



Is it volunteering?

Introduction

This information sheet aims to define what volunteering is and isn't. It summarises the different types of volunteering that may be available and could be of interest to you.



Defining Volunteering

The Welsh Government Volunteering Policy (2015) defines volunteering as an activity which:

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

The national membership body for the third (voluntary) Sector is WCVA (Welsh Council for Voluntary Action). WCVA's stated purpose is 'To enable voluntary organisations in Wales to make a bigger difference together'. More information can be found at www.wcva.cymru.

Locally Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (www.scvs.org.uk) and Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service (www.nptcvs.wales) are the umbrella organisations for voluntary activity. They provide organisations and individuals information and support on all volunteering related matters.

Defining different types of volunteering

Informal volunteering is where an individual assists other individuals or community groups. Informal volunteers often may not think of their role as volunteering. Activities such as helping a neighbour (without pay) or assisting at a local event would be examples of informal volunteering.

Formal volunteering is where volunteering is carried out through a volunteer involving organisation. Appropriate training and support is given to carry out a specific role. Roles are many and varied and either SCVS or NPTCVS will be able to help find you a suitable opportunity. Roles can include supporting individuals or groups but can also help shape policies and services with communities.





Within formal/informal volunteering there are many roles and ways of volunteering, some are less obvious than others, and sometimes may not be considered volunteering. For example, an unpaid internship or work experience placement could be considered as volunteering if there is a community benefit. Another example is Employer Supported Volunteering; where employers allow staff to engage in volunteering activities during paid work time. As the staff members are not being paid specifically for the role it is still generally considered as volunteering.

You can read more about this here:



<https://wcva.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Employer-supported-volunteering.pdf>

Volunteering roles are many and varied. Often, they involve face-to-face engagement within a community, in roles such as befriending or working in a charity shop, there are however other roles that are not as visible but equally important such sitting on a local committee or undertaking administration tasks. Whatever your interests and skills are, it is likely there is a volunteering opportunity for you.

Volunteer involving organisations

There are many different types of organisation that provide volunteering opportunities including;

Charities, not for profit organisations, Community groups, Public sector and Private sector organisations.





Examples of what is/isn't volunteering

Thomas makes food deliveries for a charity, they pay him 25p a mile for using his car.

This is volunteering as the payment is to cover Thomas' expenses and is not for his financial gain. It is good practice for organisations to cover volunteer expenses.

Ashima is 18 and wants to study to be a social worker. She has to log 400hrs relevant experience to get onto the degree course. She is currently helping out at a youth club for looked after children for a local charity.

This is volunteering. Despite it being a requirement for Ashima to get on her course, it is not mandatory that she has to do it, and her role has a benefit to the community.

Emily helps out an elderly neighbour by doing her shopping each week. Although she doesn't ask for anything the lady insists on giving Emily £10 each week as a thank you.

Although she doesn't ask for payment, by accepting it Emily is gaining financially, therefore this would not be volunteering under the Welsh Government definition.



Contacts and links



I work with volunteers - WCVA

For more information about anything to do with volunteering contact your local Council for Voluntary Service.

Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service



01639 631246



www.nptcvs.org.uk

Swansea Council for Voluntary Service



01792 544006



www.scvs.org.uk



Welsh Government Volunteer Policy



West Glamorgan Volunteering Support is a multi-agency project creating shared resources to develop the knowledge, management and coordination of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas. It has been funded through the Welsh Government Volunteering Recovery Fund.

The project partners are:

Neath Port Talbot Council, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service, Swansea Bay University Health Board, Swansea Council, Swansea Council for Voluntary Service and West Glamorgan Regional Partnership.

For more information visit:

www.westglamorgan.org.uk/wgvs