

Volunteering and Gap Year Activities

Volunteering

What is volunteering?

This is when you choose to give your time and energy to benefit other people without being paid for it. It is all about making a difference to other people's lives and having fun as well.

As a volunteer, you could undertake a range of activities, for example, fundraising for a charity, caring for animals or helping people who are ill or who have disabilities. Some volunteering experiences are accredited to national standards, for example ASDAN Awards or UK Investing in Volunteers. This makes it easier for recognition as a transferable workplace skill.

If you

- do something for a family member
- are given money apart from your expenses
- are under contract to work (this does not include any 'volunteer agreement' you may have)

you are NOT considered to be a volunteer.

Why do volunteering?

Thinking about why you want to volunteer may help you to focus on what you want to do. Volunteering could help you in many ways, for example:

- Improve your chances of getting a paid job.
- Show employers that you can keep regular hours and handle commitment.
- Develop your self-confidence through learning new skills.
- Give you an insight into particular job roles.
- Help you to make career choices.
- Boost your CV or university application (accreditation of UCAS points).
- Practice and demonstrate the skills you have.
- Help you to stay active and healthy while giving something back to your community.
- Meet new people, grow your network and get references.
- Give you the chance to gain a recognised qualification, such as an ASDAN Award, first aid or health & safety qualification.

What are the opportunities?

Whatever your skills and interests, there is likely to be something you can do or a project in which you can become involved. Here are some examples of the more popular projects:

- **Social Services:** Helping the elderly, the disabled, children with special needs or other vulnerable people in times of personal crisis. An example is the 'Let Us Play Scheme' in Fareham which takes volunteers from the age of 14 to help out on holiday play schemes with disabled children.
- **Health:** Working for the NHS as a hospital guide, within a nursing home, DJ on Hospital Radio or for St John Ambulance assisting with first aid.
- **Sports:** Helping to set up and run a sports club or assisting with coaching activities or organising play schemes during holiday time.
- **Environmental / Conservation:** Restoring footpaths, street cleaning, clearing beaches, working for the RSPCA or RSPB, Blue Cross, PDSA or a working holiday with the National Trust.
- **Archaeological Digs:** English Heritage sites, National Trust, Museums and Young Archeologists.
- **Performing Arts:** Assisting with production of performances and helping out behind the scenes. For example, assistant at Groundlings Theatre Company in Portsmouth.
- **Other Community Projects:** Working with the Police or Trading Standards as a mystery shopper or in underage sales, for example "The Edge" project.

Opportunities in each of the above sectors are available across the Hampshire area and you will be able to find out exactly what is on offer by checking out the website <https://do-it.org>, looking at other websites listed below or by calling your local Volunteer Centre. Some roles will require specific experience and skills. For many of the caring opportunities, you may need to be aged 16 years or older and a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check may also be required before you start. If a DBS check is required, it will be discussed in more detail at your interview as the volunteering provider usually organises this. You may be required to work for a minimum number of hours per week and on specific days so before applying it is important to think about the amount of time you can spare and when you will be available.

Although there are no age limits on volunteering it can sometimes be difficult for young people to find suitable opportunities, particularly for those who are under 16 because of insurance and safeguarding issues. However, there are many other projects and activities in which you could get involved in, either through your school, college or in your spare time. Here are a few suggestions:

- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (for 14 – 24 year olds)
- The Scout or Guiding Association
- Armed Forces Cadets (Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force)
- Membership of Student Council in School
- Joining the Local Youth Council (influence local youth policies)

- School / College prefect or mentor or litter collector
- National Citizenship Service for 16 and 17 year olds
- Music projects – organisation of gigs, band practice or learning how to be a DJ or play a musical instrument.
- Youth Theatre – opportunities to perform or work backstage for young people aged 14-21.

Involvement in any of these activities could benefit you in the same way as volunteering on any of the above projects. If you volunteer in the community or at events on a regular basis you may be able to obtain an ASDAN qualification.

You could also start up your own project if you identify a need in your local community and apply for funding through the **O2: Think Big** project (www.fundingforall.org.uk/funds/o2-think-big). This scheme offers funding and training to young people aged 13 to 25, who have an idea for a project that will improve their local community.

