

# A-Z GUIDE TO VOLUNTEERING



Being a volunteer means that you freely give your time to support a charity or cause. Volunteering makes your community a better place and can lead to new friends and skills. Here's our A-Z guide to volunteering, and why doing good feels good.

**A AGE**  
Anyone of any age, can volunteer.



**B BENEFITS**  
Volunteering can help reduce the effects of stress, anxiety and loneliness; increase self-confidence and provide a sense of purpose.



**C CAUSE**  
What matters to you? Have you or a loved one been supported by a charity in the past? Many people choose to volunteer to support a cause that is personally important to them.



**D DIFFERENCE**  
Volunteers can make a huge difference to the charities and the communities they support.



**E ENJOYABLE**  
Volunteering should be something that you are happy to spend your time doing, even if your volunteering role is a challenging one.



**F FRIENDS AND FAMILY**  
If you are unsure about volunteering, ask your friends and family if they volunteer. What do they like about it? Could you join them? If they don't volunteer could you start as new volunteers together? Many organisations offer opportunities for families and friends to volunteer together.



**G GREAT OUTDOORS**  
Lots of organisations offer opportunities to volunteer outdoors. Spending time outdoors has a direct link to improved mental health and wellbeing.



**H HOME**  
If you are unable to travel, there are lots of ways that you can volunteer from home. Phone befriending, social media support and craft projects are just some examples.



**I INCLUSIVE**  
Volunteering should be open to everyone. If you do have any concerns or need extra support to volunteer, talk to your volunteer team and find out what support is available.



**J JOB PROSPECTS**  
Volunteering can greatly improve your job prospects. It looks great on a CV and helps develop new skills, interests and connections.



**K KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**  
You should be treated fairly and with respect. Many organisations offer a volunteer agreement which will clearly state what the organisation will do for you and what it expects of you as a volunteer.



**L LEARNING**  
Volunteering is an excellent opportunity to learn new skills and explore new interests. Most organisations offer volunteer training.



**M MICRO**  
Micro volunteering opportunities are great if you want to make a difference but are short on time. They are short and simple set tasks that require no training or specific skills.



**N NEW**  
New places, new people, new experiences and new skills!



**O OPPORTUNITY**  
Volunteering is not just about discovering the new, it is also an opportunity to share the skills and knowledge you already have.



**P PEOPLE**  
Many organisations offer social events and activities for their volunteers.



**Q QUESTIONS**  
If you have any questions about volunteering or the types of opportunities you can get involved with, visit our '[I want to volunteer](#)' webpage, for answers, top tips, current opportunities and inspiration.



**R RESPONSIBILITY**  
Trustees are also volunteers and are very important. They are a group of people who have legal responsibility for a charity's management and administration. Being a trustee does require significant commitment but it is very rewarding, and can make a huge difference to the success of a charity.



**S SUPPORT**  
All volunteers should receive support and guidance from a named person when volunteering. This person will make sure that you know what volunteering you are doing, when and also organise any extra tools or training you need to volunteer.



**T TIME**  
The amount of time you give and how often you volunteer is up to you. While a particular role may need you to volunteer at regular times, many organisations offer flexible volunteering that fits around your commitments, such as family or work.



**U UNPAID**  
Volunteering is not work and is not paid. However, you may receive expenses to cover things such as travel to your place of volunteering, food or drink or childcare costs.



**V VOLUNTARY**  
Volunteering means that you are freely giving your time to support a cause. No one can make you volunteer; it is up to you how, when and where you volunteer.



**W WEBSITES**  
Nearly all charities and organisations now have a web page or are on Facebook or Twitter. This is a great way to find out more information about a charity and what volunteering for them might involve.



**"X" MARKS THE SPOT!**  
If you want to volunteer to make a difference in your local area you can use our [Volunteering in North Yorkshire directory](#) to search for volunteer opportunities close to you.



**Y YOUTH**  
You can volunteer if you are under 18. However, there are extra considerations around the type of volunteer role and tasks you can do and the hours you can volunteer.



**Z ZOO**  
Yes, you can volunteer at your local zoo, but for lots of other exciting opportunities visit our [Volunteering in North Yorkshire \(VINY\) directory](#) to find the role perfect for you!

