

Volunteering

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is where you offer your time and skills for free to a charity, organisation or an individual who is not a member of your family or a friend.

Volunteering can be a hugely rewarding experience. Not only will you be giving your time to doing something useful, you can meet new people, learn new skills and hopefully have fun as well!

There are many opportunities for you to volunteer; you just need to decide what's right for you. Around 5 million people over the age of 50 participate in voluntary work, and many organisations rely on older volunteers for their knowledge and their experience.

Benefits of volunteering

There are many benefits to becoming a volunteer, including:

- **Learning a new skill or putting existing skills to good use** Many organisations could benefit from your existing knowledge and experience and it's always useful to learn new skills.
- **Meeting new people** By volunteering you can meet like-minded people of all ages and [make new friends](#).
- **Gaining valuable experience** If you are looking to get back into [paid work](#) or maybe to change your career, volunteering is an excellent way to gain experience in your chosen field.
- **Occupying your time and getting out of the house** Having something to occupy your time can improve your [mental health](#) and keep you busy, particularly if you are [feeling lonely](#) or isolated.
- **Contributing to a good cause** Volunteering for a good cause, for example for your favourite charity, is a great way of contributing to your local community and will give you the satisfaction of knowing that you are making a difference.
- **Improving patient treatments and outcomes** you can make a difference by talking about your medical condition; contributing to patient involvement groups for Trusts.
- **Helping you to adjust to retirement** Many people find it difficult to adjust to [retirement](#), and taking on voluntary work can be an excellent way of coping with this. It will keep you occupied, without having the pressures of paid work.
- **Helping you to overcome bereavement** If you are going through [bereavement](#), it can be a very difficult and lonely time. Volunteering can help to take your mind off things and is a great way to meet other people who may be in a similar situation.
- **Building confidence** If you have been out of work or retired for some time, you may find that you are lacking confidence in your skills and abilities. Volunteering can help to restore this, when you see the difference that you can make.

- **Improving you health** Research has found that volunteering gives people a sense of wellbeing, a stronger immune system and even a speedier recovery from surgery!

“Volunteering has certainly given me a chance to enhance my own personal development. More important than this, however, is the fact that, in giving and reaching out to others, I have received so much more in return.”

Eric, aged 68 years old.

Things to consider before volunteering

Before you decide to volunteer you might like to think about the following:

- **What you would enjoy** – Is there a cause that you're particularly passionate about, or perhaps a group of people you enjoy working with? Do you have any specific skills that you want to put to good use? Would you prefer an office-based role or an active outdoors activity?
 - **Making a commitment** – Some organisations take on volunteers on a very casual basis, whilst others need someone who can give their time on a more structured basis. Think about the amount of time that you can spare before deciding on a role that will suit you.
 - **Achieving your aims** – If you are thinking about volunteering to improve your career prospects or to learn a new skill, you should think carefully about whether the role will fulfil your expectations. It is important to explain to your chosen organisation what you hope to gain from volunteering with them.
 - **Welfare benefits** – You can volunteer for as many hours as you want, as long as you don't get paid beyond expenses and you are available for interview within 48 hours. The old rule that you could only volunteer for 16 hours a week no longer applies, however you should Always check with your personal adviser before you start volunteering.
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Finding a volunteering role

There are a huge range of volunteering opportunities available including:

- Administration
- Trustee of a charity or voluntary group
- Animal welfare
- Befriending
- Campaigning
- Research
- Driving
- Fundraising
- Park Run and fitness
- NHS services directly or through associated charities
- Youth work

Once you have decided on the type of volunteer role that you would like to do, or the organisation you want to volunteer with, there are several ways to go about finding a role:

- Contact the organisation directly
- Contact your local Volunteer Centre (see the section below for details)
- Search the [Do-it.org](https://www.do-it.org) for available opportunities

Local Volunteer Opportunities

[Volunteer Centre Newcastle](#) is a free service for anyone interested in volunteering. They offer:

- a range of volunteer opportunities and training
- [The Volunteer Passport \(VP\)](#) where you go through one application and training process. Then you can volunteer for a wide range of different roles and organisations. The volunteer roles you can choose from are suited to your availability, skillset and interests. Helping to find the right role for you.
- support to organisations, no matter how big or small, that involves volunteers or would like to. They offer training, support and advertise your volunteer opportunities.

[Volunteering Matters](#) is the UK's leading volunteering and training charity. Volunteer Centre Newcastle is part of this organisation.

[National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) is the national volunteering agency and offers information and advice on volunteering.

Visit the [NIHR local network site for opportunities](#). You could also donate a blood sample to the NIHR BioResource and get matched into research studies based on variations in your DNA, health and lifestyle information, your age, gender or ethnicity.

