

HOW MUCH TIME WILL I HAVE TO GIVE ?

It is up to YOU!

Daytimes, evenings or weekends - you can give as much - or as little - time as your lifestyle allows and you feel like giving. You may have a few hours a week to offer long term or you may want to volunteer full time on a short term basis.

Most groups will ask for a regular commitment but this can be as little as a couple of hours each month. Be realistic about how much time you can spare and don't over-stretch yourself to start with. You can always take on more volunteering later.

THE NEXT STEP

Once the Volunteer Centre process has been completed and you have chosen one or more volunteering opportunities that interest you, we will then contact groups on your behalf, or give you contact details so that you can get in touch yourself.

At this stage you are just finding out more rather than making a commitment - you may be sent an information pack or be invited in for a visit.

Some groups will operate a selection procedure to make sure that volunteers can cope with the role they want to take on. This should be reasonably informal. If you need assistance with any aspect of this ask the Volunteer Centre for help.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Some Volunteer Centres offer training opportunities on a regular basis to all volunteers wishing to develop their skills or learn new ones.

This training can include accredited training such as First Aid, Health and Safety and Food Hygiene or "soft skills" training such as Assertiveness, Time Management or Confidence Building.

We will be happy to discuss your particular needs and find courses that fulfil those needs. Training is usually free of charge to volunteers.

HOW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Potential volunteers are required to fill in an application form. This can be obtained by contacting the Volunteer Centre. *(contact details on the back cover)*

On the basis of the information you give in this form we will be better able to match you to an organisation or an individual who would benefit from your help. Any disclosures relating to crime, health and personal circumstances will be treated as confidential.

We may ask you to attend an informal interview with the Volunteer Co-ordinator to ensure that the help you offer matches your wishes. Some Volunteer centres do this before taking up references, others afterwards.

REFERENCES & POLICE CHECKS

Be aware that the Volunteer Centre may ask for character references, especially if you will be handling money or working with people who are vulnerable. Try to think of someone suitable - if you are stuck ask us for some suggestions.

Some groups (especially those who work with children and vulnerable adults) may ask for a criminal record check or ask you to declare any convictions. Certain types of criminal record will affect the range of volunteering available to you.

If you have any concerns about this then talk to staff at the Volunteer Centre.

IF A PROBLEM ARISES

It may be that you have chosen a volunteer role that does not suit you. You could talk to the person responsible for volunteers and see if you could change your role.

If this is not possible come back to us at the Volunteer Centre and look at other options. Please don't be embarrassed to return if your first choice doesn't work out. You can use our service as many times as you wish.

If you enjoy your volunteer role but have a problem and feel you need outside support, then staff at the Volunteer Centre are there to listen and give you support. If you wish, we can also talk to the organisation on your behalf.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You are asked to respect the trust placed in you by groups and individuals with whom you will be working. We will give you the same respect.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

In line with Health and Safety at Work legislation the organisations that you help will seek your co-operation in obeying their rules on health and safety.

YOUR RIGHT TO BENEFITS

Volunteering should not affect your state benefits. Do however check with your local Job Centre before volunteering.

EXPENSES

As a volunteer you should be reimbursed for any previously agreed out-of-pocket expenses.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

All Volunteer Centres operate a Complaints Procedure for anybody *(volunteers or those they are helping)* who is not satisfied with the service they have received.

If you feel that you have been unfairly treated you should, initially, write to the Chair of the Trustees at the Volunteer Centre, marking your letter "Private and Confidential".

You will receive acknowledgement of your complaint in writing within seven days of receipt together with details of how your complaint will be dealt with.