

Facts and Myths about Volunteering



Want to volunteer or involve volunteers?

It may be easier than you think. Although some rules do get in the way, much of the problem is caused by misunderstanding.

Through dispelling some common myths, this leaflet will unravel some of the red tape that is standing in your way.

Myth: You can only volunteer for sixteen hours a week if you receive state benefits.

Fact: Your volunteering hours are not limited, as long as you continue to meet the conditions of your benefit(s).

You must talk to Jobcentre Plus, your local council or whoever pays your benefit(s) before you start volunteering.

Myth: Only UK citizens can volunteer.

Fact: Anyone from an EU or EEA country and refugees are allowed to volunteer. Asylum seekers can currently only volunteer for a registered charity or voluntary organisation but this may change. People from outside the EU or EEA can volunteer if their visa allows it.

For more information visit volunteering.org.uk/visas

What next?

For more information on volunteering, contact your local Volunteer Centre.
www.volunteering.org.uk/finder

To find a volunteering opportunity now, visit the Do-it website.
www.do-it.org.uk

Support us in working with government to cut red tape.
www.facebook.com/freevolunteeringfromredtape

Myth: Voluntary groups that work with children and vulnerable adults have to check every volunteer with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

Fact: Checks should only be made for roles that meet the CRB's eligibility criteria. If an application for a check is not justified, you could be breaking the law, as well as creating unnecessary bureaucracy.

The complete list of eligible posts is available at crb.homeoffice.gov.uk

Myth: People with criminal convictions cannot volunteer with children and vulnerable adults.

Fact: Very few people are barred from employment or volunteering. Only certain convictions will stop someone from volunteering with children and vulnerable adults. As with any volunteer, a CRB check should only be made if the role meets the CRB's eligibility criteria.

Visit volunteering.org.uk for more info on involving people with criminal convictions.

Myth: If you volunteer to clear snow from paths you're at risk of legal action under health and safety laws.

Fact: There's no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your home or from public spaces. It is also very unlikely you would be held legally responsible for any injuries on the path if you cleared it carefully.

Guidance on clearing snow and ice from pavements is available at direct.gov.uk