

Voluntary and Community Action

Bossard House . West Street . Leighton Buzzard . Bedfordshire . LU7 1DA

Tel: 01525 850559 · mail@action-centralbeds.org.uk · www.action-centralbeds.org.uk · Fax:01525 376281



Registering with your local Volunteer Centre

Dear colleague

The Volunteer Centre at Voluntary and Community Action promotes volunteering opportunities to the general public. Our knowledge of local voluntary organisations, the public sector and community groups makes us the first point of contact for anyone interested in finding out about local volunteering opportunities. Potential volunteers access our services via the Internet, through telephone enquiries and informal face-to-face interviews. Our goal is to match a volunteer's interests, skills and availability with appropriate opportunities.

Registering your organisation's volunteering opportunities with us enables your opportunities to reach a wider audience and helps you to find the volunteers you need.

The details you provide will be entered onto our database that is used to provide information to prospective volunteers. The information, with your permission, will also go on-line on the national volunteering website www.do-it.org.uk

In addition to our one-to-one sessions with people interested in volunteering we can actively promote your opportunities through:

- volunteering events
- information days
- the internet
- volunteering directory
- local media

How we work with volunteer-involving organisations

Step one - Register your organisation and its opportunities with the Volunteer Centre, using the Organisation Registration form and Volunteering Opportunity Registration form (see attachment). Complete a separate form for each new opportunity to be registered. Once we have received the forms, we will contact you to confirm the registration process. If you would like further advice or help with completing the forms,

Member of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action · Member of Volunteering England and licensed Volunteer Centre
Registered Charity No. 1108879 · Company limited by guarantee · Registered in England No. 5386570 · Registered Office as above

Volunteering · Development · Training · Funding Advice · Information · Partnerships

please get in touch. We are more than happy to arrange to meet with you to discuss your organisation's activities and requirements if this is something you would find useful.

Step two – Information on your activities or services helps prospective volunteers get a clearer picture of what you do. Keep us up-to-date with leaflets, publicity materials or newsletters in order to help us to promote your opportunities effectively.

Step three – Referrals. If a prospective volunteer expresses an interest in your opportunities we will contact you and pass on their details. Please respond promptly to any referrals we make. Remember that volunteers are likely to be looking at more than one organisation before making a decision. This is your chance to enthuse about your organisation.

Step four – Invite a prospective volunteer for an informal chat or interview. Remember it is your responsibility to assess the volunteer's suitability for a role before taking up references or a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Step five – Keep us informed. Let us know if you take on any of the volunteers we refer to you or complete and return the organisation feedback form which is sent to your organisation 6 - 8 weeks after referral. Also inform us if an opportunity is no longer available, this will help to prevent us from referring volunteers to you unnecessarily. We will check the information we hold with you annually and you can add or remove opportunities at any time.

The Volunteer Centre can also offer advice, information and support on all aspects of volunteer recruitment and management.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Rebecca Gooch

Rebecca Gooch
Volunteering Adviser

Voluntary and Community Action

Organisation Registration Form

Name of Organisation:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone No:

Fax No:

Email:

Website:

Geographical area served by organisation:

Name of Contact Person (who deals with volunteering opportunities):

Role/Job Title:

Address in Bedfordshire (if different to that above):

Postcode:

Telephone:

Fax No:

Email:

Please provide some brief directions on finding your organisation i.e. bus route, train etc

Briefly describe the purpose of your organisation

Briefly describe the activities of your organisation

Do you have an Equal Opportunities Policy?	Yes	No	Need advice
Do you have insurance cover for volunteers?	Yes	No	Need advice
Do you have a volunteering policy?	Yes	No	Need advice
Do you have a Health and Safety Policy?	Yes	No	Need advice

Data Protection

Information held on the database is used for Voluntary and Community Action mailing purposes (e.g. newsletters, information on training workshops and events), and to answer enquiries from others about specific types of organisations offering volunteering opportunities. It will also be used to compile statistical data on the voluntary and community sector locally and may be shared with other Volunteer Centres, if appropriate. We will not sell or pass this information on to a commercial third party. Unless otherwise stated all opportunities will be placed on the National Volunteer Database www.do-it.org.uk

I confirm that the information above is correct to the best of my knowledge and consent to it being included in the database of Voluntary and Community Action.

