Recruitment and Retention Workshop – Facilitators' Guide

CCCBR Volunteer & Leadership Workgroup (April 2020)

The Central Council Volunteer & Leadership Workgroup has developed a resources pack to allow local associations/branches/clusters of towers to run their own Recruitment and Retention Workshop. This interactive workshop will help ringers come up with a plan for their tower(s), using resources from the Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) and from the Central Council. The workshop was trialled in Sussex in early 2020, then run on a larger scale at the V&L day during the 2020 ART Conference.

This Guide will help you to facilitate appropriate discussion by **providing ideas** on how to:

- **Give everyone the opportunity to speak, particularly the "quiet" people**
- **Prevent "chatty" people taking over the discussions**
- **Keep the discussion focused on the topic**
- **Use open questions to kick start and to develop discussion threads**

There is a separate *Organisers' Guide* to help you plan and run the workshop.

1. The Masher of Mayhem (or Spoon of Doom) – making sure everyone gets to speak

Facilitators may wish to use an object (e.g. potato masher, wooden spoon, conch shell…) to ensure that only one person may speak at a time during discussions. Only the person holding the object is allowed to speak. The object can be passed around the group, and/or the facilitator can give it to specific individuals to encourage them to contribute.

Fairness and equality are essential and will enable you to navigate through passionate debate with gentle authority – essential for positive dynamics. Irrespective of whether you use a Masher of Mayhem or equivalent, the aim is to:

- Make a note of the order in which people put their hands up.
- Encourage quiet people to give their views, e.g. "What do you think about this, Margaret?"
- Prevent chatty people from taking over the discussion; you may have to interrupt them – "Those are good points Richard; I can see Julie's hand up, let's hear what she can add."
- Make sure new recruits get to give their perspective – "Katherine, when you first started ringing, how did you feel about…?"

2. Timekeeping and keeping on-topic

We recommend that you allocate someone other than yourself to keep an eye on the time and provide a 10-minute warning for the end of each discussion session. Guide discussions so that they remain purposeful and focused, and ensure all relevant points are covered.

- "We've discussed this very thoroughly; let's move on to the next point."
- "We're going to discuss that in the next session"
- "We're going off-topic here; let's keep to the question of…"

3. At the beginning

Setting some "house rules" may be a good idea. For example: everyone gets a chance to speak; anything said in confidence does not leave the room...

You could start the workshop by asking **new recruits to introduce themselves briefly**, perhaps by saying:

- their name
- tower(s) where they ring
- how long they've been ringing
- what got them in to ringing
- any barriers that hindered them making that first move to start learning (e.g. some people find just going into a church very difficult).

You might also want to **ask attendees** what they want to get out of the workshop. E.g. are they:

- Looking to run a big recruitment drive?
- Looking for a steady trickle of new recruits?
- Considering joining forces with other local towers?

This information will help you to direct useful discussions, geared towards your specific group of attendees.

4. The discussion sessions

This section suggests open questions that you could ask during each of the discussion sessions in the workshop.

4.1 Ice-breaker

- Who has been ringing more than 30 years – how did you get into ringing?
- Who has been ringing less than 10 years – how did you get into ringing?
- In your experience how long do new recruits typically stay engaged in bell ringing?
- What observations can you make about the drop-out rate?

Questions such as these are intended to:

- Raise awareness of a shift in recruitment demographics (we can no longer rely on recruiting mostly from church congregations)
- Demonstrate the need to evolve and diversify our recruitment strategies
- Raise awareness of the drop-out rate, which is often significant
- Indicate that retention is an issue to be considered in conjunction with recruitment.

4.2 Discussion 1: raise awareness, what do you want to achieve, who to recruit

Some points to aim for during discussions:

- Encourage raising awareness – we should talk about ringing to anyone and everyone in a friendly and enthusiastic manner (that's what people remember)
- Achieving a viable band requires planning – by the time you realise that you need to recruit, it might be too late; better to maintain steady trickle of new recruits

Suggested questions:

- "What potential sources of recruits are available to you in your locality?" (E.g. schools, university, U3A…)
- "Has anyone tried any of the suggestions the presenter talked about?"
    - "What worked well, what didn't work well?"
    - "Why?"
- Ask new recruits
    - "What are your suggestions?"
    - "What do you think people need to bear in mind?"

4.3 Discussion 2: what are you going to do, publicity, events, follow-up

- Ask new recruits
  - "What do you think we should bear in mind?"
  - "What are your suggestions for things to do?"
- Ask established ringers
  - "Have you done any of these things recently?"
  - "What worked well, what didn't work well; why?"
- Generally:
  - "Might it be helpful to have some specific roles on your committee to support recruitment?"
  - "How could your newer recruits be involved in recruitment activities?"

4.4 Discussion 3: Intensive training, retention, making it work for everyone

Intensive training:

- "Has anyone tried this (as a learner or a teacher)?"
  - How did it go?
  - What needs to be considered?

Keeping your new ringers interested:

- Questions for newer ringers
  - "What are the issues?"
  - "What do you think could help?"
- Questions for more established ringers
  - "Do you have experience of things that did (or didn't) work?"

Making it work for everyone:

- Questions for established ringers
  - "What are the risks?"
- For everyone
  - "How could we mitigate these risks?"

"Who could you approach for help?"

4.5 Wrap-up

- "From a district/branch/association/guild perspective, is there a role or potential for cluster/district/branch recruitment and training?"
- "How might this work?"
- "Could you help?"

If you have any comments or suggestions about this guide, or other materials in the Recruitment & Retention Workshop Resources Pack, please contact the Volunteer & Leadership Workgroup lead: vllead@cccbr.org.uk