

ACCELERATE

youth volunteering edinburgh



PROMOTING YOUTH VOLUNTEERING: GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS.



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Why promote volunteering to young people?

Volunteering is a vital resource for young people as it aids personal development in a number of ways:

- It helps to develop new skills- both soft and job specific
- It increases confidence
- It forges new relationships
- It can provide structure for those with chaotic lifestyles
- It develops a sense of community responsibility.

As a result of this development young people might experience additional benefits:

1, Volunteering can help young people achieve their desired University or College place. It is a relevant addition to the Work Experience section of their UCAS Personal Statements, particularly if it is directly related to the course they wish to do.

www.ucas.ac.uk/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement/whattoinclude#work

2, It can provide relevant work experience for those looking to move into the job market, making them more employable in an ever more competitive environment.

3, Volunteering complies with all four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence helping young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, and effective contributors but it particularly develops responsible citizens. There is evidence that if a young person becomes involved in volunteering there is a good chance they will start a lifelong cycle of volunteering that will enrich both their own life and that of their community.

I wouldn't have got
into University if I
hadn't volunteered!
Lynne, 19

I feel so confident
now!

Gemma, 15

Awards for Youth Volunteering

As well as volunteering to receive the benefits described above young people may also decide to volunteer in order to take part in an awards programme.

The Saltire Award

New in 2011 this government endorsed award recognises commitment to volunteering at a variety of levels. A young person can progress through the stages or enter/exit the programme where they chose. It is completely flexible, accessible to young people regardless of ability, circumstance or lifestyle.



The Saltire Award consists of 4 sections:

- 1, The Challenge (12-15yrs):** this is an introduction to volunteering, undertaken as part of a team. It takes the form of a volunteering taster such as a fundraising event or community clean up day. Young people will be supported to design their own challenge by a teacher/ youth worker/ adult enabler or they can opt in to a pre-arranged volunteering session.
- 2, The Approach (12-15yrs):** this encourages a young person to volunteer as an individual. Certificates are awarded at 10 and 25 of individual activity.
- 3, The Ascent (14-25):** this award is based on an individual making a sustained commitment to volunteering and encourages the recording and evaluation of learning. Certificates are awarded at 50,100 and 200hrs
- 4, The Summit (16-25):** this will be awarded to young people who have not only achieved the Ascent but have exceeded expectations. Young people can be nominated

for these awards by the organisations they volunteer for, recipients will be chosen by Saltire Ambassadors.

Saltire Ambassadors (16-25): having completed the Ascent young people can become Saltire Ambassadors assisting in a variety of possible roles: helping organise challenge events, organising award ceremonies, doing promotional workshops etc.

For more information contact:

accelerate@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

Youth Achievement Awards

Youth Achievement Awards enable young people (14+) to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors, recognising young people's contributions in a variety of settings including youth work, volunteering, active citizenship, alternative curriculum and formal education.

The awards recognise four levels of responsibility taken by young people participating in activities that interest them. Bronze is about young people **taking part**, at Silver young people **assist** - sharing responsibility with others, at Gold they take individual responsibility to **organise**, and at Platinum they undertake training and **lead**. Youth Achievement Awards can be used within existing youth work programmes. The Awards are accredited by ASDAN and are credit rated and leveled by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

See: www.youthscotland.org.uk/projects/youth-achievement-awards.htm

Dynamic Youth Awards

The Dynamic Youth Awards are peer assessed awards recognising the contributions and achievements of young people in the 10 to 14 age group.

Key Features of the Award:

- They are peer assessed: young people assess and award certificates as part of an Award Group
- They are externally accredited by ASDAN, the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

- They are non-prescriptive: the awards complement existing quality youth work practice providing a framework, not a programme
- They encourage and support youth participation: the process encourages young people to take increasing responsibility for their own future
- They are progressive: the awards encourage continuing participation and increasing responsibility.

