



# HIVE Portsmouth

**The impact of volunteering on the volunteer**

December 2024

# Introduction



HIVE Portsmouth and Together in HIVE Portsmouth routinely see the positive contribution volunteers make to the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the city. We also see the significant impact volunteering makes on people's lives every day.

We wanted to hear from the volunteers themselves - about how their work affects them, to understand their experiences of volunteering and record some of the many extraordinary stories of volunteering in the city.

By doing so, we aim to:

- add to the understanding of how volunteering impacts on the wellbeing of the volunteers as well as those they work with,
- learn lessons about how organisations use volunteers and;
- learn how to get the best possible outcomes for everyone who volunteers.

## **Thank You**

We want to express our gratitude and thanks to every person who gave their time to talk to us. We have tried to capture the range of your experiences and stories and we hope to continue to use your feedback throughout our work over coming months to highlight the amazing work you do.

# What we did



Together in HIVE Portsmouth, the volunteering co-ordination team, sent an email message (shown on the next page) to all volunteers on their database and who had previously agreed to regular communications. The message asked for people who were currently volunteering to consider being interviewed and explained this was a HIVE Portsmouth project aiming to understand the impact that volunteering can have on the individual volunteer.

38 volunteers responded and expressed their willingness to participate. During September and October 2024 we arranged and conducted interviews with 26 volunteers. We made good efforts to interview all 38 people who responded however 12 people were not interviewed - the reasons for this included the person subsequently opting out or becoming unavailable for interview due to other priorities. In a few cases people either did not respond to our follow-up emails or did not attend for their interview.

For each of the 26 people we did interview, we met for between 20 and 60 minutes though most were completed within half an hour. The majority of the interviews were in-person and conducted in a public space, such as Portsmouth Central Library, whilst a few were completed via an online meeting or telephone call.

There were three interviewers from the HIVE Portsmouth team - Innes, Georgi and Clare - and they used a semi-structured interview approach, focused on 3 key discussion points:

- The impact of being a volunteer on the person themselves - how specific experiences of volunteering made them think or feel;
- What messages they would give to any organisation who uses volunteers and;
- From their own experiences, what they would tell other people who were considering becoming a volunteer.

The interviewers made hand-written notes and these were transcribed and collated during November. The three interviewers met in early December to review these collated notes and agree the most significant themes to have emerged from the interviews.

This report gives an overview of the key themes alongside quotes from volunteers given in their interviews. We have included a significant number of quotes because the volunteers often illustrated the point far more clearly by telling their own stories than we could achieve through a formal report.

## MESSAGE TO ALL VOLUNTEERS:

We are looking for volunteers, past and present, who would be willing to take part in some work we are doing to understand how volunteering has an impact on your own wellbeing.

We see the positive impact volunteers have on other people's lives every day and want to gather examples of how this work affects the volunteers themselves. This will allow us to understand how being a volunteer impacts on your life and get the best possible outcomes for everyone who volunteers.

We would like to invite you to be a participant in this project as we feel your experiences as a volunteer would help us. If you agree to participate it would involve having a 1:1 conversation with either Georgi Oakley or Innes Richens (who is another member of the HIVE team). You would be asked to share some of your experiences of being a volunteer and how these affected you. We are looking for any experiences that impacted on you – be they good, bad or anything in between.

The 1:1 conversation could be in person in a mutually agreeable location where there is an acceptable level of privacy for you (we cannot offer to come to your home). They could also be done online using Teams, Zoom, or telephone if this is easier. It would take no longer than 30 minutes. We will take notes of what you share and these will only ever be seen by Georgi and Innes. We will not be asking you for any information that could personally identify you in order to keep the information anonymous.

We are aiming to complete these 1:1 conversations by the end of September. We will analyse the data to identify the key themes and these will be written up in a short report that can be shared with you if you want this. The report will also be shared within HIVE and externally with other voluntary groups, charities or social enterprises who offer volunteer services in Portsmouth so they can use the information to develop their services. HIVE may also want to use the information in the report to promote Volunteers Awards, Volunteers Week and to celebrate all the ways volunteers and volunteering contribute to the city's wellbeing.

If you would like to participate and consent to a 1:1 conversation, then please contact us via the email below. Georgi or Innes will be in touch with you to arrange a date and time to meet.

