

CONGRATULATIONS

You've made the first important step towards becoming a volunteer. You're now on the way to joining 22 million other people in the UK.

This leaflet gives you some important information in finding the best voluntary opportunity for you; it also highlights some of the frustrations that you may encounter along the way.

Starting Point

By now you will have some opportunity sheets detailing specific volunteering opportunities. Have a read through this important information and then ask yourself some questions in order to decide whether this opportunity is suitable for you.

QUESTIONS

- Q- Why do I want to volunteer?
- Q- Am I available at the times needed, can I make the commitment required?
- Q- Does the description of the organisation and opportunity interest me?
- Q- Do I have the skills and qualifications necessary?
- Q- Does the organisation offer the training that I would like?
- Q- Does the organisation pay expenses?
- Q- Is this opportunity in the right location?

These will help you focus on the best volunteering opportunity for you.

DECISION TIME

Once you have considered all these questions you will be in a position to decide which opportunity suits you best. If you feel that you would like to make further enquiries about the opportunity, simply make contact with the organisation by telephoning the number or emailing the email address supplied asking for the named person at the top left of the information sheets. It may be a good idea to have a list of questions that you may like to ask the organisation. Remember that this is the first contact that you are making with the organisation, by doing this you are not making a commitment. You may wish to make enquiries with more than one organisation.

THE FRUSTRATIONS

Timescales

You may think that now you have decided to volunteer that you should be volunteering immediately, this is unlikely to be the case. Organisations all have their own recruitment procedure and some may be quite informal asking you to call in for a chat while others may ask you to complete an application form. Some organisations require a CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) check and these can take weeks to process and many others ask for references (which can also be time consuming). Sometimes the process can take a lot longer than you may have anticipated.

Competition

You might have not thought that volunteering could be competitive, it can be. Some organisations are in dire need of volunteers while others have waiting lists and only intake once or twice a year. Dependent on where your interests lie, don't be put off by the fact that the process can sometimes feel like a job interview. The organisation is trying to find the best people for that role.

Benefits

If you are in receipt of benefits we advise you to inform your benefits advisor of your involvement, being a volunteer should not affect your benefits. For further information, please refer to our "Volunteering and Your Benefits" leaflet or speak to one of the advisors at Volunteering Kirklees.

Being aware of some of the frustrations can help; don't let them put you off.

Enhancing your CV, making new friends, helping others and learning new skills may only be a phone call away.

For further information or if you have any queries/questions call 01484 226608 or drop in to the Centre between 10am-4pm.

Good Luck and Happy Volunteering!