



# VOLUNTEERING FACT SHEET



## WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

Choosing to give your time to do an activity, unpaid, that benefits others.

## SO WHY VOLUNTEER?

Volunteering provides the opportunity to use your skills to make a difference to people's lives in your local community. Not only can it be very rewarding, it can give you valuable experience to mention on your CV or university application, enhancing your future prospects.

## WHERE CAN YOU VOLUNTEER?

- ▶ Charities
- ▶ Local businesses
- ▶ Community groups
- ▶ Voluntary organisations
- ▶ Public sector organisations e.g. hospitals

## WHEN IS IT 'NOT' VOLUNTEERING?

- ▶ If you're getting paid, other than expenses
- ▶ If you're helping a family member

## WHO CAN VOLUNTEER?

**Anyone!** The following factors may affect the type of volunteering you can do, but remember that there are volunteering opportunities to suit everyone, even if any of these are an issue. It's most important to find an opportunity that's right for you as an individual.

- ▶ **Age** – if you are under 18 or over 65 there may be some opportunities that are not suitable for you for insurance reasons, but those outside of this age bracket will still be able to find volunteer opportunities
- ▶ **Risk** – if the volunteer opportunity you want is deemed too dangerous for you by an employer, there are other roles you can consider, perhaps keeping the more dangerous roles in mind for a later time
- ▶ **Time** – you may find it difficult to fit volunteer work around other commitments, such as studying, in which case there will be smaller roles that can work around you
- ▶ **Transport** – the opportunities you're interested in may be too far for you to get to, so you might need to reduce your search to local opportunities instead

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO START VOLUNTEERING?

Some opportunities may allow you to start straight away, however you may have to wait for an interview, references or for a DBS check.

## HOW LONG WILL I BE EXPECTED TO VOLUNTEER FOR?

This could vary depending on the role, so make sure you find out the details and only commit to time you are able to give that doesn't affect your studies. Some organisations may ask you to commit to certain hours and others may be flexible.

## WHAT TYPE OF VOLUNTEERING WOULD SUIT ME?

In order to figure out what type of volunteering would be best for you, consider the following questions:

- ▶ What skills do you already have?
- ▶ What skills would you like to develop?
- ▶ What would you like to experience?
- ▶ How much time are you willing to commit?
- ▶ What areas of work are you interested in?
- ▶ What causes are important to you?
- ▶ Do you prefer to work on your own or in a team?
- ▶ Do you enjoy customer service?
- ▶ How much responsibility are you ready to take on?

## DO YOU NEED QUALIFICATIONS TO VOLUNTEER?

Not generally - the organisation should train you and support you to learn new skills. The best things you can bring are positivity and a willingness to help others.

## CAN VOLUNTEERING HELP ME TO GET A PAID JOB?

Volunteering can often be excellent preparation for a paid job. It gives you valuable new skills, experiences and confidence. When you look for a volunteering opportunity be sure to think about what you want to get out of it to make the most of your time there.

## WHERE CAN I FIND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES?

It's quick and easy to search online for volunteer roles. The following websites will be useful:

- ▶ **www.do-it.org.uk** – offers more information on volunteering, and you can search for opportunities
- ▶ **www.vinspired.com** – opportunities for people aged 16-25
- ▶ **www.nvconline.org.uk** – the website for Northampton Volunteering Centre

Alternatively, you can drop into your local volunteering centre, or go directly to organisations to ask about volunteering with them. Some examples of organisations that often look for volunteers include:

- ▶ Libraries
- ▶ Museums
- ▶ Charity shops
- ▶ Places of worship
- ▶ Youth clubs



**For help and support email  
the Futures team:  
[futures@northamptoncollege.ac.uk](mailto:futures@northamptoncollege.ac.uk)**

**Alternatively, you can visit the Futures  
Team based in The Lookout at Booth  
Lane, or pop in to Student Services at  
Lower Mounts or Daventry to make an  
appointment with an advisor.**