Together in Hive: [Volunteering@hiveportsmouth.org.uk](mailto:Volunteering@hiveportsmouth.org.uk)

Or Innes at: [innes.richens@hiveportsmouth.org.uk](mailto:innes.richens@hiveportsmouth.org.uk)

Or you can telephone on: 02394007124

Many thanks for your continuing support to this work.



# Who we interviewed

We interviewed people who had volunteered in a variety of voluntary roles over the past 1-4 years:

Food pantry  
Food banks  
Supporting community groups (tea, coffee, reading, activities)  
Community cafe  
Providing regular meals at locations in the community  
Supporting refugee groups eg food and meals  
Homeless centres (meals)  
Meal provision in people's homes  
Gardening (residential homes)  
School readers (reading to young people)  
Community repair services  
Dementia care home  
One-off events (eg lunches, fund raisers, Park Run)  
Writing Christmas cards/supplying gifts for people on their own, in residential homes  
IT and digital access for people usually excluded  
Digital, publishing and communications work  
Data collation  
Working on a variety of different jobs but within one charity

Trustee at a charity  
School governor  
Steam railway  
Charity shops  
Welfare & advice (mobile or at specific locations)  
Charity centres (admin, reception, advice)  
One-off large events (eg D Day Celebration, Great South Run, Opera in the Park)  
Country Parks or wildlife charities  
Museums, galleries  
Vaccine centre  
Hosting/training welfare dogs  
HIVE Portsmouth  
Beach litter picks  
Church based roles  
Micro-volunteering - one-off, time-limited roles  
Meet & greet: cruise ships  
Sorting out donations  
Local pharmacies



# The impact on the volunteer of being a volunteer

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# 'You really feel like you've made a difference'

Volunteering makes people feel that their individual contribution has made a positive difference to someone else, a community, the environment or society more generally. 'Making a difference' was one of the most frequently expressed expectations of volunteers.

For most volunteers, seeing the results of their work directly and, often, gaining an instant response from others significantly contributed to their own sense of wellbeing and worth. Many talked about creating an emotional connection with others through the work, one which was often not expected but still welcomed.

*'I know it might sound simple but putting up some curtains for an old lady ... was great. It was such a simple job but she was so thrilled. She couldn't get over that it (the service) was free!'*

*(At a community repair service) ... 'an older guy came in (and) asked for IT support. He had complex PTSD from being in (active combat). He attended a few times to get his tech fixed but we spent time talking. He said 'I feel comfortable talking to you' and I thought this underlines the importance of a one-to-one conversation.'*

*'When you can get the emotional connection ... (with someone you are helping) .. it's fulfilling. You can get emotional yourself. It can be frustrating as well if you can't fix something, but it's really rewarding.'*

*(On being a volunteer school reader over a full school year) ... 'I was working with a young boy who didn't have much motivation to read. Seeing him progress over the year was really nice to see, a very positive experience'*

*'When I volunteered with (a hospice) ... I tried to ensure people had a nice time, crafting, chatting, it was very emotional because you put yourself in their shoes.'*

*'The (residential home) was a real eye opener... to be someone's highlight of their week was just fantastic... they would say to me "what, you've come here to see me?" They were so happy to see me. I saw one particular gentleman for a year and we developed a great relationship. It was so lovely, it was like visiting your granddad. He passed away last Christmas.'*

*'It rewards me particularly when it's just me who has helped and I feel valued. I feel valued by them smiling or laughing or saying thank you. One woman even bought me a chocolate bar. She went out of her way to go and get it.'*

# 'It gives you a great buzz'

Whilst everyone we spoke to acknowledged that their volunteering was about helping others or contributing to society, many explained how the work also benefitted their own wellbeing. This included:

- Feeling appreciated
- Staying busy
- Keeping up-to-date
- Having emotional experiences
- Improving health, including mental health
- Feeling good about their role in the world

Where volunteering roles did not necessarily put the volunteer in direct contact with people, they talked about how this sense of wellbeing came from the work itself and understanding the benefits their efforts had for others.