Signed:

Print name:

Date:

For further advice, or help with completing this form, contact the Volunteer Centre,
tel. 01525 850559, or email volunteer@action-centralbeds.org.uk

Please keep a copy and return this form to:

**The Volunteer Centre, Voluntary and Community Action,
Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. LU7 1DA.**

Voluntary and Community Action

Volunteer Registration Form

Title		
First Name:		
Family Name:		Male/Female (please circle)

Address:	
Postcode:	
Daytime Telephone:	Evening Telephone:
Mobile	
Email:	

How did you hear about this Volunteer Service?
--

Areas of interest	Type of Activity
Please tick any of the following that interest you	Please tick any following that you would like to do

Animals	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art and Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disaster Relief	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drugs and Addictions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elderly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Families	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay, Lesbian Bi and Transsexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health, Hospitals and Hospices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homeless and Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human and Civil Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
International Aid	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal Aid and Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/>
Millennium Volunteers (16-25yr)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Museums	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music	<input type="checkbox"/>
Politics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prisoners and Ex-offenders	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race and Ethnicity and Refugees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport and Outdoor Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women's Group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth	<input type="checkbox"/>

Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advice Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architecture and Building Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art	<input type="checkbox"/>
Befriending	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business and Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Campaigning and Lobbying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computers and Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website Design	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finance Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hostel Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Languages	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing, PR and Media	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical Work and DIY	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retail and Charity Shops	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching and Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trusteeship	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under 16 Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
One Off Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tick the boxes below to show the days and times when you are available.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EVE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

One off events: Would you be interested in attending on-off volunteering events? Yes No

In which area do you want to volunteer?

Dunstable Houghton Regis Leighton Buzzard/Linslade
 Other (please specify) _____

Give brief details of any skills you would like to use:

Data Protection:

At no time will we provide any of your details to a third party, e.g. volunteering organisation, without your permission. You have the right to see any information about you that we hold in a retrieval system such as a computer database or paper index system. You have the right to challenge us about any information relating to you that we hold in a retrieval system and to have this information changed. You have the right for your details to be removed from a retrieval system. We may compile statistical data from time to time but this will never include references to a particular individual. In order to keep you up to date with information and events we may include you in our mailing list or email list. We never sell or give mailing lists to a commercial third party.

If you have decided which organisation(s) you would like to make contact with please indicate below and we will pass your contact details to them. If you need further help and guidance and would like an interview with volunteer services please tick this box

Organisation	Opportunity	Date contacted

Print Name _____ Signed _____

Date _____

Please return to:

Volunteer Centre Central Bedfordshire
 Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 1DA.
 Telephone: 01525 850559 email: volunteer@action-centralbeds.org.uk www.action-centralbeds.org.uk

What is Volunteering

Put simply, it's about choosing to give some of your time (unpaid) to benefit the environment or people in the community... yet it's a whole lot more than that!

Volunteering has changed with the times, it's more versatile and rewarding, and there's a wider range of interesting opportunities available.

In return for your time, commitment and enthusiasm, volunteering offers great opportunities to meet other people, learn new skills and have fun.

There many reasons why people volunteer, here are just a few!

- gain experience
- make new friends
- use and share existing skills
- access training and qualifications
- develop new interests
- increase self confidence

To find out for yourself what volunteering has to offer, contact us for an informal chat or visit our website.

how to Contact us

Our offices are open to the public between Monday and Friday from 9.30am until 3.00pm and at other times by appointment. You can contact us by telephone, email, or post, or visit our website. We can also arrange to meet you at a venue closer to where you live or work if you cannot get to Leighton Buzzard.

Telephone: 01525 850559

Fax: 01525 376281

Email: volunteer@action-centralbeds.org.uk

Website: www.action-centralbeds.org.uk

Voluntary and Community Action
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West Street
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thinking about volunteering?



visit your local Volunteer Centre

Voluntary and Community Action

What is a Volunteer Centre?

Volunteer Centres work with volunteer-involving organisations to promote and develop volunteering.

