

# Volunteer Brigade Leader Annual Support and Development

## Introduction

### When to use

These guidelines should be used by Volunteer Brigade Leaders and Group Managers to enable meaningful two-way support and development discussions. These conversations would be conducted on first appointment and annually thereafter.

This process is for all new Volunteer Brigade Leaders appointed after 01 October 2024(tbc). Volunteer Brigade Leaders that were appointed prior to 01 August 2024 may choose to adopt this Annual Support and Development Process and begin their 5-year term. If so, they should contact their Group Manager to agree on their annual conversation dates.

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### Included Positions

These discussions will take place between the Group Manager and the Volunteer Brigade Leader. The term 'Volunteer Brigade Leader' is inclusive of the following roles:

- Chief Fire Officer
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- Controller
- Deputy Controller
- Brigade OIC
- Brigade 2IC

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### Purpose of these guidelines

These guidelines:

- Outline the benefits of having a consistent annual support and development conversation, highlighting how this process may differ from what has been in place before
  - Ensure that we provide our leaders with the tools to create a positive, supportive, diverse and inclusive brigade culture
  - Describe how to prepare for annual discussions
  - Outline how to conduct annual conversations and complete the support and development plan
  - Provide supporting documentation and related information.
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**Overview of this process**

An annual discussion shall take place between the Group Manager and the Volunteer Brigade Leader to support the effective performance and functioning of the Volunteer Fire Brigade and to support the Volunteer Brigade Leader in their role. Consideration must be given to the workload of the Volunteer Brigade Leader and Group Manager to ensure an appropriate amount of time can be set aside for this process. Each year, the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the Group Manager shall meet to discuss the following:

- The Volunteer Brigade Leader and their Brigade's progress across key identified areas (goals) from the previous 12-month support and development plan.
- What additional support could be given/offered to further assist with this progress/plan?
- The current state of the Brigade.
- What key areas (goals) should be included in the next 12-month support and development plan?
- Plan for regular informal check-ins throughout the 12-month period.

This discussion allows the Volunteer Brigade Leader the opportunity to review their personal progress as the brigade leader, assess how the brigade is functioning and seek the appropriate support and development to ensure continued improvement in identified key areas.

This should be conducted in a manner encompassing our core values of:

**Whanaungatanga – We are better together;** recognising that the Volunteer Brigade Leader and Group Manager support each other in sharing knowledge and understanding.

**Auahatanga – We strive to improve;** enabling a future focus and promoting collaboration around improvement. Nāku te rourou, nāu te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi – With my basket and your basket, the people will thrive.

**Kia Tika – We do the right thing;** making decisions that are beneficial to our brigades and their communities.

**Manaakitanga – We serve and support;** at every opportunity, we actively seek ways to fill up or care for the mana of others.

Consideration should always be given to our relevant Volunteerism Principles:

- Appreciate that volunteering is always a matter of choice.
- Demonstrate openness, transparency and fairness.
- Operate with trust and respect.
- Build an environment that enables volunteerism to thrive.
- Be inclusive and embrace difference.
- Involve volunteer perspectives in decision making.
- Be responsive to local needs.

**Change of approach**

This approach to support and develop our Volunteer Brigade Leaders means:

Less of this...	More of this
Directed/led by the manager	A collaborative approach between the Volunteer Brigade Leader and Group Manager
Cascaded goals from the top down	Individual goals aligned with Volunteer Brigade Leaders' requirements
Unstructured approach to support and development of volunteer leaders	A clearly defined process of regular support and development discussion
Reactive approach to supporting volunteer leaders	Working within a process that proactively supports our volunteer leaders to grow and thrive

**Benefits**

Regular, honest, two-way conversations between the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the Group Manager focussing on support and development will help the Volunteer Brigade Leader to:

- Feel engaged
- Be clear about their role
- Grow through development to be the best they can be
- Perform at their best
- Enjoy being in the role/position
- Feel included and valued
- Develop the relationship between the Brigade leader and the Group Manager

**Annual Support and Development Process**

**Pre-discussion preparation**

Each year, on or before the anniversary of the appointment of the Volunteer Brigade Leader to their position, the Group Manager shall initiate the annual support and development conversation at a time and place (online or in-person) suitable to both parties.

Both the Volunteer Brigade Leader and Group Manager are encouraged to prepare for this conversation by reviewing the previous year, considering achievements over that year against the identified key areas (goals), and recognising possible focus areas for the year ahead to enhance overall performance and effectiveness. Consideration should also be given to potential support needs of the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the brigade for the coming year.