For Further information visit:

www.youthscotland.org.uk/projects/dynamic-youth/dynamic-youth.htm

Duke of Edinburgh

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is for young people aged 14-25 and consists of a programme of activities. It has three different levels: Bronze (14+), Silver (15+), Gold (16+) and there are a number of elements involved:

- Service (volunteering) - giving something back to your community e.g. picking up litter
- Skills - could be anything really from dress making, cookery, filming studies
- Recreation - could be a sport you already play or an activity you want to take up
- Expedition - trip where you camp overnight and fend for yourself
- Residential Project - (for Gold Awards only)

See: www.dofe.org

Breaking down barriers

A need to promote volunteering also exists as, despite the benefits discussed young people are often unwilling to volunteer for a variety of reasons:

-They are reluctant to work for free

If money is the goal it is worth pointing out the long term affect volunteering might have on earning potential e.g. if it helps you get a place at College or University it may help you into a higher paid job in the long run.

-They see it as 'slave labour'

Many young people believe if they volunteer they will be given mundane tasks that no one else in an organisation wishes to do. This is not the case; there are a huge variety of different volunteer roles available and young people are able to choose what kind of work they want to be doing depending on where their interests lie.

Whilst they cannot pay them, organisations value their volunteers greatly; volunteers increase their capacity allowing them to do work that otherwise would not be done.

-They do not think they are old enough

In principle anyone can volunteer as long as they are able to do the task required. However, in reality, it **is** harder for under 16's to find opportunities. This is often the result of individual Volunteer Involving Organisation's (VIO's) capacity, policy and insurance. Under 16's should not be dissuaded by this and seek additional support and advice from appropriate sources if they have difficulties.

-They do not have time

Some young people do not have time to volunteer, others may find they do. There is often a misunderstanding about how much time volunteering requires. Some think they would have to donate a great deal but actually volunteering opportunities start at as little as a couple of hours a month. Volunteers are also entitled to holidays which they may decide to take over busy periods.

-It's just 'not cool'

Volunteering has an image problem; many young people see it as something people like them just don't do, that it is just for those who are elderly or unemployed for example. This is untrue, thousands of young people across Edinburgh volunteer successfully in interesting and meaningful positions.

-They cannot afford travel expenses etc

Volunteers should not be disadvantaged in any way by their volunteering and most organisations will reimburse travel costs.

-They are concerned about Police checks

Young people who wish to work with vulnerable groups will need to be checked under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme, whatever their age. This is the VIO's responsibility and there is no cost involved to the individual. For young people who do have a criminal record, a record check can be daunting. Many offences do not prohibit a person from volunteering; each case is different and whether or not a young person will be accepted for a role will depend on the offense itself and the individual policy of the VIO.

Volunteers must also be prepared to wait several weeks for their record check. This requires them to plan ahead.

-They 'can't be bothered'

Volunteering is a choice not a punishment and people should not be forced to volunteer. However, it is important that young people have access to information about volunteering benefits and options so they are able to make an informed decision.

