

Volunteer Today - Your Charity Shop Needs YOU!



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Some Key Information:

- Over 110,000 people volunteer in charity shops in the UK every week.
- Some charity shops are run almost entirely by volunteers.
- They raise almost £100 million a year for the charities they support.
- More volunteers, especially younger people, are always needed.
- Your new ideas, energy and enthusiasm can raise money for a good cause – making a real difference.
- Why not become a volunteer and help the charity shop of your choice? - There are hundreds to choose from.
- Your charity shop needs you!

Who Can Volunteer?

- Anyone who has some spare time & would like to use it to benefit a charity can be a volunteer in a charity shop; volunteering really is open to everybody!
- People from all backgrounds and walks of life volunteer in charity shops.

What does volunteering involve and what will I get out of it?

- Meeting lots of different people.
- Making new friends.
- Having fun!
- Being a valued member of a team.
- Learning new skills.
- Development of talents that employers & colleges really value – such as communication skills, numeracy, teamwork & taking responsibility.
- Some charities offer formal qualifications such as NVQs in retailing.
- You can make a difference & help the charity of your choice, whilst having fun at the same time.

What would I be expected to do?

There's a lot to do in a charity shop with something to suit most tastes.

- If you have a passion for fashion then sorting clothes might be for you.
- If retailing is your thing, then helping the customers, pricing stock, or working on the till could be right for you.

- Perhaps you have an eye for design – then arranging shop and window displays would be a great way to show off your skills.

Will I need any special skills?

- You do not need any special skills, as you will receive on-the-job training and support. More formal training is sometimes available.
- However, please tell the shop manager of any experience you do have as it can often be put to good use.
- Any help with special interest items, such as antiques, books or music is always much appreciated. A good eye can lead to a rare find!

Will volunteering affect my benefits?

- Volunteering will not affect your Job Seeker's Allowance as long as you are still 'actively seeking & available for work.'
- Volunteering should not affect someone's Income Support as long as they only receive reimbursement expenses.
- If you are in receipt of Incapacity Benefit you may volunteer for as many hours as you wish.
- Volunteering will not affect whether a person receives Disability Living Allowance or not.
- Whichever benefit you receive, you should always inform your benefits agency that you are doing voluntary work.

How much time do I need to volunteer?

- Volunteering need not interfere with your other commitments.
- Most shops only ask for a regular commitment of one half-day session per week.
- Many shops are open on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Ask if you can work full time – some charities will be more than happy to help you.
- Volunteering shouldn't leave you out of pocket as many charities reimburse volunteers' actual expenses.

What do charity shops sell?

- Charity shops mainly sell second-hand items donated by the public.
- Charity shops are full of bargains and collectables. Whether it is retro fashion, CDs, DVDs, books or computer games, you will have fun and save loads of money shopping in them.

Charity shops are a great place to find an unusual outfit.

- Volunteers can't take themselves too seriously when faced with the 'I'm going to a fancy dress party, please help me look like Harry Potter/a gangster/ a fairy godmother' scenario!

Why not give it a go?

- You can try out volunteering in a shop to see if you like it before making a commitment.
- The easiest way to volunteer is to go directly into a local charity shop of your choice & ask about volunteering.
- Find out about your local volunteer centre from...
- In England: www.volunteeringengland.org.uk
- in Northern Ireland: www.volunteering-ni.org
- in Scotland: www.vds.org.uk
- in Wales: www.wcva.org.uk
- Or have a look at the Association of Charity Shops' website, where you can find details of your local charity shops: www.charityshops.org.uk and click on 'Find a Charity Shop'.

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