

## **Volunteering Canterbury**

### **Interviewing Tips**

It is vital that you prepare carefully and are clear about the purpose of the interview.

#### Structure of an interview:

- Establish rapport
- Gather data
- Guide/advise/facilitate
- Close

Introduction and closure are the most important parts of an interview. An environment in which the potential volunteer feels safe and valued needs to be created. There is a difference between empathy and sympathy and the interviewer needs to be a little detached rather than overfriendly.

Everyone has pre-conditioned attitudes and these need to be consciously put to one side. Be aware of your own body language and use appropriate speech. The most important thing is to listen to what the person interviewed is saying.

When gathering data ask open questions such as "tell me about yourself." Only ask questions that are relevant and don't make assumptions or frame questions in a way that invites a certain response. Do not appear distracted – concentrate on the task at hand with no other 'baggage' brought with you from earlier in the day. If you're too tired to give your full attention to the interview, don't do it!

Give clear warning before you finish the interview. Review the information you've gathered and check it's accurate.

When closing check there are no loose ends, thank the person, and finish with something positive.

#### How to carry out an interview where you need to tell someone that their behaviour is not acceptable.

- Deal with your own feelings first (anger, frustration), perhaps by discussing the situation with colleagues
- Be clear about what you want to achieve
- State the purpose of the interview at the beginning
- Give the facts as you understand them – state the problem precisely
- LISTEN – give the interviewee plenty of space to tell their side of the story
- Be open to new information

Always be honest (but kind). Remember you can't be responsible for another person's reaction