

Hawk's Rest Bird Sanctuary - Volunteer training: Confidently Engaging Visitors at the Sanctuary

<p>Charity problem & goals</p>	<p>The goal of this session is to equip volunteers with the strategies and necessary knowledge to provide sanctuary visitors with a positive, informative experience. By providing this experience, the sanctuary aims to improve satisfaction levels, foster connection to our mission and, ultimately, increase donations.</p> <p>As this role has a very high turnover, with most volunteers working a single season before moving on, completion of this session will reduce reliance on supervisors to deal with recurring questions and issues, which is currently occupying up to 2 hours of each working day. This additional support means that less immediate tasks, such as medium to long-term projects in the charity, are often negatively impacted.</p> <p>Of greater concern than using supervisor time, some volunteers prefer to improvise rather than escalate, which has led to inconsistent messaging and some complaints from visitors.</p> <p>The vast majority of volunteers are currently studying at the local university, as this programme can gain them extra credit. Several volunteers also use their experience in the sanctuary as part of their dissertations in their final year. As a result, 85% of last year's volunteers said they had a good knowledge of the work the charity does, while 60% described themselves as 'confident' tackling questions related to the bird species most commonly found at Hawk's Rest.</p> <p>In contrast, only 15% of volunteers had had experience dealing with members of the public in the past, usually from working in retail. As a result, the majority have no strategies for asserting themselves in a difficult group, or presenting information engagingly to a variety of ages. This learner gap is something which the training session aims to address, preparing volunteers to both address challenging situations and also to excite visitors with the work that we do at the sanctuary.</p> <p>Therefore, while volunteers possess strong subject knowledge, there is a clear gap in public-facing communication skills, confidence, and consistency of messaging, which this session is designed to address.</p>
<p>Target audience</p>	<p>Most volunteers are students at the local university with a strong knowledge of the charity's work and the bird species which are cared for and rehabilitated at the sanctuary. However, in most cases, they have little to no experience of interacting with the public in an official capacity, and only 34% said they felt 'at ease' holding the attention of a large group of people.</p> <p>The role requires communicating the sanctuary's work in a clear and engaging way. Therefore, this session will develop strategies for speaking with clarity and confidence to maintain interest amongst visitors. Additionally, volunteers will need to guide visitor behaviour effectively, so methods for achieving this will be covered.</p>
<p>Learning objectives</p>	<p>At the end of this course, learners will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply strategies to manage visitor behaviour effectively during guided tours. 2. Demonstrate clear and engaging speaking techniques to maintain visitor interest. 3. Respond appropriately to challenging visitor questions or behaviour. 4. Deliver key sanctuary messages accurately and consistently.

	<p>In order to reach these LOs, learners will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch and engage with a presentation delivered by the trainer via video call, and complete a related multiple-choice quiz to reinforce key concepts. 2. Participate in scenario-based exercises with peers. 3. Work collaboratively in pairs or small groups in breakout rooms to practice key skills.
<p>Training recommendation</p>	<p>Delivery method: Virtual Instructor Led Training is recommended to facilitate attendance for all prospective volunteers, irrespective of location.</p> <p>Approach: Platform: Zoom will be utilised as the video call provider due to its advanced interactive capabilities. Trainer presentation: This will be delivered live via screen sharing. In this presentation, the key concepts and strategies will be covered. Learners will engage with the content and complete a short multiple-choice quiz. Scenario-based learning: Learners will interact with scenarios by means of a poll which will be employed to gather feedback and allow peer-to-peer guidance in real time. Collaborative work will take place in breakout rooms before a group plenary to share reflections.</p> <p>This approach combines expert guidance, active practice and real-time reflection to provide a base for all learners to engage with the course content while also developing the practical skills which will enable them to meet the learning objectives. It adheres to adult learning principles, emphasising relevance to the role, participation and instantaneous feedback for learners.</p>
<p>Training time</p>	<p>1.5 hours</p>
<p>Deliverables</p>	<p>PowerPoint slide deck Facilitator's guide Workbook pdf</p>
<p>Training outline</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Welcome B. Agenda C. Learning Objectives II. Presentation: Delivering sanctuary messages clearly and consistently <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Core sanctuary messages B. Tone and consistency expectations C. Importance of visitor experience III. Speaking with clarity and confidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Voice clarity and pacing B. Structuring explanations C. Adjusting language for different audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breakout room task: Learners practise delivering a 1-minute sanctuary explanation D. Plenary reflection and feedback IV. Responding appropriately in real time <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Poll-based scenarios (e.g., difficult visitor question) B. Discussion of best responses

	<p>C. Breakout pairs to role-play responses</p> <p>V. Behaviour management strategies</p> <p>A. Setting expectations early</p> <p>B. Calm boundary-setting</p> <p>C. De-escalation techniques</p> <p>VI. Reinforce learning and commitment</p> <p>A. Quick recap quiz or poll</p> <p>B. Reflection prompt: “What will you do differently on your next tour?”</p> <p>C. Final Q & A</p> <p>D. Next steps and conclusion</p>
<p>Assessment plan</p>	<p>Kirkpatrick Model Level 1 (Reaction).</p> <p>A questionnaire will be sent out to all learners asking the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Were you able to follow the content of the session? 2. Did you feel the content was relevant to you as a volunteer? 3. Do you feel the session enhanced your ability to fulfil your role as a volunteer? 4. Was the content and delivery engaging? 5. Are there any areas in which you think the session could be improved? <p>Kirkpatrick Model Level 2 (Learning).</p> <p>To measure the degree to which learners have acquired the intended knowledge and skills from the session, there will be a number of knowledge checks throughout the presentation, specifically multiple choice quizzes, demonstration of learning through role play and plenaries. The session facilitator will also provide feedback in the session itself.</p> <p>Kirkpatrick Model Level 4 (Results).</p> <p>In order to ascertain whether the session improved volunteer performance, a satisfaction questionnaire will be given to all visitors. Supervisor time spent addressing recurring visitor queries will also be monitored as an internal efficiency indicator. While donations will also be monitored, the high number of variables affecting this measurement make it inappropriate for the evaluation of this session.</p>