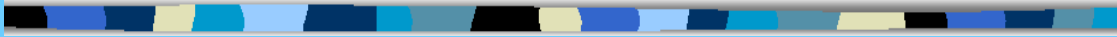


Volunteer Centre Fife

A Guide To Volunteering



www.volunteeringfife.org

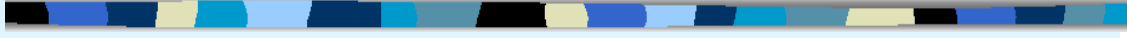


This Guide outlines the procedures involved in becoming a volunteer and answers questions you might have.

At the outset, we want you to know that if there is anything connected with your volunteering experience you are unsure of, confused by or just want to talk about, we will be more than happy to discuss it with you.

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Volunteer Centre Fife

“Our vision is a Fife where volunteering is universally valued and recognised, with the overwhelming majority of people choosing to volunteer and having a fulfilling and worthwhile experience.”

Volunteer Centre Fife exists to

- take a lead in working with others to develop volunteering
- represent the interests of volunteering
- maintain and improve the effectiveness and quality of volunteering
- make it easier for people to volunteer
- respond to current issues and emerging needs
- enhance the capacity of organisations through training and development

Why volunteer?

What can you gain?

- new skills
- a different route to learning
- real work experience
- improved self-confidence
- new friends
- a chance to try something new
- an exciting replacement for paid work
- awards and accreditation
- enhanced CV
- variety - the choice is yours
- flexibility - fits in with your lifestyle
- reduced feelings of isolation
- real references for work
- a reason to get up in the mornings
- **FUN!**

"It's amazing what you find to talk about. It's just lovely, I really look forward to it each week." (elderly carer for husband with dementia)

What are the benefits to others and to the community?

- volunteering benefits all sectors of the community
- families experiencing problems can gain through practical help from a volunteer or just having someone to talk to
- young people can learn from the support of experienced adults volunteering in a mentoring role
- lack of transport to appointments or for social visits can be eased by volunteer drivers
- older people can gain an insight into the world of younger volunteers by welcoming them into their lives
- feelings of isolation for people living on their own or with disabilities can be alleviated by volunteer befrienders
- through Employer-Supported Volunteering the image of local companies in the community is enhanced

*Communities which work together
thrive together*

What can volunteers do?

The list is endless!

Teaching, playing, entertaining, IT, gardening, DIY, acting as escorts, supporting families, assisting people who have disabilities or are isolated; offering company, passing on skills, lending a sympathetic ear; working with older people, youngsters and those in-between.....

Passionate about a particular charity? We will do our best to find you a placement with that organisation.

Sometimes it is surprising the ways in which volunteers can use their skills.

For example, a cat rescue centre can use volunteers for 'hands on' work with the animals, to help out in their charity shop, or to help maintain the grounds around the centre.

Time, skills, experience
everyone has something to offer

"Put aside preconceptions: volunteering is work experience with the added possibility that the act of choosing to be a volunteer can show even greater initiative and commitment." Mike Killingley, Senior Manager Executive Education (HSBC Bank)



What About Young People ?



What is the MV Award?

It is a nationwide award for young volunteers, aged 16 - 25. It is endorsed by the Scottish Government and offers certificates for 50, 100 and 200 hours of volunteering completed within two years.

How do I register for an MV Award?

- A **paper version** of the registration process is available from the Youth Development Worker at Volunteer Centre Fife or it can be downloaded from www.volunteeringfife.org
- An **on-line version** is available www.mvolunteeringpassport.org.uk If you are already volunteering, get in touch with the Youth Development Worker to register. If you are not yet volunteering, contact your local Volunteer Centre to find an opportunity.

What counts as volunteering hours?

All types of volunteering can qualify for the MV Award - helping with organisations and charities, youth groups, fundraising events, helping the elderly, peer tutoring at school.

Volunteering hours include 'hands-on' volunteering, training and meetings. You can volunteer at more than one place and include all your hours.

More Information

If you have any queries or would like further information contact:
Volunteer Centre Fife, 10 St Brycedale Avenue, Kirkcaldy, Fife KY1 1ET.
Tel: 01592 645540, youth@volunteeringfife.org

How do I get started?



Follow the simple steps below

Start volunteering!

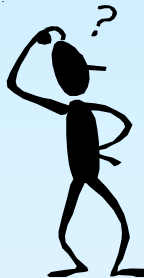
Organisation will take up references, advise on training and complete Disclosure (police check) form if required.

A member of staff contacts organisations to set up a suitable time for you to visit and will accompany you if you wish

Meet a member of Volunteer Centre Fife staff, complete a Registration Form and discuss volunteer opportunities

Contact Volunteer Centre Fife to arrange an informal chat about volunteering or check out www.volunteeringfife.org for all our latest opportunities

Where do I start?



