

Requesting volunteer references

Section 10.3 of the Branch Charter states that 'All candidates for Branch Officer posts must provide the names of two referees. References will be sought prior to the elections at the AGM'.

It is good volunteering practice to request references for all volunteers involved in your branch committee. References enable you to:

- check that the person is who they say they are
- check suitability for a particular role
- demonstrate to volunteers, staff and our members that our volunteers are an integral part of the service and therefore need to be checked formally in the same way that staff are checked
- satisfy everyone that reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure that we have exercised our 'duty of care' towards our members.

The reverse side of the Branch Management Committee (BMC) Nomination Declaration form requests the nominee to provide two referees who can be contacted to provide a reference. The referees should be someone who has known the nominee for at least two years and should not be a relative or someone who lives with the nominee.

On receipt of this completed form, the branch secretary should contact the two referees to request a reference. A template reference request form is available to download from the Volunteer Zone or from the Volunteering Team. It is good practice to enclose a stamped addressed envelope which is marked 'Private and Confidential' for a prompt return of the reference.

When references are received, they can legitimately be read by anyone involved in the recruitment and selection process. The reference should only be used for the purpose for which it was obtained and should be shredded once it is no longer required.