



The Benefits of Volunteering

Did you know volunteering benefits individuals, as well as organisations, wider society, nature, the climate and more?

Volunteers help to transform communities of all kinds, as people work together on things they care about, driving positive change and improving others' quality of life. Volunteers can play a valuable role in expanding the reach of services, whilst helping them become high quality, person-centred and effective. Individuals who volunteer can not only impact on the world around them, but can also see improvements in their own health, wellbeing and connections to others.

Here's some of the key benefits for organisations and individuals, which can be helpful to think about if you're considering creating volunteer roles, recruiting new volunteers, or you're looking to volunteer yourself.

Benefits to Organisations

1. **Expanded reach and impact:** Volunteers can extend the capacity of organisations by contributing their time, skills and energy. Organisations can carry out more projects, provide additional services and reach a larger number of beneficiaries, broadening their reach and their impact.
2. **Diverse skills and expertise:** Volunteers bring a diverse range of skills, knowledge and expertise to organisations, which may include professional expertise, specialised skills or unique talents. This diverse pool of individuals can allow organisations to access a wide range of perspectives and tackle complex challenges more effectively.
3. **Enhanced community engagement:** Organisations that involve volunteers can often foster stronger connections with the local community, with volunteers acting as ambassadors and spreading awareness about the organisation's mission, values and initiatives. Their involvement helps generate a sense of community ownership and participation, encouraging others to get involved.
4. **Increased flexibility and adaptability:** Volunteers provide organisations with flexibility and adaptability in responding to changing needs and circumstances. They often quickly mobilising during times of crisis or in emergency situations and can also help organisations adjust their programs or services based on community feedback.
5. **Positive social impact:** Organisations that involve volunteers contribute to fostering a culture of social responsibility and civic engagement. By actively engaging in volunteer work, individuals can become more aware of social issues and take action to make a positive difference in their communities. This collective effort helps address societal challenges and promotes a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Benefits to individuals

Every individual has their own reason for volunteering, but here are some of the key advantages:

1. **Gaining new skills:** Whether studying, starting a career, looking for work or trying to improve promotion prospects, volunteering can be a great way to learn and develop the skills individuals need.
2. **Making new friends:** Sometimes life changes, like moving, job changes, or losing a family member or friend can leave us feeling a little isolated. Volunteering reconnects people within their communities and helps create new friendships.
3. **Mental health and wellbeing:** Volunteering has been linked to improved mental and physical health. It can boost happiness, reduce stress and provide a sense of purpose and fulfilment.
4. **Giving something back:** Many volunteers have benefitted from volunteer-engaging services at some time in their life or perhaps they feel that they have been fortunate and they would like to share that with others. Volunteering gives people an opportunity to give something back.
5. **Improving your confidence:** Sometimes life can knock individuals' confidence, for example losing a job or needing extended time off work. Other people may want to improve their personal skills. Volunteering gives individuals a chance to find their feet in their own time and at their own pace, allowing them to build their confidence in a way that works for them.

Durham Community Action understands that knowing where to start with volunteering can be daunting. Support in finding the right volunteer role or finding the right volunteers is available at: <https://www.countydurhamvolunteering.org.uk/>

Durham Community Action can also offer 1:1 support in looking for the right opportunity and advice in getting started by contacting volunteering@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk