

Skills, Development and Employment

Volunteering

Volunteering or work experience gives you the chance to learn new skills and improve those you already have. You will be helping others at the same time and helping yourself build a better future. Many people have moved into new types of work on the back of the volunteering they've done - and you can join them. ^(1.)

Choose carefully the organisation or group you wish to help. Make sure it does something you feel is important, something you feel passionately about. Make sure that the experience will improve your own chances of getting back into paid work. Volunteering is a win-win situation – you carry out a useful task and learn new skills at the same time.

- ⇒ If you're unemployed and looking for work, you can volunteer with a local organisation through the Work Together programme. Your Jobcentre Plus adviser will help you to find a volunteering opportunity. See your local Jobcentre Plus for more information on the Work Together programme. ^(2.)
- ⇒ The website www.do-it.org.uk enables you to search for a variety of different volunteering opportunities. If you know what you want to do you can search by your area of interest. If not, you can search for opportunities using your postcode to find what is available in your local area. If you need any support in volunteering contact the New Forest Volunteer Centre at Community First New Forest:
Sarah Suddrey - Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator
Community First New Forest
Archstone House, Pullman Business Park,
Pullman Way, Ringwood, BH24 1HD
Tel. 01425 482773, Fax : 01425 482666
Email: vol.bureau@cfnf.org.uk
www.cfnf.org.uk
- ⇒ Volunteering while on benefits: you are free to volunteer while you are receiving benefits. This is as long as the work you do is unpaid and you meet the rules of your benefit. Always check with your personal adviser before you start volunteering. Volunteering shouldn't affect your right to benefits, as long as the only money you receive is to cover your volunteering expenses, such as travel. There are no limits on the amount of time you can volunteer for, as long as you continue to meet the conditions of the benefit or tax credit you are receiving. For example, if you receive Jobseekers Allowance you must
- still be actively seeking a full-time job.
 - able to attend job interviews at 48 hours' notice.
 - be available to work at one week's notice. ^(3.)

Top Tips

- Think about what you want from volunteering – new skills, fun, a chance to contribute to a cause?
- Think about what you have to offer – enthusiasm, work skills, life skills.
- Work out roughly how much time you have to give, and how many times a week or month.
- Browse! The best way to find out what's available is to do some searches on the do-it website (www.do-it.org.uk). Use the quick search or try the advanced search.
- Access support, information and advice from you local volunteer centre.
- Remember that everyone can volunteer – whatever your skills, experience or background, you should be able to find an opportunity.
- Ask questions – don't be shy about asking questions as you go through the process of applying for an opportunity.
- Just try it – often the most difficult part of volunteering is making the first move, so be brave!

1. Work experience. National careers service. 2012. <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/workexperience/Pages/default.aspx> 2. Help with moving from benefits to work: work experience and volunteering. 2013. Gov.uk. <https://www.gov.uk/moving-from-benefits-to-work/work-experience-and-volunteering> 3. Volunteering while on benefits. nidirect.2013 <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/volunteering-while-on-benefits>

Volunteering

New Forest Volunteer Centre

If you need any support in volunteering contact the New Forest Volunteer Centre at Community First New Forest:

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Tel. 01425 482773, Fax : 01425 482666
Email: vol.bureau@cnf.org.uk, visit: www.cfnf.org.uk.

Work experience

Doing unpaid work experience, also known as volunteering, can bring you great rewards. Work experience gives you the chance to learn new skills and improve those you already have. To find out how work experience can help you visit:

www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/workexperience/Pages/default.aspx.

Do-it – Volunteering made easy

Do-it is a website that lists volunteering opportunities. Find ways to help in your community simply by typing in your postcode. www.do-it.org.uk.

Volunteer placements, rights and expenses

For information on your rights as a volunteer, expenses and further information visit www.gov.uk.

New Forest National Park

Volunteering opportunities with the New Forest National Park or for other organisations within the National Park. Visit www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/involve.

Volunteering in the New Forest

If you would like to find out about volunteering in the New Forest you can access one of the Volunteering Outreach Sessions held across the New Forest at Lymington Library, New Milton Library, Hythe Library, Ringwood Library and Fordingbridge Library. A Volunteering Ambassador will be able to give you help and advice on how to get started with volunteering, what's available locally as well as registering with the Volunteer Centre. For dates and further information call the Volunteer Centre on 01425 482773.