

Volunteering for Carers Trust Solihull Frequently Asked Questions

Am I too old?

No – as long as you are over 18, age is not a barrier if you can offer your time, energy and skills.

How much time do I need to volunteer for?

The amount of time needed is different for each role, and also depends on how much time you have to give. Some roles require a regular time commitment, others are more flexible or short term only.

Can I be paid to cover my expenses?

We reimburse reasonable expenses that arise from volunteering, such as travel.

Can I claim benefits while volunteering?

Yes. Volunteering does not affect your benefits, as long as you continue to meet the conditions of the benefit or tax credit you receive, for instance, if you are on Job Seekers Allowance, actively seeking a job and being able to attend interviews. It is always worth checking with your Job Centre.

I'm working full-time, can I still volunteer?

Yes, there is a range of activities that you can fit around your work commitments, such as befriending, respite sitting, helping carers get to grips with the internet.

Do I need any skills or qualifications?

Many volunteer roles don't require special skills or qualifications and you will be given any training you need. Some roles do require certain skills, but this will be stated clearly in the role description.

Can I get a qualification?

Although we cannot help volunteers obtain formal qualifications such as an NVQ, we can help you keep a record of your volunteering activities and skills. Even if you can't get a qualification, volunteering will make you more employable as you gain valuable experience, skills and a reference.

Will I be interviewed?

Most volunteering opportunities will entail an informal discussion, so that you can find out more about us and the opportunity you are interested in.

In turn, we will want to find out a bit more about you and may typically ask you:

- Why do you want to volunteer with Solihull Carers Centre?
- What sort of role(s) are you interested in?
- How much time can you offer?
- Do you have any particular skills you can offer?

Roles that require more responsibility, such as being a trustee, will involve a more formal interview.

We do ask for two references and a CRB check will be necessary for some roles.

What support will I get?

We will make sure that you have what you need to perform your role and you know who to go to if you have a question or a problem. We will also regularly review what you are doing with you and give you opportunities to increase your responsibilities, if you want to.

Can I leave if I don't like it?

Yes, of course you can. If you are unhappy, it is always worth talking to the Volunteer Manager beforehand to see if there is anything they can do to improve your experience, such as changing your role to something you find more enjoyable.