How do I get started with volunteering?

To find out more about being a volunteer in your area, you could log onto the website <https://do-it.org> and search for suitable opportunities by entering your post code and interests. Your search should bring up all the registered volunteering opportunities in your area. All the websites listed on page 4 include useful information about volunteering and opportunities.

Other ways to find out about volunteering?

- Ask friends, family, teaching staff and tutors.
- Ask your careers adviser in school or college for some ideas.
- Call into your local Volunteer Centre or look in your local library, community centre or youth centre.
- Check local newspapers for volunteer adverts and listen to radio stations who often broadcast bulletins of organisations who want volunteers.

What are expenses?

Expenses are costs you have to pay as a direct result of volunteering. Expenses can be things like: a bus or train fare for you to get to or from your volunteering; the cost of somewhere to stay if you have to be away from home overnight because of your volunteering; the cost of your meals while you are volunteering; the cost of any special clothing, equipment or materials you need in order to carry out your volunteering. You may be given expenses to cover any of these costs and should discuss this with the volunteer organisation you are working with to understand their policy.

The National Citizenship Service

The National Citizen Service (NCS) is open to all 16 and 17 year-olds in England. It helps you build your skills for work and life, while you take on new challenges and meet new friends. It runs in the spring, summer and autumn. You'll have a short time away from home and take part in a team project. NCS brings together young people from different backgrounds and helps them develop greater confidence, self-awareness and responsibility. It encourages personal and social development by working on skills like leadership, teamwork and communication. Participants develop a social action project to deal with a local issue and spend 30 hours putting the project into action. Further details can be found at www.ncsyes.co.uk.

Other Volunteering Websites

- <https://vinspired.com> Information for young people seeking volunteering opportunities with search facility to find local opportunities. Helps young people to set up their own project through the **Igniter** project.
- www.volunteering.org.uk Useful information on all aspects of volunteering including the benefits.
- www.hampshirevolunteers.org.uk Gives an overview of voluntary projects across Hampshire and includes useful information on volunteering with links to volunteer centres across Hampshire.
- www.nationaltrust.org.uk/holidays/working-holidays Details on working holiday opportunities - conservation and environmental.
- www.lups.co.uk Holiday play scheme for disabled children at St Francis School in Fareham.
- <http://musicfusion.org.uk> Information on music projects in the Hampshire area.
- www.solentyouthaction.org.uk Details of opportunities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for young people, especially those with special needs.
- <http://volunteer.portsmouth.gov.uk> Volunteering in the Portsmouth area.
- www.hampshire.police.uk Search for police support volunteers and special constables under "Join the Team" or check out Police Cadets if you are aged 13 to 17.
- www.porthosp.nhs.uk Click on "Get Involved" to find out more about the types of opportunities available at Portsmouth hospitals.
- www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/area/hampshire Hampshire Youth Parliament - get involved in politics and help to influence local youth policies.
- www.yac-uk.org The Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) is the only club for young people interested in archaeology. There is a network of local clubs across the UK for 8–16 year olds.
- www.gva.org.uk/individuals/volunteering/loud-proud **Loud & Proud** is a volunteering group for young people aged 16-25 in Gosport and Fareham, looking to give a good impression of our age group by helping people through volunteering.
- www.dofe.org The DofE gives all young people aged 14-24 the chance to develop skills for life and work, fulfil their potential and have a brighter future.



Local Volunteer Centres

Southampton Voluntary Services, Kingsland Square, Southampton, Hampshire.
SO14 1NW.

Tel: 023 8022 8291

Website: www.southamptonvs.org.uk

Portsmouth Together, Civic Offices, Floor 3, Core 3, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth.
PO1 2AL.

Tel: 023 9284 1280

Website: <http://volunteer.portsmouth.gov.uk/contact>

Gosport Volunteer Centre, Martin Snape House, 96, Pavilion Way, Gosport.
PO12 1FG.

Tel: 023 9258 8347

Website: www.gosportvolunteercentre.org.uk

Fareham Volunteer Centre, 163 West Street, Fareham, PO16 0EF

Tel: 01329 223140

Website: www.farehamaction.org.uk/volunteer

Havant Volunteer Centre, The Pastoral Centre, Petersfield Road, Havant, Hampshire,
PO9 2HU.