Our knowledge of local voluntary organisations, the public sector and community groups also makes us the first point of contact for anyone interested in finding out about local volunteering opportunities.

Volunteer Centre services include:

- access to volunteering opportunities
- marketing volunteering
- developing volunteering opportunities
- promoting good practice
- campaigning

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities and challenging barriers to volunteering.

Our services are confidential, accredited by Volunteering England and available to **all** members of the community.

Ever thought about volunteering?

You'll be **amazed** at what you can do!

There is something for everyone... whatever your age, skills, interests or experience.

Our Volunteer Centre advisers can offer you a free, confidential and informal appointment where they can help you:

- **explore your interests** and motivations for volunteering
- **make an informed choice** about the different opportunities we have available
- **search and select** information on over 300 local volunteering opportunities
- **get in contact** with local volunteer-involving organisations and groups

There is no pressure to make an immediate choice; you are free to take information away with you and make a decision in your own time.

Need volunteers?

If you are a local volunteer-involving organisation or community group, we can help you too.

Register with us and we'll promote your opportunities and signpost volunteers to your organisation.

In addition to our one-to-one sessions with people interested in volunteering we can actively promote your opportunities through:

- the Internet
- volunteering events
- information days
- local media
- our volunteering directory

We do our best to match a volunteer's interests, skills and availability with appropriate opportunities.

The Volunteer Centre can also offer advice, information and support on all aspects of:

- volunteer recruitment and management
- setting up and running a volunteer programme
- developing new opportunities
- developing good practice

life skills campaigning sport befriending driving heritage
mentoring research conservation committee counselling events

How to contact us

To find out more about how we can help your organisation promote its volunteering opportunities and develop a volunteer programme, contact us for a chat or to arrange a meeting.

Our offices are open to the public between Monday and Friday from 9.30am until 3.00pm and at other times by appointment. You can also contact us at other times by telephone, email or post and visit our website.

Telephone: 01525 850559

Fax: 01525 376281

Email: volunteer@action-centralbeds.org.uk

Website: www.action-centralbeds.org.uk

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Voluntary and Community Action

Volunteer-Involving Organisations

a guide to our services



Volunteer Centre

Central Bedfordshire

Welcome

Supporting good practice



We want to help you develop your organisation's most valuable asset – your volunteers!

Volunteers are a valuable resource bringing enthusiasm, skills, experience, flexibility, fresh ideas and new ways of working.

Whether volunteers can offer a regular commitment, one-off, occasional, or seasonal help, every volunteer has a unique contribution to make.

Need help finding volunteers?

Volunteer Centres work with volunteer-involving organisations to promote and develop volunteering.

Our knowledge of local voluntary organisations, the public sector and community groups makes us the first point of contact for anyone interested in finding out about local volunteering opportunities.

Register with us and we'll promote your opportunities and signpost volunteers to your organisation.

The Volunteer Centre can offer advice, information and support on all aspects of volunteer recruitment and management.

Tips, advice, training and practical workshops relating to involving volunteers in your organisation - good practice, pitfalls and sources of further information.

Help to develop and promote clear volunteer policies and good practice covering:

- recruitment
- equal opportunities and diversity
- induction and training
- expenses
- supervision and support
- insurance
- health and safety
- grievance and disciplinary procedures
- confidentiality
- risk assessment
- setting up and running a volunteer programme
- meeting Investing in Volunteers (and other) quality standards on volunteering

Developing new opportunities

The Volunteer Centre can assist you in developing new volunteering opportunities. If you have not used volunteers before, or simply want help in identifying and developing volunteer roles and opportunities, we can advise you.

We offer individual consultations to develop potential opportunities within your organisation. At this stage we can help you look at:

- role descriptions
- person specifications
- volunteer recruitment
- what to expect from a referral from us
- how to welcome potential volunteers
- interview and selection procedures
- further help and support for volunteer co-ordinators

We look forward to working with you, please call for an organisation and opportunity registration pack. Our Volunteer Centre staff would be happy to meet with you to discuss how we can help.

How we work with potential volunteers

Our goal is to match a volunteer's interests, skills and availability with appropriate opportunities.

