



Guide to...

Volunteering



WHY VOLUNTEER?

Previous research by TimeBank and [Reed.co.uk](https://www.reed.co.uk) found that 80% of employers value volunteering on a CV.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING:

- Gain new skills or develop and improve existing skills;
- Demonstrate to employers how you enhanced your skills beyond your degree;
- Learn about different roles to assess what you might enjoy doing in a future career;
- Develop contacts and networks;
- Gain relevant experience to support with your future career goals;
- Enhance your CV;
- Positive impact on your wellbeing (source: [NCVO](https://www.ncvo.org.uk)).



DECISION MAKING

WHAT SKILLS MIGHT I WANT TO DEVELOP OR IMPROVE ON BY VOLUNTEERING?

Perhaps you want to learn new skills or utilize your existing skills in a new setting. Consider if there are particular skills and/or experience that would benefit you in achieving your career goals.

WHAT 'CAUSE' DO I WANT TO VOLUNTEER FOR?

As volunteering requires you to give up your time for free, start by considering what you are passionate about, what you enjoy doing, what interests you, or what type of 'cause' you want to give your time to.

IF VOLUNTEERING TO HELP OTHERS, WHO DO I WANT TO HELP?

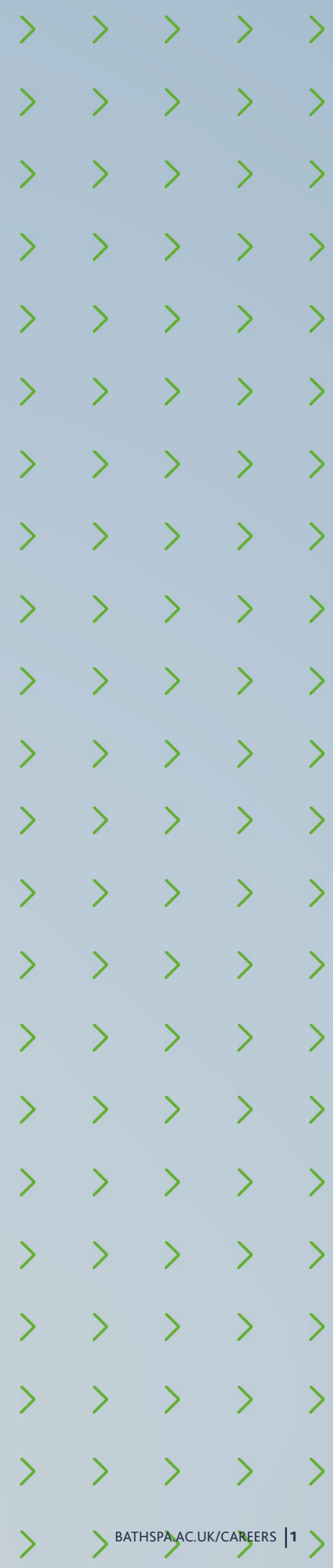
If you want to volunteer for a 'cause' that helps people, consider whether there is a specific client group you want to support. For example, perhaps you want to work with children, with the elderly, with adults with disabilities or with refugees.

HOW MUCH TIME CAN I COMMIT TO VOLUNTEERING?

Consider whether you want to volunteer on a regular basis, become a volunteer for a specific event or activity, or both! If volunteering regularly, how much time can you give to volunteering each week/month? If you don't have lots of time, micro-volunteering is a great way to volunteer as little as a few minutes of your time. Examples include: [Missing Maps](#) (map areas to support humanitarian organisations) or [Be My Eyes](#) (sighted volunteers helping blind and low-vision people lead independent lives via an app).

WHERE DO I WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Volunteering opportunities exist all around the UK as well as abroad. Where you volunteer will be dependent on the type of volunteering experience you want, such as what you want to do, how you want to help and how much time you can commit. If you are interested in volunteering abroad consider: where, when, and for how long you want to volunteer.



VOLUNTEERING IN THE UK

The majority of volunteer opportunities will be with charities. There are over 195,000 UK registered charities, but the vast majority are small charities (employing less than 30 staff), so be open-minded with your volunteer search.