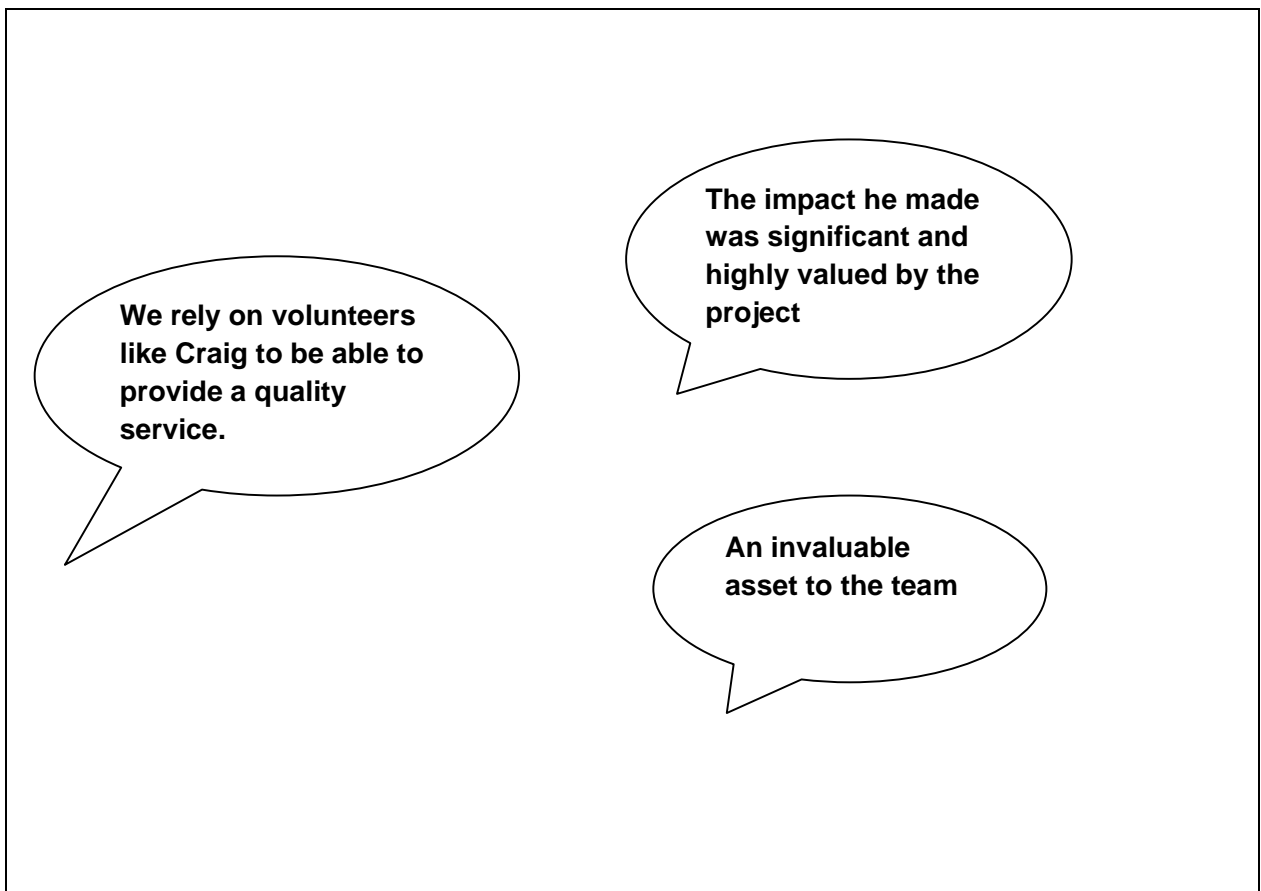
Why Do Organisations Want to Work with Young Volunteers

Young people can bring a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and commitment to a volunteering role and add a new dimension to the work of a VIO.

Young people can:

- Provide peer support to beneficiaries
- Help provide a voice for other young people so that their views and experiences other charity can help shape future work
- Help VIO's develop partnership and networks with other organisations that support young people e.g. schools and youth groups
- Help promote their work to the wider community e.g. parents, residents

This is what some of the organisations that work with young volunteers have said about their young people:



Types of volunteering

Volunteers can get involved in numerous activities these include:

- Administration/Office work
- Advice/Information giving
- Advocacy/Human rights
- Arts (music/drama Crafts)
- Befriending/Mentoring
- Campaign/Lobbying
- Care/Support worker
- Catering
- Charity shop/Retail
- Community Development work
- Committee work
- Computing
- Conservation/Gardening
- Fundraising
- Library Information Management
- Marketing/PR/Media
- Playschemes/Afterschool Clubs
- Practical/DIY
- Short term volunteering (event assistance etc)
- Sports/ Outdoor activities
- Youth Work

And Much, Much More

How to find a Youth Volunteering Opportunity

There are a number of ways a young person might get involved in volunteering:

1, Use the facilities of the Volunteer Centre Edinburgh

- They can search opportunities that are advertised by VIO's across the city on the Volunteer Centre website www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk, paying particular attention to any age restrictions.
- They can drop into the volunteer centre between 9.30am and 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am- 4.00pm on a Friday. Here volunteering advisers will be on hand to offer guidance and answer any questions. This is particularly recommended for under 16s who may struggle to find opportunities.
- The Volunteer Centre can also be contacted for any further information on volunteering and volunteering opportunities on 0131 2250648/ admin@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

2, Get involved at school

Most High Schools, Colleges and Universities offer a variety of in house volunteering opportunities including fundraising committees, paired reading, overseas opportunities, sports coaching etc. These opportunities are often an excellent first step into volunteering and eligible for the same awards.

3, Just Ask!

Some volunteering opportunities are very popular and these VIO's will not need to advertise. This is particularly true in the case of volunteering with animals for example. Here the best thing to do is to ask. The organisation may have something suitable coming up or they might be able to put the interested party on a waiting list.

