

Volunteering for Young People – Advice and Information

Young volunteers can bring a skill set that can really benefit a voluntary organisation. There is no legal reason why a young person aged 16 or 17 cannot volunteer. However, children are classed as a vulnerable group, so any organisation that takes on young volunteers must be careful to protect you.

It is important that when you are looking for a volunteer opportunity you are aware of your own safety and rights within that opportunity, and that you feel comfortable with what you are being asked to do. Parental permission if you are 16 or under must be sought by the organisation you are seeking to volunteer with before you take-up that opportunity.

Community Connections Richmond, managed by Richmond CVS www.richmond cvs.org.uk, delivers volunteering services in Richmond for people 18+. This briefing is intended to give you some ideas about where, if you are under 18, you might look to find volunteering opportunities, and some of the things you should be aware of when choosing an option that's right for you.

This is the first update since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 and we will update it again as the current situation evolves and more charities and organisations feel confident to go back safely to their workplaces. The availability of volunteering opportunities has been severely affected due to the restrictions and risks associated with the pandemic, and particularly for young people as under 18s have not had access to vaccinations. Organisations are required to set out their Covid Safety Precautions and apply them across their workforce including volunteers, so please be aware of this when seeking a suitable opportunity.

What do you want to do?

A good place to start is to think about what your interests are, what you like to do, what skills you are looking to develop, the time commitment you have available. Often things you are already involved in – your sports club, uniformed group, school activity – may have opportunities for you to help out. If you are looking to complete your D of E, be clear what's required of you, how many hours you have to achieve, what skills you will need to be able to demonstrate through the assessment process. Does the volunteering opportunity support you to achieve this? Are you looking to develop skills and experience for your CV? Make a list of all your requirements and this will help you search more effectively for an opportunity that's right for you.

Opportunities

Vinspired provides you with inspiring high quality social action opportunities to gain new experiences and skills for life. Specifically targeted at young people, the site offers you the chance to:

- Log your hours and work towards awards
- Use your volunteering CV to apply for temporary paid jobs
- A database searchable by your postcode, with opportunities specifically for those aged 16-30

www.vinspired.com

The National Citizen Service government-backed programme brings together young people aged 15-17 from diverse backgrounds, providing them with strong skills for life, work and adulthood. For more information and to sign up, go to [NCS | No We Can | National Citizen Service \(wearencs.com\)](http://www.wearencs.com)

Team London is The Mayor of London's volunteering database where you can find out about local and London-based events such as helping out at sports and charity events. Sign up for their e-alert of volunteering opportunities or search their database <http://volunteerteam.london.gov.uk>

Skylarks provide activities and therapies for children with disabilities and additional needs. They welcome enthusiastic and motivated young people aged 14+ to volunteer as part of the DoE scheme bronze, silver or gold award. Young volunteers help at sessions for children with additional needs and siblings on Tuesdays after school in Twickenham during term time only. As part of their placement they are involved in many activities ranging from playing with children, helping in drama, cookery, karate, music therapy or art classes and setting up and putting away toys and equipment. There are also ad-hoc opportunities to volunteer at other times and locations such as fairs and fetes, visits to Kew Gardens, Marble Hill Park or Richmond Park, holiday activities including nature trails, family fun days, ice skating and visits to Father Christmas. See their website for further details <https://www.skylarks.charity/> They can only accept a limited number of DoE volunteers at a time, so it is best to plan ahead and contact them as early as possible. Young people need to complete a different application form, so please email info@skylarks.charity to express an interest.

