

I'm the difference. I volunteer.

Find an opportunity that's
right for you and be the
difference in your
community.



Volunteer Centre
East Sussex

Why volunteer?

Volunteering enriches our community and you can help make it happen. If you're thinking about volunteering you're in good company. Thousands of people volunteer in East Sussex in a huge variety of roles for a large number of organisations. And there are hundreds of volunteering opportunities across East Sussex available to people of all ages, abilities and interests.

Volunteering can...

...**help you make friends and feel more connected** to your community.

...**give structure to your week** and something to look forward to

...**improve physical and mental health** and enhance your overall sense of wellbeing.

...**provide you with the opportunity to learn new skills** and try new experiences that can boost your confidence. You could also gain qualifications that could look good on your CV.

...**add to your sense of self-worth** and achievement by enhancing the lives of others and your environment.

Above all, volunteering is about you choosing to give your time and talents to an activity that appeals to you. So when you're looking for a role, think about what you'd like to achieve through your volunteering.

“Volunteering two mornings a week gives structure to my life, as well as a sense of purpose and achievement.”



What kind of volunteering?

Here are some ideas to help you decide what kind of volunteering you'd like to do. This list isn't exhaustive – there are so many kinds of opportunities out there!

I have professional skills

- Charity trustee (incl. treasurer)
- Accountancy
- Web design and maintenance
- Marketing and communications
- Fundraising/events organisation
- Building and trade
- Creativity and arts
- School governor
- Magistrate or local councillor

I'm a people person

- Befriender
- Social group helper
- Front of house reception/guide
- Driver
- Café volunteer
- Taking part in events
- Advocate, counsellor and providing advice
- Youth support and children's activities

I'd like to volunteer in an office environment

- Reception volunteer
- Office administration
- Computer and IT
- Bookkeeping

I'd like to volunteer with animals

- Animal care in a rescue centre
- Horse and donkey sanctuary
- Dog walker
- Animal fostering

I'd like to do something active/outdoors

- Conservation
- Gardening
- Sports
- Walk leader
- Practical / DIY
- Food projects
- Retail / market stall
- Youth group activities – cubs, scouts, brownies, guides

I'd like to volunteer in heritage & arts

- House or exhibition guide
- Gallery attendant
- Arts, crafts, music group facilitation
- Buildings and grounds conservation
- Museum curating, archiving and display
- Festivals and events

How do I find an opportunity?

Volunteer Centre East Sussex promotes and supports volunteering in the county.

There are many opportunities available and these are regularly being updated, so we do not provide this information in the form of printed lists. Instead these opportunities can be found on **Do-it**, the national online volunteering database.

It's easy to see all these opportunities on the new revamped website. Here's how to **Do-it**:

1. Go to **www.do-it.org** and choose the **Start Volunteering** link in the navigation menu at the top of the page.
2. From the drop-down lists **select your interests and what you would like to do**. Then enter your location and the distance you'd be prepared to travel and click **Submit**. At this point, you'll be presented with a list of opportunities that meet your selection criteria.
3. Choose **View** to read the full role description of opportunities that appeal to you.
4. To apply for an opportunity online, choose **Register My Interest**. You will need an email address to do this. Your expression of interest will then be sent to the organisation responsible for the opportunity and they will be in touch with you to tell you more. Alternatively, if you do not have an email address you can contact the organisation directly.



No internet access or unfamiliar with using the internet?

No problem! You can visit your local library to go online using their computers. The libraries also have Computer Buddies who can show you how to use the internet to carry out your search. To book a session with a Computer Buddy, contact your local library on 03456 080 196 or pop in.