Potential volunteers can access Volunteer Centre services via the Internet, through telephone enquiries and informal face-to-face interviews.

Some people have a good idea of the type of activity they would like to get involved in and are happy for us to pass their details straight to the relevant organisation.

Others may have been unaware of the range of opportunities available to them, or have yet to decide what they would like to do. In these circumstances we would encourage these potential volunteers to look at more than one organisation before making a commitment.

Volunteer Centres are committed to promoting equal opportunities and challenging barriers to volunteering.

We offer impartial advice and guidance to people seeking to volunteer and do not make judgements on a volunteer's suitability for a role.

We do not take out references or undertake criminal records checks on volunteers.

Promoting your opportunities

The Volunteer Centre works with organisations to stimulate interest in volunteering and community activity. Follow these five steps to help us to help you.

Step one – Register your organisation and opportunities with the Volunteer Centre. Call us for an organisation and opportunity registration pack or download one from our website.

Step two – Information on your activities or services helps prospective volunteers get a clearer picture of what you do. Keep us up-to-date with leaflets, publicity materials or newsletters in order to help us to promote your opportunities effectively.

Step three – Referrals. If a prospective volunteer expresses an interest in your opportunities we will contact you and pass on their details. Please respond promptly to any referrals we make. Remember that volunteers are likely to be looking at more than one organisation before making a decision. This is your chance to enthuse about your organisation.

Step four – Invite the prospective volunteer for an informal chat or interview. Remember it is your responsibility to assess the volunteer's suitability for a role before taking up references or a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Promoting your opportunities

Step five – Keep us informed. Let us know if you take on any of the volunteers we refer to you, or if an opportunity is no longer available. This will help to prevent us from referring volunteers to you unnecessarily. We will check the information we hold with you annually and you can add or remove opportunities at any time.

In addition to our one-to-one sessions with people interested in volunteering we can also promote opportunities via:

- the national volunteering website www.do-it.org.uk
- our directory of volunteering opportunities
- volunteering events
- information days
- articles in local newspapers
- newsletters and publications
- our website
- national campaigns and events

Don't forget your own promotion is equally important; we can advise you on how to promote your organisation and opportunities through your own networks, publications and promotional materials.

How to contact us

Voluntary and Community Action

To find out more about how we can help you find the right volunteering opportunity, drop in for a chat or contact us to arrange an informal meeting.

Our offices are open to the public between Monday and Friday from 9.30am until 3.00pm and at other times by appointment. You can also contact us at other times by telephone, email or post and visit our website. We can also arrange to meet you at a venue closer to where you live or work if you cannot get to Leighton Buzzard.

Telephone: 01525 850559

Fax: 01525 376281

Email: volunteer@action-centralbeds.org.uk

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so you want to volunteer?

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Volunteer Centre
Central Bedfordshire

Welcome

Recruitment and selection



Your local Volunteer Centre is **the** place to find out about volunteering opportunities in your area. We can offer you a free, confidential and informal appointment where our advisers can provide information and guidance on any aspect of volunteering.

Put simply, volunteering is about choosing to give some of your time (unpaid) to benefit the environment or people in the community... and it's a whole lot more than that! We understand that volunteering can be a highly rewarding and enjoyable experience. That's why our advisers take the time to discuss your interests, likes and dislikes, and availability before suggesting some opportunities that might appeal to you.

We work in partnership with local volunteer-involving organisations to provide a wide range of interesting and rewarding volunteering opportunities.

Volunteer Centres are committed to promoting equal opportunities and challenging barriers to volunteering. We offer impartial advice and guidance to **all** members of the community seeking to volunteer and do not make judgements on a volunteer's suitability for a role.

The information included in this booklet will help you to identify the right opportunity for you.

