



Plymouth Guild

Providing Support, Advice and Volunteers

Volunteer Centre

Before you volunteer think ...

Before you begin volunteering there are a number of things you should think about to help you find a volunteering role that is right for you.

Why are you doing it?

If you are clear why you want to volunteer then you are more likely to know what you want to do. All volunteers are motivated to some extent by the notion of wanting to do good but often there is more to it than that. There is no need to feel guilty or uncomfortable about considering your own needs. If you are doing work that is interesting to you, you are more likely to give more to your volunteering role and to get more out of it.

Reasons for volunteering

Some of the reasons why people volunteer:

- To meet new people
- To help others
- To improve your community
- To gain work experience
- To learn a new skill
- To practice a language
- To put a hobby to good use
- To use natural talents
- To build your self-confidence
- To feel useful
- To have fun!

What do you want to do?

Think about the type of activity that interests you. For example, ask yourself:

- Do you want to get involved with people, issues or the environment?
- If people, which people? young people (what age)? old people? young offenders? people with special needs/learning difficulties? mental health issues? etc
- If an issue, which issue?

- Do you want to work on your own or as part of a group?
- Would you be able to work in close, emotionally demanding relationships or would you rather do more practical work?

How much time can you give?

Can you make a regular long-term commitment or do you want to get involved for a shorter period of time? Time commitments can vary from a concentrated one-off effort for an event or specific project, to several hours each week or month, to a full time commitment. Be realistic about how much time you can spare and over what period of time. Do not over commit yourself. A reliable volunteer for a few hours a month can be more useful than someone whose availability is unpredictable and difficult to plan for.

What skills do you have to offer?

You may have certain skills or talents that you would like to put to use in the course of your volunteering. For example financial skills, musical ability or IT skills. You should think about these skills when considering what role you would like to do. There are many voluntary positions which require no specific skills or talents and many more where training is provided. You should be clear about whether you want to use skills you already have, are willing to participate in training to develop new skills or a combination of both!