

VOLUNTEERING CAN HELP YOU TO...

Thinking of volunteering? Tips for young people with criminal convictions

WHY VOLUNTEER?



You have the opportunity as a person to develop, to learn new skills. You have the opportunity to be part of life-changing experiences just in a day.

Young volunteer

Start dreaming in colour again



VOLUNTEERING IS...

Volunteering can provide new opportunities and even new ways of thinking about things.

What you want it to be. Give a little time or a lot.

Something you choose to do

Giving something back

Fun!

Unpaid

Doing something to help others

AREN'T ALL VOLUNTEERS POSH AND MIDDLE-AGED?



There are **18 million** adults in England volunteering at least once a year

45% of 16-25 year olds volunteer at least once a year

Young people with offending histories are involved in many kinds of volunteering including football coaching, museum guiding, office admin, gardening, theatre, music production and involvement in charity campaigns.

BUT WHAT ABOUT...

My criminal record...?

Having a criminal record doesn't stop you volunteering. In fact, lots of organisations work with volunteers with criminal convictions. For some roles, you may be able to share your experiences to help others. Organisations should consider whether your conviction is relevant to the volunteering role you want to do.

My lack of experience...?

The level of experience and skills required will depend on the role you are applying for. Organisations may also provide you with training before you start or you may learn while doing the role. If you're unsure just ask what training is provided.

If I'm on benefits...?

People are allowed to volunteer while claiming state benefits, including Job Seekers' Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). You can volunteer for as many hours as you like as long as you keep to the rules for getting your benefits.

You can find more information from the Department for Work and Pensions

www.gov.uk/government/publications/volunteering-while-getting-benefits-leaflet

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

- To know what is expected of you in your voluntary role
- Induction and training
- An identified contact to support you in your role, ask questions of or raise any concerns with
- To be reimbursed for expenses e.g. travel expenses. The organisation you volunteer with may have guidance to explain this
- Ongoing support and supervision, to make sure you are happy in the role
- Some flexibility and ability to choose how much time you can volunteer for

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Contact your local Volunteer Centre

Volunteer Centres can help you find the right opportunity. This can be an ideal place to start if you are looking for an opportunity in your local area.

www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer

Search the Do-it volunteering database

www.do-it.org.uk is a national database for volunteering opportunities. You can search more than 1 million volunteering opportunities by interest, activity or location and apply online.

Look out for local advertising in community centres, your local press and newsletters.

WILL VOLUNTEERING HELP ME GET A JOB?

For some, volunteering can be a route to employment, or a chance to try something new. It can also help you to:

- Gain new skills, knowledge & experience
- Develop existing skills & knowledge
- Build up your CV
- Access training or accreditation
- Demonstrate your skills and commitment
- Get a reference

JULIE'S STORY

Julie is in her early 20s. A few years ago she was homeless, and it was then that she was convicted of theft.

My reasons for volunteering here were quite personal. It's not like "I need work experience", it was more like "I want to give something back".

Volunteering has given Julie self-confidence, developed her team-working skills and helped her get into college. Today she has paid work in the organisation she volunteered for



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Other briefings in this series are guidance for:

- Volunteer-involving organisations
- Resettlement organisations

Available at www.ivr.org.uk/ivr-projects/ivr-current-projects/ex-offenders-and-volunteering

Illustrations by Jade Sarson www.teahermit.co.uk/illustration

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