

Will it lead to a job?

Although volunteering will not lead directly to a job, it can **help** in many other ways. For example you can:

- ⇒ Contribute to the community.
- ⇒ Have fun and meet new people.
- ⇒ Share your knowledge and get satisfaction from helping out.
- ⇒ Learn new skills and gain experience.

Where can I get more information and help?

Contact details of your local Volunteer Centre Volunteering England's website at www.volunteeringengland.org.uk

More information on CRB/ can be found at www.crb.gov.uk

More information on volunteering while on benefits can be found at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

To find out what is available in your area log onto www.do-it.org.uk - this is a postcode based search engine so if you live outside of Newcastle then please use the name of the town OR your home postcode to begin your search



The Volunteer Centre Officers are:

Adam Stewart, Gemma Finch, Karen Watson.

Our contact details are:

Telephone: 0191 232 6616

Email: info@volunteercentrenewcastle.org.uk

Our website address is:

www.volunteercentrenewcastle.org.uk

We are based in MEA House:



(2 minutes walk from Northumberland St.)

Our opening hours are:

Monday to Friday 9.00am - 4pm

YOU MUST MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO SPEAK TO THE TEAM

Leaflet by Steven Greenwell,
CSV Virtual Volunteering Project



Volunteer Centre
Newcastle

A Guide to Volunteering for Refugees and Asylum Seekers





What is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is a person who gives their time and skills free of charge, doing something which is of benefit to others, society or the environment. It is usually carried out on behalf of a charity or voluntary organisation.

Volunteering is not the same as 'unpaid work.'

For example working in a business or for a family member is classed as unpaid work and not volunteering, therefore cannot be undertaken by anyone seeking asylum; whereas volunteering for a charity or a community group is open to everyone.

What the government says

The UK government permits and encourages volunteering by refugees and asylum seekers, particularly in their local community.

What can I do?

You can volunteer and develop your skills pursuing a wide variety of interests including: **Animals, Arts & Culture, Disabled or Elderly People, Education, the Environment, Families, Health, Heritage, Homeless People, Human and Civil Rights, Music, Politics, Religion or Sport.**

Where can I get information?

Your local Volunteer Centre will have a database of many different volunteering roles, which are advertised on behalf of other voluntary organisations. You can talk with them about your options and where you would like to volunteer.

Can I get a reference from a voluntary organisation?

Yes, after at least 3 months of volunteering you can ask for a reference.

How many hours do I have to do each week and are the days flexible?

There are no restrictions on the amount of hours you can volunteer. You can talk to the organisation and come to an agreement with them.

Refugees on Job Seekers Allowance

Refugees with status to work who are on benefits **can** volunteer as long as they continue to follow the usual Job Seekers rules.

Do I get expenses?

You are allowed to claim expenses as long as they are a direct result of volunteering and you provide the organisation with a receipt or proof of purchase. **Each organisation will explain their expenses system.**

How do I become a volunteer?

Once you have decided which volunteer role you want to apply for, you should

- ⇒ Get in touch with the organisation by telephone or email. The co-ordinator may be very busy so may take a few weeks to respond.
- ⇒ They may send you an application form to fill in or invite you along for a chat.
- ⇒ Most organisations will ask you for 2 written references. These could be letters from people who know you well, eg your tutor, someone from your faith group or a respected member of the local community.
- ⇒ Some volunteering roles need a CRB check and this can take up to 12 weeks, so you might not be able to volunteer straight away.

What is a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Check?

A CRB check's purpose is to help protect children and vulnerable adults and support organisations recruiting people into positions of trust. More information on how to apply for a CRB Check and the documents needed will be provided by the voluntary organisation.

The organisation pays for this check, you will be asked to prove ID which they will explain.