Remember, you can always come back to the Volunteer Centre if there's anything you're not sure about, you fancy a change of scene or if you do not hear from an organisation within 2 weeks of your appointment

What is expected of volunteers?

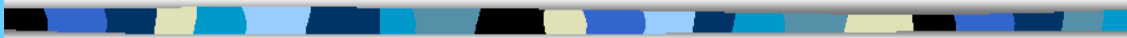
- to be reliable
- to make a realistic commitment of time
- to express your views when appropriate
- to be a good listener
- to observe rules of confidentiality
- to attend training sessions if required
- to ask for advice and assistance to enable you to carry out the duties of your role
- to recognise your own limitations
- to keep confidential any information you may have access to, whether given to you willingly by an individual or through the placement organisation/agency
- to attend Support and Supervision sessions as required
- to be familiar with and follow policies and procedures
- to give as much notice as possible if you are unable to carry out your voluntary work. Volunteers are entitled to holidays and days off, too!

"It's got me thinking outside my own shell"

"It's broadening my horizons in all directions"

What is expected of organisations?

- to offer advice and information about suitable volunteering placements
- to make clear what they expect of volunteers and to allow you to get involved at your own pace
- it is anticipated that organisations will provide out-of-pocket expenses and have insurance in place, but please check before starting your volunteer placement
- to have policies and procedures in place to help you carry out your voluntary work
- to listen openly to your views and comments and to treat your suggestions seriously
- to provide adequate support and assistance
- to be available should you wish to discuss any aspect of your volunteering experience
- to support you if you decide to take time out from your voluntary work, whatever the reason
- to provide a reference where possible
- to offer exit interviews and support you in your decision
- to show you respect and appreciation
- to promote equal opportunities and diversity



Training & Support Disclosures Confidentiality

Training & Support

Some organisations will provide support and induction for volunteers. Others will require volunteers to undergo specific training and this will be explained to you before committing yourself, e.g. Home-Start, Citizens Advice and Rights Fife, Victim Support, Fife Advocacy. Volunteer Centre Fife also provides a range of training programmes for volunteers. Details on our website: www.volunteeringfife.org

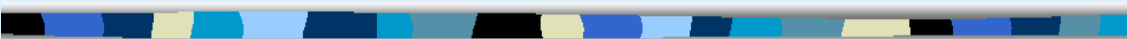
Disclosures (Police Checks)

If you are to be volunteering with young people or vulnerable adults the organisation taking you on will ask you to complete a Disclosure Form. You should be aware that it can take a few weeks for Disclosures to be processed and this may delay the date you can start volunteering.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from volunteering.

Confidentiality

Organisations must respect the confidentiality of information given to them by volunteers, unless specific permission is granted to pass it on to another agency.



State Benefits and Volunteering

Are you allowed to volunteer while receiving state benefits?

The short answer is **Yes** you can volunteer and, in nearly all cases, your benefits will not be affected.

However, there are some cases where your benefits can be affected – for example, if you receive a subsistence allowance.

There are also some guidelines and rules which claimants should be aware of. Some of these rules are general and others relate specifically to a certain type of benefit.

What you have to do

If you are receiving benefits, you must always talk to your benefits adviser before you start any volunteering.

Details correct at time of going to print. Please check with the Department of Work and Pensions (www.dwp.gov.uk) or Job Centre Plus (jobcentreplus.gov.uk) for latest information.

Moving On

Why might you move on?

New challenge, change of personal circumstances, gaining employment, moving into education

- **Please give your placement organisation as much notice as you can if you intend leaving so that they can arrange to take on another volunteer**
- **If appropriate, please discuss with the organisation your reasons for leaving**
- **If you wish to discuss other volunteering options please contact the Volunteer Centre**

As a volunteer, you have a unique contribution to make to our organisation and the groups/agencies where we place volunteers, so we welcome and value your comments, both positive and negative.



Volunteer Centre Fife

is part of the national network of
Volunteer Centres and provides advice
and information about volunteering
and encourages people to
engage in voluntary work

Central Fife

10 St Brycedale Avenue
Kirkcaldy KY1 1ET
Tel: 01592 645540
E-mail: kirkcaldy@volunteeringfife.org

West Fife

29a Canmore Street
Dunfermline KY12 7NU
Tel: 01383 732136
E-mail: dunfermline@volunteeringfife.org

East Fife

Volunteer House,
69-73 Crossgate,
Cupar KY15 5AS
Tel/Fax: 01334 659134
E-mail: cupar@volunteeringfife.org

