



Voluntary work after brain injury

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Please help us to continue to provide free information to people affected by brain injury by making a donation at www.headway.org.uk/donate. Thank you.

Introduction

Voluntary work can be very rewarding and enjoyable. Helping others and doing something productive can be a good way to boost self-confidence and help you back into a working routine. It can also be a good way of trying out things you have never done before and finding out your strengths and weaknesses. There is the possibility that voluntary work may lead to paid work eventually, but even those who won't be able to return to employment can still benefit from volunteering.

Looking for voluntary work

There are many types of volunteering opportunities available, so you can usually find something that you will enjoy doing and something that matches your interests or skills. For instance, you might want to volunteer in your local community, or for a charity with a cause that you are interested in, or for your local sports club. There are lots of different things to consider, so you might wish to start off by talking your options through with a family member, a friend or your local Jobcentre. Some parts of the country also have Volunteer Centres. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has a search tool to help you with locating your local Volunteer Centre and also offers information on the benefits of volunteering. For more information, visit the NCVO website at www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering.

There are a number of online databases and organisations that can also help you with your search for volunteer work.

- **Do-it** offers information about volunteering and also has a search function that allows you to specify your search according to what type of work you are interested in and when you are available. For more information, visit do-it.org/.
- **Charity Job** is a database of charity sector voluntary jobs. For more information, visit the website at www.charityjob.co.uk/Volunteer-Jobs.
- **Reach** can help with identifying volunteering opportunities depending on your skills. For more information, visit reachskills.org.uk/volunteers.



- **Volunteering Matters** offers volunteering opportunities in the local community. It also runs a range of programmes for disabled individuals and a young disabled people's work shadowing programme. For more information, visit volunteeringmatters.org.uk/.
- **Leonard Cheshire** runs a project called Can Do, which supports 16 to 35 year old disabled individuals with volunteering in their local community. For more information, visit www.leonardcheshire.org/.
- Your local **Citizens Advice** can give information about volunteering services or opportunities in your local area
- Your local **Jobcentre** might be able to offer advice on volunteering. They may also have a Disability Employment Advisor available who can offer advice about volunteering after brain injury.

Volunteering organisations by area

- **Volunteering England** offers information about volunteering opportunities to help with running events and activities taking place across England. For more information visit www.volunteeringengland.org.uk/.
- **Volunteer Scotland** offers information about volunteering opportunities across Scotland. For more information visit www.volunteerscotland.net/.
- **Volunteering Wales** offers information about volunteering opportunities across Wales. For more information visit www.volunteering-wales.net/.
- **Volunteer Now** offers information about volunteering opportunities across Northern Ireland. For more information visit www.volunteernow.co.uk.
- **Association of Jersey Charities** offers information about charity volunteering opportunities across Jersey. For more information visit www.jerseycharities.org/.
- **The Association of Guernsey Charities** offers information about volunteering opportunities across Guernsey. For more information visit www.charity.org.gg/Volunteer.



General tips for volunteering

Volunteering can be a very positive experience if you pick the right job that accommodates for your needs. Below are some general tips to consider.

- Consider how much time you have to give to volunteering. Remember that volunteering is optional; you shouldn't feel obliged to do more work or offer more time than you wish to give.
- Organisations should accommodate for any health needs that you have within the work environment. If you have any concerns about the amount of support that you are getting to accommodate for your health needs, you can make contact with the Health and Safety Executive. For more information, visit www.hse.gov.uk/contact/.
- Consider volunteering with a friend or a family member. They may be able to offer extra support and keep you motivated with your tasks.
- Be realistic about how your brain injury has affected you. For instance, if you experience fatigue, you should avoid volunteering for long hours, or at times of the day where your fatigue is likely to set in. Or if you are sensitive to noise, try to avoid volunteering at places where you will be exposed to a noisy environment.
- Remember that you can often reclaim money that you have spent on things such as food and travel when volunteering
- Don't be afraid to ask for feedback from your employer, as this can be very useful if you are considering applying for jobs in the future

More information on other aspects of returning to work is available in the following Headway factsheets, available from www.headway.org.uk/information-library:

- Adaptations to the workplace - a guide for employers
- Financial support when returning to work
- Making a complaint about treatment at work after brain injury
- Returning to work after brain injury
- Returning to education after brain injury
- Self-employment after brain injury
- A guide to the Equality Act 2010



the brain injury association

factsheet

To discuss any issues raised in this factsheet, or to find details of our local groups and branches, please contact the Headway helpline free of charge on 0808 800 2244 (Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm) or by email at helpline@headway.org.uk.

You can also find more information and contact details of groups and branches on our website at www.headway.org.uk/supporting-you.

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