A young person might be interested or particularly passionate about the work of a particular charity, if they are not advertising why not ask them if there is anything they can do to help?

Volunteering: A lesson plan

Volunteering can have an enormous impact on the lives of young people; it provides them with the work experience that has become increasingly necessary in accessing the job market or gaining University places. It can also provide stability in chaotic lifestyles, help establish a sense of community and active citizenship or simply be a fun extracurricular activity. Despite this young people often feel that volunteering is not for them for a variety of reasons: many do not see the point in working for free, some believe they will not be given worthwhile roles and others consider it 'uncool' or have considered it but do not know how to get involved.

The following lesson plan is designed to challenge these attitudes to volunteering and demonstrate that young people can and do volunteer in meaningful roles that help them get ahead.

Equipment required: A4 card or paper, pens, a white board, DVD player and projector

Room Set Up: young people should be seated on chairs, in a circle in the middle of the room

Exercise one

Volunteering: what, who, why and where? (15 mins)

Aim:

- to introduce the concept of volunteering
- to trigger discussions about volunteering
- to introduce the idea that volunteering can be a positive experience

Divide the class into groups of four and give each group a set of A4 cards printed with the following statements.

1, What is volunteering?

2, Who volunteers?

3, Why do people volunteer?

4, Why don't people volunteer?

5, What jobs do volunteers do?

Ask each group to feed back their answers. Challenge any misconceptions and offer counter arguments for 'why people don't volunteer' answers.

Example Answers

1,

The most common answer is 'volunteering is working *for free*' and is correct but you might add 'yes it is working for free *for a charity*'. Volunteering is often long-term and working for free for a profit making organisation long-term, like a bank for example, is ethically questionable. Pupils might offer alternative answers like 'working for your community' which are also correct. Elicit further answers until you are sure the class fully understands the concept.

2,

Groups may give a variety of answers to this question: the elderly, retired people, the unemployed etc. It is important to emphasise that there are no age restrictions on volunteering. Young people do volunteer! In reality, however it is often harder to find opportunities under 16 and these young people may need some extra help. They can contact service like the Volunteer Centre Edinburgh for additional information and should not be disheartened.

3,

- to improve their CV/ get a job or university place more easily
 - To get an award e.g. MV Award, Duke of Edinburgh Award
 - Because they are passionate/ interested in something
 - To contribute to the community
 - To use spare time well
- (young people may give other valid answers)

Young people are often initially motivated to volunteer by self promotion rather than it being a selfless act and these arguments are usually the most convincing to those resistant to the concept.

4,

- You don't get paid
 - They don't have time to
 - They don't want to/ can't be bothered
 - They don't know how to
- (young people may give other valid answers)

Each of these answers is important and needs to be challenged. Raise any that are missing from this set.

You don't get paid but volunteering will help you get into college or get a job so it may help you earn more money in the long run.

Some people do not have time; others have more time than they think. There is often a misconception about how much time volunteering takes up- it can be as little as 2 hours a week. When people's schedules are busy, exam time for example, they may also be able to take a break as long as they give organisations adequate notice, ensuring there is enough time for everything!

If they don't want to or can't be bothered that's ok – no one makes you volunteer but it is important to consider all the benefits of volunteering before making this decision.

They don't know how:

- *they can get involved in volunteering through school*
- *they can use the Volunteer Centre Edinburgh website www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk*
- *they can drop into the Volunteer Centre where advisors can help them look for opportunities*
- *they can approach charities they are interested in and ask if they are able to volunteer*

5, They do a huge variety of things:

- Work in charity shops- this is often the first volunteering opportunity mentioned and is good for learning retail skills but is often unpopular with young people looking for 'more exciting' opportunities. These are out there!
- You can work in conservation, assisting on wildlife reserves
- You can work with the elderly, befriending or assisting at nursing homes
- You can work with children in play schemes, afterschool clubs and nursery's
- You can work as a peer educator on issues like drugs and alcohol
- You can work with uniformed organisations like Scouts, guides etc
- You can work with animals with organisations like Gorgie City Farm
- You can coach sports
- You can help out at special events like festivals or marathons
- And much more.... (see Appendix 3 for some additional ideas.)

Opportunities are available to provide experience and develop transferable skills that will support most job applications.