You can volunteer at Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust as well as other Trusts including [Gateshead](#) and [NTW](#).

Take up a [volunteering challenge](#) for Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums (for instance the Late Shows in May)

You can become a [Volunteer Ranger](#) and help manage any of the city's local parks and nature reserves.

Keep fit and active whilst helping older people through [GoodGym](#).

[Voice](#) is an organisation that supports a range of research activities and requires volunteers who have an interest in ageing.

[Timebanking UK](#) and [Time Exchange](#) are timebanking organisations where you volunteer your time to help someone in return for someone volunteering their time to help you with something.

Rest Less is a digital community that aims to inspire today's generation of over 50s and 60s to get the most from life – focusing on work, financial wellbeing, learning, volunteering, lifestyle and more. You can search for a volunteering role on their website.

onHand is a volunteer-matching platform, and they are offering their services to people needing help with simple tasks in the North East.

PaCT Lab at Northumbria University are interested in understanding how people use technology and have a special interest in how older users engage with e-health technologies, cyber security systems, and digital privacy controls.

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Useful Organisations

Volunteer Rangers

Email: enquiries@newcastleparksandallotments.org.uk

Website: <https://urbangreennewcastle.org/get-involved/friends-of-groups>

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Ouseburn Parks Visitor Centre, NE7 7BQ

Volunteer Centre Newcastle

Email: karen.watson@volunteeringmatters.org.uk

Website: www.volunteercentrenewcastle.org.uk

Telephone: 0741 9988 821

Address: MEA House,

Time Exchange

Email: info@thetimeexchange.org

Website: <https://thetimeexchange.org/>

Telephone: 0191 245 0663

Address: 235 Stanton Street, NE4 5LJ

Timebanking UK

Email: info@timebanks.co.uk

Website: <http://www.timebanking.org/>

Telephone: 01453 750 952

Address: The Exchange, GL5 1DF

Elders Council of Newcastle (Older People's Forum)

Email: info@elderscouncil.org.uk

Website: www.elderscouncil.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 208 2701

Address: The Elders Council of Newcastle, NE4 5PL

Natural History Society of Northumbria

Email: nhsn@ncl.ac.uk

Website: www.nhsn.ncl.ac.uk

Telephone: 0191 208 2701

Address: Great North Museum: Hancock, NE2 4PT

Do-it.org

Website: <https://do-it.org/>

Telephone: 0191 208 2701

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

Email: ncvo@ncvo.org.uk

Website: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering>

Telephone: 020 7713 6161

Address: Society Building, N1 9RL

North Tyneside VODA

Email: admin@voda.org.uk

Website: www.voda.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 643 2626

Address: Queen Alexandra Campus, NE29 9BZ

Royal Voluntary Service (RVS)

Email: tynewearhub@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Website: www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 300 9334

Address: Correspondence to:, NE30 2AY

Volunteering Matters

Website: <http://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/>

Telephone: 020 3780 5870

Address: MEA HOuse, E5 0PD

GoodGym

Email: missioncontrol@goodgym.org

Website: www.goodgym.org/request-a-mission

Telephone: 0203 432 3920

Address: Somerset House, WC2R 1LA

VOICE

Email: voice@ncl.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.voice-global.org/>

Telephone: 0191 208 1288

Address: VOICE, NE4 5PL

Guide Dogs Newcastle

Email: newcastle@guidedogs.org.uk

Website: www.guidedogs.org.uk

Telephone: 0345 143 0220

Address: Guide Dogs, NE7 7TZ

Rest Less

Email: info@restless.co.uk

Website: <https://restless.co.uk/>

Telephone: 0345 143 0220

on Hand

Email: hello@beonhand.co.uk

Website: <https://www.beonhand.co.uk/>

Telephone: 0203 488 2912

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds RSPB

Email: membership@rspb.org.uk

Website: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/>

Telephone: 01767 680 551

Address: The Lodge , SG19 2DL

PaCT Lab, Northumbria University

Email: lisa.thomas@northumbria.ac.uk

Website: <https://pactlab.co.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 227 3716

Address: PaCT Lab, NE1 8SU

Jesmond Community Orchard

Website: <https://jesmondcommunityorchard.co.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 227 3716

Address: St Andrew's Cemetery, NE2 3BU

Golf in Society

Email: anthonye.golfinsociety@gmail.com

Website: www.golfinsociety.com

Telephone: 07984 374441

Address: 4 Elmfield Gardens, NE3 4XB

National Institute for Health Research Clinical Research Network North East and North Cumbria

Email: nenccommunications@nihr.ac.uk

Website: <https://local.nihr.ac.uk/lcrn/north-east-and-north-cumbria/>

Telephone: 0191 282 3845

Address: NIHR CRN North East and North Cumbria, NE3 3HD

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