The recruitment process will vary depending on the organisation, is normally informal and may include some or all of the following:

- application form
- references
- trial period
- informal discussions
- interviews
- criminal record checks

The amount of red tape involved in volunteer recruitment can come as a surprise to potential volunteers. Do not be put off by this, it's important to consider the following:

- Application forms can seem very formal, but their primary purpose is to allow volunteers to give an idea of who they are, rather than being a selection or screening tool.
- Many organisations use role descriptions and person specifications to outline what is involved. Naturally they will want to work with those volunteers who offer the skills and experience most suited to a particular role.
- Most organisations will ask for references. Bear in mind that references do not have to come from an employer.
- Volunteers who will be working with children or vulnerable adults may be asked to undertake a criminal records check (known as Disclosure). This is a legal requirement to protect both volunteers and the client group they are working with.

Remember the application process is as much about you deciding whether you like an organisation, as about them accepting you as a volunteer. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

What kind of volunteering do you want to do?

There are all kinds of volunteering opportunities available locally..... here are just a few examples of the type of activity you can get involved in:

- Administration
- Accounting
- Advice work
- Advocacy
- Animal welfare
- Befriending
- Caring
- Charity shops
- Committee work
- Conservation
- Driving
- Disability
- Event organising
- Fundraising
- Heritage
- Homelessness
- IT support
- Gardening
- Mentoring
- Sport
- Teaching and training
- Telephone help lines
- Web design
- Women's groups

Opportunities are available locally and throughout Bedfordshire and Luton. Some opportunities will be close to home while others may be further afield so you may need to consider transport and access issues.

- How far are you prepared to travel?
- If you don't have your own transport, is there a bus route?

Our Volunteer Centre advisers can help guide you through the many opportunities available. They will contact organisations on your behalf and arrange for them to contact you. This is your chance to ask questions about the organisations, find out more about the opportunity and the recruitment process.

Making the most of volunteering

Volunteering offers something for everyone whatever your skills, background or experience. There are almost as many reasons why people volunteer as there are volunteering opportunities to choose from.

Volunteering can be a great way to:

- ✓ share skills
- ✓ help the community
- ✓ develop a personal interest
- ✓ improve your self-confidence
- ✓ gain useful experience
- ✓ learn new skills
- ✓ access training and qualifications
- ✓ relieve boredom
- ✓ enhance your CV
- ✓ get some work experience
- ✓ make friends and enjoy yourself

“There’s nothing wrong with self-interested motivation! Whether you’re wanting to impress your boss, try out new skills or simply to escape from the kids,”

Catherine 2004

You’ll be **amazed** at what you can do!

To find out what is available you can contact our Volunteer Centre advisers by telephone or email. You can browse our database of volunteering opportunities and even apply online by visiting our website.

What motivates you?

Whether you are new to volunteering or have a lot of experience it is worth spending some time thinking about your own interests, needs and motivations.

Questions you might want to consider:

have you had previous contact with an organisation that you would like to support?

do you want to volunteer to work with certain groups, e.g. children, older people, victims of crime?

do you want to volunteer for a particular cause, e.g. a cancer charity, an environmental organisation, or supporting services in hospitals or schools?



Your reasons for volunteering will influence the type of role and organisation you choose. Some volunteers feel very strongly about a particular issue or cause and want to help change things. Others want to improve things in their local community or environment, or may want to use or develop their skills.

“I want to contribute to something I believe in.”

Volunteering can be a great way to gain experience for paid work. Volunteering should not affect your entitlement to state benefits, ask your Volunteer Centre adviser for more information.

When do you want to volunteer?

Another thing to consider is the time you have available.

- 🕒 Will you be able to offer one hour a week or twenty?
- 🕒 Can you give time every week, once a month or only a couple of times a year?
- 🕒 Are there certain days you would prefer to volunteer?
- 🕒 Are you looking for a long-term commitment (for example one or more years)?...
- 🕒 Or a short-term project (this could be a one-off event, a particular campaign or helping out during holidays)?

Short on time?

Ask our Advisers about 'time flexible' opportunities where you choose to give as much or as little time as you wish.

Volunteer-involving organisations need to plan ahead and invest in your training, supervision and support. Some opportunities require a specific level of commitment, others may be more flexible. As a general rule, the more training and supervision you receive from an organisation, the greater the commitment they'll ask from you.

Some opportunities may not be available immediately as volunteers need to undergo training or await criminal records checks.

Top Tip

Be realistic about the amount of time you can give, it is always better to increase your involvement later on if you want to.