Tel: 023 9248 1845

Website: www.havant.gov.uk/community-and-living/volunteering

Volunteer Action (Arun & Chichester), The Town Hall, Clarence Road, Bognor Regis,
PO21 1LD.

Tel: 01243 864220

Website: www.vaac.org.uk/volunteer-now





Gap Year Activities

What is a Gap Year?

In previous years a gap year was traditionally seen as the activity of “taking time out before university”. Nowadays this is not the case and gap years can be taken before, during and after university or after a couple of years of employment. Gap years come under many guises - backpacking, a career gap, a short gap year, travelling, time out, a sabbatical - but they all mean the same thing.

A gap year is constructive time out to travel in-between life stages. It usually means travelling, volunteering or working abroad. Often it can mean all three. Gap years are now seen as a way:

- To improve your CV.
- To gain relevant work experience in a specific field, with employers actively employing people who have taken a gap year.
- To try new experiences and cultures.
- To work out what is important to you, getting a work life balance.

Top Tips for your Gap Year

1. Do your research - speak to people who've been there and done it. Have a search around the site and ask questions.
2. Take time to plan and prepare - it can take 9-12 months to plan your gap year and to raise the funds, so make sure you give yourself time to prepare.
3. Budget, but don't get hung up on saving money at all costs so that you miss out on once-in-a-lifetime opportunities - have a reserve of money to fall back on. A gap year is about enjoying yourself - don't forget you can do that at home too!
4. Be open-minded - a gap year is all about new experiences and developing yourself both personally and professionally.
5. Use the time to make contacts - this is an important time to develop networks that could help you in your future career. Get on message boards and see if anyone is planning a similar kind of trip as you. Be friendly, get chatting, and start planning your gap year!
6. Enjoy - oh, and most importantly, enjoy it...

(Extract taken from Gapyear.com – August 2015)

Gap Year Websites

- www.gap-year.com A social network and travel advice website committed to providing you with everything you need to know about taking a gap year. Created by backpackers, for backpackers, offering expert advice on travelling, volunteering and working abroad, all tied together with inspirational ideas, opportunities and products.
- www.gooverseas.com A site which provides an insight into working overseas and offers an extensive database of programmes including volunteering, internships and teaching opportunities across all areas from disaster relief to advocacy and human rights.
- www.yearoutgroup.org The Year Out Group is an association of leading year out organisations that was formed in 1998 to promote the concept and benefits of well-structured year out programmes, to promote models of good practice and to help young people and their advisers in selecting suitable and worthwhile projects.
- www.wse.org.uk World Service Enquiry provides information and career advice to people who want to volunteer or work in international development.
- www.vsointernational.org VSO is the world's leading international development organisation that uses volunteers to fight poverty and reduce inequality.
- www.bunac.org BUNAC offers a range of work abroad and volunteer abroad programmes. BUNAC has been helping young people work and volunteer abroad since 1962. Popular gap year destinations include: USA, Canada, New Zealand, Nepal, Australia, Britain, China, South Africa and many more.
- www.campamerica.co.uk Camp America is a cultural exchange programme that gives you the chance to spend your summer living and working on a summer camp in the USA.
- www.britishexploring.org British Exploring takes young people on charity expeditions to the world's most extreme and remote locations.
- www.coralcay.org Coral Cay Conservation is an award winning not for profit organisation that specialises in the organisation of community based coral reef and tropical forest expeditions.
- www.frontier.ac.uk Frontier has over 300 gap year, adventure travel and volunteering abroad placements worldwide. Placements from 1 week to 1 year, you decide what's right for you.
- www.raleighinternational.org Raleigh International runs meaningful sustainability projects which are designed to create a positive impact in the communities and areas in which they take place, and will increase the leadership, teamwork and employability skills of volunteers. Volunteers are trained and supported throughout the programmes which can include community, environmental and adventure projects. Raleigh's vision is to create a global community of inspired young people committed to working together regardless of age, social background, culture and nationality, to build and maintain strong and sustainable communities across the globe.



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