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!

Things to think about 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.

Volunteer roles

There are a huge range of volunteering opportunities to try such as:

- administration
- Trustee of a charity or voluntary group
- animal welfare
- befriending
- campaigning
- health and public health research
- community driver
- fundraising
- Park Run and fitness
- NHS services directly or through associated charities
- youth work
- sharing public health messages

How to find a volunteer role

When you know what type of volunteer role you would like to do, or the organisation you want to volunteer with you can look for a role. Contact the:

- organisation directly
- local **Volunteer Centre Newcastle**
- or search **Do-it.org**

Your local Volunteer Centre

Volunteer Centre Newcastle is a free service for anyone interested in volunteering. They offer:

- a wide range of volunteer roles across Newcastle and the wider region
- supporting volunteers in identifying suitable roles based on their interests, aspirations and availability
- training on good practice in volunteer management
- support to organisations in writing volunteer policies, risk assessments, and role descriptions etc.

Volunteering Matters run Volunteer Centre Newcastle. Volunteering Matters brings people together as volunteers to help with challenging problems in communities and support local people.

Volunteer Passport

The Volunteer Passport scheme is ran by Volunteer Centre Newcastle

The Volunteer Passport (VP) means 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. Watch the video below for more information

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Local volunteer opportunities

Community volunteering

Newcastle has a large number of charities and community groups who support people in our city. Here's some of the ways that you could volunteer to help others.

The Health Champion Network is a group of people who live, work, study, and volunteer across Newcastle. They use their personal experience, knowledge, networks, and expertise to help overcome unfair differences in health and wellbeing. They do this by making sure people are able to find, understand, and use health and wellbeing information, support, and services.

Volunteer Ranger help to look after the city's local parks and nature reserves.

GoodGym gives you the chance to keep fit and active, while you help others with small jobs that they can't manage.

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.

HostNation is a befriending scheme which is looking for local people to buddy up with refugees or asylum seekers living in Newcastle and Gateshead.

Charities

There are a large number of charities in Newcastle who help others in our city.

Search is a local charity that involves volunteers aged 18+ with its work supporting older people to lead happier and healthier lives'.

St Oswald's Hospice has volunteer opportunities in their charity shops and hospice. Every volunteer application is followed up by an informal interview, during which staff aim to understand volunteer applicants' skills, experience, achievements and motivations.

Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums look for a large number of volunteers every year to help run The Late Shows which takes place in May.

Food help

There are many food banks in our city who help get emergency food parcels to people who need them. There are opportunities to volunteer your time at food banks.

You could volunteer to help prepare meals for people who need food. Or at one of the low cost food pantries in our city.

You can contact the food banks or charities directly to find out more about volunteering with them.

Research in health and care

Research improves the health and social care provided by the NHS and others. Advancing medicine to find new cures and better treatments for future generations. It also helps to improve diagnosis, prevention and quality of life for everyone. In some cases it can change lives, or even save lives.

Read more on how to get involved in health and care research on InformationNOW.

Have your say about health services

You can help to improve our health services. You can volunteer to take part in groups or forums to make sure the views of patients, carers and the public are heard. Your feedback is used to improve health services in the North East of England.

Read more about how to get involved and have your say about health services.

Hospital volunteering

There are lots of different volunteer roles in hospitals such as: helping in a shop, welcoming patients, fundraising and more. There are roles available at:

- **Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**
- **Gateshead Hospitals Trust**
- **Cumbria Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Hospitals Trust**

Last updated: June 26, 2024

Useful Organisations

Volunteer Centre Newcastle

Email: karen.watson@volunteeringmatters.org.uk

Website: www.volunteercentrenewcastle.org.uk

Telephone: 0741 9988 821

Address: Grainger Hub,, NE1 5JE

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

Address: Great North Museum: Hancock, NE2 4PT

Do-it.org

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

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: Spirit of North Tyneside Wing,, NE28 8JR

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

Email: gtm@volunteeringmatters.org.uk

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

Telephone: 0808 196 6831

Address: The Levy Centre, E5 0PD

GoodGym

Email: missioncontrol@goodgym.org

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

Telephone: 0203 432 3920

Address: Somerset House, WC2R 1LA

Valuing Our Intellectual Capital and Experience (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/

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: dawn.branley-bell@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/

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 and Care Research (NIHR) 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: 07342 058 139

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

Smart Works North East

Email: newcastle@smartworks.org.uk

Website: www.smartworks.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 6917900

Address: Smart Works North East, NE1 1JW

Healthwatch Newcastle

Email: info@healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk

Website: http://www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk/

Telephone: 0191 338 5720

Address: Suite E11 E Floor, NE1 1LE

Suitability – Society Matters

Email: suitability@societymatterscic.com

Website: http://suit-ability.com

Telephone: 0191 4904334

Home from Hospital and Community Support

Email: nuth.homefromhospital@nhs.net

Website: https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/opportunity/community-responder-newcastle/

Telephone: 07534 043578

Address: Grainger Hub, NE1 5JE

Health Champion Network

Email: communitychampions@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/community-champions

Telephone: 0191 211 5055

Address: Newcastle Civic Centre, NE1 8QH

St Oswald's Hospice

Email: enquiries@stoswaldsuk.org

Website: www.stoswaldsuk.org

Telephone: 0191 285 0063

Address: Regent Avenue, NE3 1EE

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