Other ways to find opportunities

In addition to searching **Do-it**, you could try searching the internet using your interests as key words. You can also:

- ⇒ Contact your local town or parish council to find out if there are any local initiatives in which you could get involved (e.g. local environmental, arts or heritage projects and local events).
- ⇒ Contact your local village hall, community centre or information centre to find out what's going on locally where volunteers might be involved.
- ⇒ Keep an eye on your local paper for volunteering-related events and contact the organisers to see if you can join in as a volunteer.
- ⇒ Contact your local Council for Voluntary Service: 3VA for Eastbourne, Wealden and Lewes district, HVA for Hastings and RVA for Rother. They have a wealth of knowledge about volunteer involving organisations in their local areas.
- ⇒ Think about what you'd really like to do as a volunteer and approach an organisation in your area of interest to see if you can create that role for yourself!

Or, if you live in these areas, you could contact one of our partners:

Rye Volunteer Hub

Please ring for an appointment:
07722 298 692

www.rva.uk.com/rye-volunteer-hub

Uckfield Volunteer Centre

01825 760 019
uckfieldvolunteer@gmail.com
www.uckfieldvolunteer.org.uk

Tried it all but can't find anything suitable? Contact us:

Volunteer Centre East Sussex

01323 301 757
info@vces.org.uk
www.vces.org.uk



Frequently Asked Questions

How much time will I have to give?

As a volunteer, the amount of time you give is entirely your choice, so think about how much time and how frequently you'd like to volunteer before you start looking for a role. Then see which roles appeal to you. Even if you work full time or you have a busy lifestyle, you could still find an opportunity that suits.

How do I find out more about an opportunity?

The easiest and quickest way to find out more about a role is to contact the organisation and speak to the person who organises the volunteers. Then try out the role for a while to see if it suits.

What skills will I need?

This will depend on the role. Some roles don't need any specific skills and you will learn whatever you need to know as you take part, but others may require a particular skills set – the role description and organisation will be able to tell you more.

Will I get my travel costs reimbursed?

Volunteer involving organisations are encouraged to pay reasonable out of pocket expenses to support people to volunteer for them (i.e. to cover travel cost from your home to where you volunteer). There is, however, no obligation for them to do this, so we recommend that you discuss this directly with the organisation if you feel that it may be a barrier for you.

If I volunteer will my benefits be affected?

There are no restrictions on volunteering whilst on benefits as long as the only money you receive is to cover your volunteering expenses, such as travel from home to the volunteering location. There are no limits on the amount of time you can volunteer for as long as you continue to meet the conditions of the benefit or tax credit you are receiving. It's always advisable, however, to discuss your choice of voluntary activity with your benefits adviser before you start. For more information, we'd suggest taking a look at the government's Volunteering while Getting Benefits: www.gov.uk/government/publications.

I am under 18. Can I still volunteer?

Due to the nature of many roles and the experience and skills needed to carry out the activities, it can sometimes be difficult to find a volunteering opportunity if you are under 18. Limitations are also influenced by health and safety risk assessments and restrictions required for insurance purposes. If in doubt, please contact us for more advice on 01323 301 757 or at info@vces.org.uk.

I have a criminal record/police caution. Will this affect my ability to volunteer?

Not necessarily, although you may need to declare any criminal convictions to the organisation that you volunteer with. If you are working with young people or vulnerable adults you will be asked to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which will inform the organisation of your criminal record. We advise you to be up front about any convictions as this will not necessarily mean that you cannot volunteer, but it may limit the type of volunteering you can do.

The role I am looking at requires DBS clearance (a police check). How do I get one?

If the organisation that you want to volunteer for requires you to complete a DBS check the organisation will advise you on how to go about this. It is best practice that the organisation pays for your DBS check.

I am a support worker looking at volunteering on behalf of my client. How can you help me?

Please visit our website at www.vces.org.uk/volunteer/support where we provide useful advice and resources for support workers.

For more answers to Frequently Asked Questions on volunteering, please visit our website at www.vces.org.uk/volunteer/faqs.

“ I get a huge sense of satisfaction that I am helping and contributing. ”



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We volunteer.



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Volunteer Centre East Sussex is hosted by 3VA, registered charity number 1096788 and company limited by guarantee in England and Wales number 4637252.

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