

HOW TO: FIND A COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERING ROLE

Sharing your time and skills for free, for the benefit of others, is an incredibly generous act of love and care, but where do you start? We've created this guide to help you make a start in finding out how to get involved in something that blesses others, in your community or further afield.

WHERE DO I START?

Step 1: Ask yourself some key questions...

- **What is your capacity?** Knowing how much time you are able to offer (even if it's just a rough idea) as you start to look for a role will help you to narrow down your search and filter out the ones that require more time than you're able to give at present e.g. are you looking to help with something as a one-off, or for a regular commitment?
- **What do you care about?** Think about whether there is a particular group of people you want to help or issue you want to help to combat.
- **What skills and knowledge do you have?** Many volunteer opportunities ask that individuals have certain skills, therefore knowing where your skills and experience lie will be really helpful in working out what you can help with or not e.g. if you don't know how to drive then taking up a driving role would be difficult! However, volunteering can also be an opportunity to learn new things and sometimes organisations offer training for the positions they are looking to fill.

Step 2: Research volunteer opportunities in your community

Who are the groups or organisations who involve volunteers in your local community already? They might be registered charities or more informal community groups who are active in making things happen. Here are some tips for finding them...

- **Take a walk** around your community – what do you notice? Have a read of community noticeboards; ask in the community centre or library.
- **Connect with your community online** to find out what's already happening. Use Google maps to see what organisations there are and visit their websites; join local Facebook groups or create a profile on 'Nextdoor' to get recommendations from neighbours too.
- **Ask a friend or relative** if they know of any opportunities that might connect with your interests.
- **Use a volunteer listing website** to research opportunities.

Below we've listed some local and national sites that list current opportunities within local communities:

- www.thenoise.org.uk/volunteer365
- www.voscur.org/volunteers
- www.candobristol.co.uk
- www.do-it.org
- www.charityjob.co.uk/volunteer-jobs



Step 3: Gather the details of the role & offer your help

For informal volunteering or a one-off task, it's likely you will just need to contact the organiser to find out details of where you need to be and when. Some volunteer roles require you to go through an application process, usually involving an application form and sometimes an interview too.

Step 4: Go!

Once your offer of help has been accepted, it's time to make a start! There may be training you are invited to complete before you start, but otherwise, we encourage you to keep an open mind and be ready to help.