Exercise 2

The Virtual Peer Educator (15 mins)

Aim:

- to provide real life evidence of the above discussion
- to show young people really do volunteer
- to provide inspiration

The video provided will show real life young volunteers discussing what they do and what they have gained from it.

Exercise 3 (10 mins)

Aim:

- To aid information absorption
- To have fun
-

Volunteering Fruit Salad

This is a variation on the traditional fruit salad game.

- 1, Ensure the class are sitting in a circle
- 2, Remove one child's chair and stand them in the middle of the circle.
- 3, Ask the central young person a question about volunteering, see page X for suggestions
- 4, If the answer is right say GO. Everybody moves seat- they must not take the seats immediately next to them.
- 5, If they get it wrong they it's time for a forfeit (see page X).
- 6, Repeat at your discretion.

OR

Win, Lose or Draw

This will allow pupils to put their artistic skills to the test.

1. Divide the group into two teams.
2. Each group takes it in turns to send up a member of their team (it should not be the same person twice).
3. The volunteer is given a volunteering role to represent in pictures on the whiteboard (see options in appendix X)
4. Both teams are given the opportunity to guess. The group that gets it right gets a point.
5. Repeat at your discretion

OR

Volunteering Hangman

This is a short exercise and excellent time filler if there is little time left at the end of a session.

1. Divide the group into two teams
2. Put a volunteering related word on the board-hangman style (for ideas see appendix X)
3. Give each group a turn at guessing a letter
4. Proceed with hangman as usual
5. Both groups can shout out guesses, whoever gets it right gets a point
6. Repeat this with 5 words – one team will emerge as the winners.

One round of hangman might also be used in 'Activity time' in the Accelerate board game.

Any questions?

Any questions posed should be answerable using this pack. If not, why not set finding the answer as a task using the Volunteer Centre Edinburgh as a resource?

Appendix 1: Volunteering Questions

Many of the games above involve asking volunteering based questions at certain points. These might include:

Q. Can you give me a definition of volunteering?

A. Giving your time for free to help a charity (accept variations)

Q. Give me two examples of the type of volunteering you can do*

A. Conservation, charity shop etc.

Q. Give me one reason why someone might volunteer*

A. To be nice, to learn new skills, to improve CV, to get a job, to be an active citizen etc (accept reasonable answers)

Q. What does MV stand for?

A. Millennium Volunteer

Q. How many hours do you have to do for your 1st (or 2nd or 3rd) MV certificate?

A. 50 (100/200)

Q. Why don't some people volunteer?

A. Not enough time, do not know how to find a placement etc. Accept sensible answers.

Q. What is a disclosure check?

A. A police record check

Q. How old do you have to be to volunteer?

A. you can volunteer at any age so long as you can do the job

Q. Give me one way you might find a volunteer placement?*

A. On the volunteer centre website, coming to the Accelerate drop in, asking the organisation.

Q. When is the Accelerate drop in?

A. Friday 2-4pm

*These questions may be repeated to elicit different responses.

Appendix 2: Forfeit Options

There are a number of forfeit options that might be used.

For shy/challenging groups	<p>Try:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Star Jumps • 3 Press ups • Rub your tummy and pat your head for 5 seconds • Say the days of the week backwards
For confident/engaged groups	<p>Try:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing a line from a lady Gaga song • Impersonate a chicken • Recite a line from a nursery rhyme • Do the Twist • Act like a chimpanzee • Do your best impersonation of Vicky Pollard • Imagine you just scored a goal in the world cup-celebrate

Pick forfeit options you think your group will find most entertaining.

Appendix 3

Volunteer roles

- Volunteer cookery teacher
- A peer educator teaching other young people about drugs and alcohol
- A hospital volunteer- helping to run shops and cafes in the hospital
- A volunteer carpenter- making objects for a social enterprise
- A Riding for the Disabled volunteer- helping care for the houses and the young people
- An administration volunteer
- A website designer
- A bicycle engineer
- A 'cuddle corner supervisor', introducing young people to animals
- A conservation volunteer
- An activities supervisor in a home for the elderly.
- First Aid volunteer

Can the young people come up with their own?

Appendix 4

Suggestions for volunteering related words:

- Millennium volunteer
- Conservation
- Charity shop
- Community Development
- Active Citizenship
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Peer Support
- Volunteer Centre Edinburgh
- British Heart Foundation (any well known charity name)

Can the young people come up with their own?