FINDING CHARITIES:

- **Direct Gov Find a Charity** - use the 'Contact and Trustees' left-hand link to find the charity's website.
- **Charity Choice** - search the charity database by interest area.

**BATH SPA UNIVERSITY
VOLUNTEERING:** [Bath Spa University Students' Union Volunteering](#).

VOLUNTEERING WEBSITES:

- [VInspired](#)
- [Do-it \(National Volunteer Network\)](#)
- [CharityJob Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [Volunteering Matters](#)
- [Volunteer Centre Finder from NCVO](#)

EXAMPLE WEBSITES ADVERTISING SPECIFIC SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES:

- [Sport and Recreation Alliance Volunteering \(Sports Volunteering\)](#)
- [Creative Lives \(Arts Volunteering\)](#)
- [Environment Job Volunteering](#) or [TCV Conservation Volunteers](#)
- [HotBox Events \(Music Festival Volunteering\)](#)

VOLUNTEERING ABROAD

There are three main approaches to arranging volunteer opportunities abroad. Whichever approach you want to use to arrange your volunteering abroad, see 'Example questions to ask overseas volunteer providers' at the end of this section.

CHARITIES AND NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NOT-FOR-PROFIT)

Some charities, not-for-profit organisations and NGOs (non-government organisations) place volunteers abroad into areas and communities where there is greatest need. Potential volunteers 'apply' for a volunteer placement, often through a formalised application and recruitment process. Costs to the participant can include air fare, living costs, and visas, although some organisations may cover these costs.

Examples include:

- [VSO \(Voluntary Services Overseas\)](#)
- [Red Cross](#)
- [Raleigh International](#)
- [IVSGB \(International Voluntary Service\)](#)
- [AIESEC \(Global Volunteer Programme\)](#)
- [NGOs Directory on WANGO](#)
- [WOOFING Volunteer Exchange \(Worldwide\)](#)
- [British Council](#)
- [Year Out Group](#) – advertises opportunities with charities and not-for-profits (some member companies, are however, private companies)

THIRD-PARTY ORGANISATIONS (FOR-PROFIT)

Third-party organization providers arrange opportunities for volunteers to participate in community projects, often in developing countries. Volunteers typically pay a fee to take part in a volunteer programme and often incur additional costs such as air fare, visas and living costs. Fees vary widely. It is recommended that you undertake thorough research to ensure the impact you have supports meaningful projects and enhances local communities, rather than creating over dependency on foreign volunteers. There are many for-profit organisations running volunteer programmes abroad and there is no single website advertising all opportunities, so use effective Google searches based on where you want to volunteer. You can also search [Year Out Group](#), which advertises a range of opportunities, including those of for-profit companies.

DO-IT-YOURSELF!

Not all volunteering opportunities need to be arranged via an established programme. It is possible to do your research and directly contact charities and NGOs in the area you are travelling to in order to arrange your own volunteering experience. You can search for [NGOs Worldwide on the NGO Directory](#).



EXAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK OVERSEAS VOLUNTEER PROVIDERS

Deciding on volunteering abroad can be a big step, and there is lots of choice when it comes to types of opportunities. Consider what questions you want to ask volunteer providers so you understand what exactly is involved and can make a fully informed decision. Example questions could include:

- How long has the organisation [you intend to volunteer with] been in existence?
- Is it a charity or a for-profit organisation?
- What have other volunteers said of the organisation and project?
- Why was the project set up? Is it responding to a locally-defined need?
- Who set up the project? How is the local community involved in the project (if at all)?
- Does the organisation have a link with a local community partnership organisation?
- Is the project creating a need for constant volunteers and what is the impact of this?
- Is a volunteer the best person to fill the role (or could the role be filled by community members)?
- What has the project achieved?
- How is the project monitored and evaluated?
- How does the organisation support volunteers (e.g. training, in-country support, de-brief)?
- If you are paying to participate as a volunteer, where exactly does your money go?
- Does the organisation provide a written contract that outlines what is expected of you, of the organisation you are volunteering with, and any or all of the costs you are likely to incur?



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