

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS



The Volunteer Centre supports local residents to identify/explore/access volunteering opportunities that match their skills, interests and availability. As an organisation committed to equality and diversity, we recognise the contribution that all people can make as volunteers and so we welcome enquiries of interest from everyone. The Volunteer Centre is a broker. This means we promote opportunities on behalf of voluntary, community, and statutory sector organisations. Each organisation has its own application process.

VOLUNTEERING AND BENEFITS

You can volunteer while receiving benefits as long as your ability to meet the conditions of your benefit is not affected. You should inform the Jobcentre that you are planning to start volunteering. More information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/volunteering-and-claiming-benefits> and <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/volunteering-and-benefits>

VOLUNTEERING AND THE ASYLUM PROCESS

Home Office guidance states that volunteering may be undertaken at any stage of the asylum process. More information is available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803596/permission-to-work-v8.0-ext.pdf

SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING

VODA offers additional support for people with health conditions to access volunteering opportunities. This could include, for example, making phone calls, setting up appointments or accompanying to initial meetings.

Many organisations support the use of a Volunteer Inclusion Plan. This document can be completed together to discuss support needs.

VOLUNTEERING AND YOUNG PEOPLE

VODA supports young people aged 14 plus to make a difference in their communities. This could include, for example, support to contact organisations or accompaniment to initial meetings. Opportunities to join social action projects may also be available.

VOLUNTEERING AND CRIMINAL RECORDS

For many people with criminal records, the nature of the offence will have no bearing on your ability to volunteer. Many organisations welcome applications from a cross section of the community. However, certain offences may prevent you from volunteering in particular roles. This can depend on various factors such as the nature of the offence, when it took place, whether it is considered spent or unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, and the nature of the role.

Organisations should make information available on their policy and procedure on recruitment of ex-offenders.

Guidance on rights & responsibilities: <https://hub.unlock.org.uk/knowledgebase/volunteering-1/> and <https://www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/support-for-individuals/jobs-and-volunteering/>

NACRO Resettlement Advice Service Helpline: 0300 123 1999
Unlock Helpline: 01634 247350

Information on spent & unspent convictions: <https://hub.unlock.org.uk/knowledgebase/roa-long-list-of-sentences-and-disposals/> and https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299916/rehabilitation-of-offenders-guidance.pdf

Some roles are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. For these roles, organisations may ask about spent convictions or request Standard or Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

If you are on a barred list it is a criminal offence to apply for a voluntary role involving the relevant regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults. If you are on license or supervision it is part of the standard license conditions that you: **"Undertake only such work (including voluntary work) approved by your supervising officer and notify him or her in advance of any proposed change."** This means that whilst we may provide you with information about volunteering opportunities you must discuss these with your supervising officer before applying.

If you would like printed copies of the web documents listed in this document, we will be happy to arrange this.

This information is for general guidance only and does not constitute legal advice. If you have further questions, you may wish to seek legal advice.

