



# Volunteer for a Career

Volunteering is a great way of making a difference to the lives of others and supporting your local community, but it also has a range of benefits for you, the volunteer. One way in which volunteering can benefit you is by providing opportunities to develop and progress your career ([for more details about the benefits of volunteering, please watch our animated video 'First Steps to Volunteering'](#)).

## There are a number of ways in which volunteering can support your career:



### Gain new skills and develop existing ones

Volunteering can play a key role helping you to build both the soft and hard skills which will advance your professional development.

Soft skills are the personal attributes needed to perform a job well. They relate to how you do your work and include things like communication skills, listening skills, time management, team work, and problem-solving. These skills are transferable – they can be used in many different jobs and career paths.

Hard skills are acquired through learning and include job specific skills such as IT proficiency and administration. These skills show you have the knowledge and ability required to carry out a role and can be gained through training received as a volunteer.



### Gain experience and boost your CV

Volunteering looks great on your CV. Employers want experience but when you first move into paid employment or are starting out in a new field, this is often difficult to get. Volunteering can give you that much sought-after experience. If it's management experience you are after – how about becoming a trustee? Looking to go into nursing – why not volunteer for your local health board?

Volunteering can also help fill in any gaps in employment and provide you with a reference for job applications. It can show employers that you are proactive by gaining experience in a field you would like to work in. It is also a great way to demonstrate your passion and gives the employer an insight into your personality and interests. In a competitive job market, volunteering can help you stand out from the crowd.





## Explore a field to discover if a career in this area is right for you

Before committing to entering paid employment in a particular field or enrolling on an educational course, volunteering lets you experience a sector to see if it is the right career path for you.

Thinking of a change in career? Why not try it out through volunteering before making the leap.

## Expand your network

Volunteering can help you build personal and professional relationships. Expanding your network can open up new prospects and opportunities for learning and growth.

## Tackle underlying barriers to work

Volunteering can contribute to improvements in health and wellbeing, helping to tackle underlying barriers to work. It can give you a sense of purpose and satisfaction knowing that you have made a valuable contribution to your community and is a great way of building your confidence and self-esteem in a flexible and supportive environment. It is a gentle way to develop in areas you might lack confidence without the pressure that comes with paid employment.



## Tips for turning volunteering into employment

- **Identify the skills you use when volunteering.** (You may be given a volunteer role description which outlines the skills involved in the role). This information can be used when completing a CV or job application to show your suitability for the job. Make sure to give examples of occasions when you used each skill and the outcome.
- **Speak to your volunteer coordinator about your future ambitions.** They may be able to offer you further training or opportunities which will help you advance professionally.
- **Ask for feedback.** Find out what you've done well and how you can develop further to help your progression.
- **Record your progress.** Keep a record of any training you have undertaken as part of your volunteer role and what you have learnt. File any certificates, compliments received or any other information which evidences your impact and achievements.



**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](http://www.westglamorgan.org.uk/wgvs)**