Girlguiding groups have a Young Leader programme for 14-18 year olds and also offer volunteering places for those undertaking their DofE. They will receive training, mentoring, support and will be able to access Girlguiding membership opportunities including social activities, festivals and concerts. Here are some links for more information on their national website: www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/

The local email contact for Girl Guiding London West is info@girlguiding-glw.org.uk and the DofE Adviser is Megan Kirby dofe.glw@girlguiding-glw.org.uk

Richmond and Kingston Buddy Up Richmond Advice and Information on Disability (RAID) is looking for volunteer buddies aged 16-30, to help young people with disabilities enjoy their leisure time by travelling with them to activities and then sharing the experience with their "buddy". More information at <http://www.richmondaid.org.uk/richmond-and-kingston-buddyup/>

Turners House in Twickenham was designed by and built for one of England's greatest landscape painters J M W Turner in 1813. If you have an interest in arts and heritage, they offer a variety of volunteer placement opportunities for those aged 16 – 25 including DofE. For more information <https://turnershouse.org/get-involved/>

London Borough of Richmond offers volunteering opportunities for young people:

- **Library volunteering** - The Richmond Upon Thames Library Service volunteer programme for students taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is currently on hold due to the pandemic. Please continue to check this page for updates.
http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/services/libraries/volunteering_at_the_library/dofe_ward_scheme_libraries.htm
- **The Local Offer** is a directory and information resource for children and families with disabilities provided by Achieving for Children who deliver children's services on behalf of the councils of Richmond and Kingston. It contains a wealth of opportunities for leisure and

short break activities and includes information and advice about volunteering, work experience and apprenticeships. <https://www.afcllocaloffer.org.uk/>

Kingston Hospital offers a range of volunteer opportunities for those aged 16+. More information can be found at <https://kingstonhospital.nhs.uk/get-involved/find-out-more-about-volunteering-at-kingston-hospital/volunteering-vacancies-at-kingston-hospital/>

If you email KHFT.volunteering@nhs.net you can go on their waiting list and they will contact you when roles come up. You'll need to give your full name, telephone number, email and the roles that are an interest.

Richmond Police Cadets: For 13-18 year olds Volunteer Police Cadets offer an inspiring and challenging environment in which you can make new friends, work as part of a team, get involved in exciting activities, gain valuable knowledge and skills. You do not need to have an aspiration to have a career in the police force in order to join. <https://vpc.police.uk/>

St John Ambulance Cadets: Young People aged 10-17 can join a local cadet unit to take part in volunteer work and learn valuable life skills. More information at <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-involved/young-people/cadets-ages-10-17> Or e-mail London-Volunteering@sja.org.uk

The London Fire Brigade – Fire Cadets offers young people age 14-17 the opportunity to gain a real qualification, and develop their confidence and personal skills. It's a bit like Scouts or Guides – you'll gain real-world skills, make lots of new friends, learn to work as a team, and have a lot of fun along the way. They have now started a phased return to Fire Station based delivery and aim to get all of their Fire Cadets units open as soon as possible. In the meantime, their Fire Cadets are still very active 'virtually' and taking part in many challenges and activities online and on social media. If you are interested in joining LFB Fire Cadets, please get in touch by emailing lfbfirecadets@london-fire.gov.uk to discuss next steps.

Princess Alice Hospice, Esher have various roles suitable for young people aged 16+ and post GCSEs throughout the Hospice itself and throughout their care area of Surrey, South West London and Middlesex. Please contact volunteering@pah.org.uk or call 01372 461856 for further details about currently available opportunities. Based on your interests and skills, their Volunteer Team can support you in deciding what role will work best for you.

Volunteering at local charity shops: Many charity shops can offer time limited volunteering for those doing their Duke of Edinburgh awards. You will need to visit your local charity shop to discuss this with them. Those under 16 will need parental permission, and you will need to complete an application form and supply references. There are also a number of charity shop roles listed on VInspired.

For those seeking apprenticeships and employment Achieving for Children (AfC) provides children's services on behalf of Richmond and Kingston. Their Way to Work service offers a range of support for those aged 16-24 not in employment, education or training, and young people with SEND. Support includes

- building confidence and interpersonal skills
- completing English and maths functional skills
- searching for jobs, apprenticeships or training
- CV writing, applications and interview practice
- gaining hands-on work experience
- achieving industry specific certifications
- access to apprenticeships, including the government funded Kickstart programme

More information at

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/preparing-for-employment/pre-employment-support>

For those 18+ Richmond CVS, provide the volunteering service in Richmond. You can register your details and search for opportunities online at www.richmondcv.org.uk

Prepared by

Community Connections Richmond

www.richmondcv.org.uk

0208 843 7940

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