Additional considerations for pre-discussion preparation may include:

- Looking at feedback from brigade surveys
- Considering any community feedback available

**Supporting Documents****The Support and Development Plan**

As part of the annual discussion between the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the Group Manager, a support and development plan will be agreed for the next 12-month period. The contents of the support and development plan will be a result of the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the Group Manager working together to identify the most effective way forward to develop and support them and their brigade.

It is recommended that the support and development plan should include a maximum of 4 key areas (goals) of support and development for the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the brigade for the following 12 months. This plan, mutually agreed on by both the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the Group Manager could include (but is not limited to) support and development around:

- Brigade leadership, management and administration
- Recruitment, retention and succession planning
- Community engagement and risk reduction activities
- Operational capability, readiness and response
- Brigade safety, health and wellbeing

See the [12-month support and development plan - Volunteer Brigade Leader](#).

**Example Goals and Development Opportunities for Volunteer Brigade Leaders**

[Example goals and opportunities - Volunteer Brigade Leader](#) provides examples of goals and development opportunities that may be considered for inclusion in the support and development plan.

There are many ways to develop, including on-the-job learning, learning through others, and enrolling in formal learning programmes.

These are included in the support and development template and provide a non-exhaustive list of examples of performance goals and types of development opportunities at Fire and Emergency.

Further information about setting development goals is available on the Portal here: [Setting development goals: Tools to use guideline | The Portal \(fireandemergency.nz\)](#)

## The annual discussion meeting process

### Looking to the past

The Volunteer Brigade Leader and the Group Manager will discuss progress referencing the previous 12-month support and development plan. *The key areas in the preceding plan will have been previously discussed and agreed on, by both the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the Group Manager.*

### Looking at the now

When reviewing the previous year's support and development plan, there may be areas that have not been fully achieved. These should be discussed, and consideration given to whether they are included in the new support and development plan.

During the conversation, the Volunteer Brigade Leader and the Group Manager should also reflect on the current state of the brigade. A brigade survey prior to this meeting to collate feedback could help this discussion.

See a [Brigade health check \(example\) - Volunteer Brigade Leader](#) here.

### Looking at the future

When looking to the next 12-month period, a collaborative approach should be taken regarding any further goal setting and support and development required.

Discussion/reflection prompts to assist in this process could include:

- What skills and knowledge do you need to be effective and successful in your role as Volunteer Brigade Leader?
- What behaviours do you need to develop to perform at your best?
- What are your strengths and how can you use and further develop these?
- What will support you in being your best?
- What do you need from your manager to grow and develop?

## Regular check-ins

The Group Manager and the Volunteer Brigade Leader will have regular, informal check-ins throughout the year. The frequency, length and format of those check-ins should be jointly agreed and may involve:

- Regular conversations focusing on the support and development plan
- Real-time feedback and recognition of progress and development
- Assisting with any help towards achieving goals
- Amending goals to meet changing priorities

## Serious concerns before end of 5-year term

**Course of action for resolving leadership concerns before end of 5-year term**  
(In order of priority)

1. The Group Manager should work with the Volunteer Brigade Leader to provide additional support and development for them and the brigade to address the concerns.
2. If there are concerns of a serious nature, then the appropriate existing channels should be followed immediately. See [Resolve Volunteer Issue](#) process for more details.

## Document Storage

The Group Manager will scan the original copy to an appropriate secure location, ensuring the Brigade Leader has a copy.

## Consultation Links

QR Code and link to feedback survey:



Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/24fknismHp>

Or email [EkeTaumata@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:EkeTaumata@fireandemergency.nz) to place feedback.

### See other guidelines and supporting documents:

[Recruit for a Volunteer Brigade Leader](#)

[Volunteer Brigade Leader Annual Support and Development](#)

[Volunteer Brigade Leader Renewal](#)

[Volunteer Brigade Leader Non-Renewal](#)

[Core selection criteria - Volunteer Brigade Leader](#)

[Volunteer Brigade Leader position description](#)

[Deputy Volunteer Brigade Leader position description](#)

[12-month support and development plan - Volunteer Brigade Leader](#)

[Group Manager checklist at end of term - Volunteer Brigade Leader](#)

Brigade feedback on shortlist applicants:

[Option 1 - Using core selection criteria](#)

[Option 2 - Values alignment](#)

[Option 3 - Current process](#)