*'it builds up to make your life feel good.'*

*'I understand how appreciated the volunteers are from staff feedback. This has given me a tremendous boost.'*

*'At (the residential home), I'm used to caring for older people, so I have a chat with residents and it gives me something in the day that I enjoy so much.'*

*'I always get a bit of a buzz about giving back, and it keeps me busy now I'm retired. It keeps me current and it keeps me in contact with people. For example, I wrote bids for school funding which was very satisfying'*

*'A positive experience overall ... I can find it emotional. I enjoy volunteering and will continue with it.'*

*'Volunteering boosted my health and wellbeing, especially in those small moments, the simple things... being helpful gives you a buzz!'*

*'When you attend big events you can take a step back and know that you've helped. It gives you adrenaline... they've got something out of it and you've got something out of it, everyone wins.'*

*'in gardening and clearing, you can go back months later to find no one else has done anything, you're the only one who is looking after this space'*

*'you really feel like you've made a difference even when you're making up food parcels. You can see the objective difference it makes'*

*(On being a volunteer who writes Christmas cards for residential homes) ... 'When I'm doing the cards, it's as if it were to my mum and dad. I'm in a situation where I can give something back, and it's what I can do alongside my other commitments. It does make you feel good about yourself. If I were in a home, I'd not want to be left alone. It's good to be part of it and participate in something'*



# 'You'll probably get more out of it than you put in'

When we continued to talk with people about how their volunteering impacts on their own well-being, the most common responses included:

- Boosting their emotional well-being
- Improving self confidence
- Reducing isolation
- Allowing them to contribute as well as manage other issues in their life, such as ongoing health issues

In particular, people drew a connection between these personal benefits and the opportunities volunteering offers to interact with others or be part of a larger community.

*'My emotional wellbeing is definitely lifted, it (volunteering) makes such a difference. It's the simple things that are most impactful.'*

*'It makes me feel good. When I go in there and I come home and I've helped someone with a complex issue, I feel good. You want a bit of job satisfaction, don't you?'*

*'With (this charity) you can sign up on the day, so it really suits me. I suffer with (health problems) and sometimes this means I can't commit but this is never a problem ... but on the days I can't go, I really miss it'*

*'Volunteering with (this charity) has definitely improved my physical health – even in lockdown we did virtual running challenges and it was great fun and it was great to know you were 'virtually' with a group of people'*

*'Working with someone else also helps you and this rubs off on the volunteer, helping other people. And sometimes people just want to be talked to.'*

*'Everyday is a good day. Time goes very quickly and I am still learning which is good for me and for other people really good'*

*'Overall, if I'd stopped work and was not volunteering, it would not have done me any good. It gives me a sense of worth that you've done a good job'*

*'Meeting people in general, so many different types... being that 'someone' that people can approach has boosted my confidence... and meeting different people has opened my eyes...'*

*'Volunteering has helped me build up my confidence, especially with communication as I was very isolated growing up.'*

*'Well, I do it because I'm lonely. I do it because I love interacting with people. I have found the same talking to other volunteers. It's not just to give something back. When I have to give it up for health reasons, I really miss it.'*

*'I don't have any friends here and one of the reasons I wanted to do charity work is I wanted to learn more about this society as I'm part of it. I want to be here.'*

# 'I've connected with people and made new friends'

Volunteers spoke frequently about the social connections they gained through volunteering, recognising these were a clear benefit to their own wellbeing.

Having regular opportunities to interact with other people gave volunteers:

- A sense of belonging
- An experience of being part of a larger community
- A chance to meet like-minded people but also people with different views and experiences
- New friends and connections – particularly after a significant life event such as a loss

Many volunteers talked about making new friendships with other volunteers throughout the course of their volunteering career.

*'It gives you a sense of belonging, a sense of community and has led to me doing things within my own community. You get to find people who also want to volunteer and I meet people in the community in my HIVE jacket.'*

*'you get to meet like-minded people & people from all walks of life that you may not normally talk to. It is a really good way to see places / services in your local community whilst trying something new.'*

*'I've connected with people and made new friends. I lost my husband two years ago now and at the time I felt low and miserable. I had no purpose at the time due to this big change in my life but finding the volunteer role changed that for me. I now feel confident as I used to be shy and can now socialise at ease.'*

*'It gets you out, it gets you to meet different people, people you may not necessarily meet in everyday life. You often make connections that carry on into your ongoing life, e.g. you bump into people. Also there's a social side.'*

*'... we built loads of friendships, and I'm still friends with some of them even today.'*

*'At (an arts event) I saw about 112 people. I interacted with people and talked to them. I enjoyed talking to people about (the art) and it's nice to see and talk to other people.'*

*(On volunteering with a group for refugee women) ... 'the women who came give a lot of themselves, a real sense of community. They embrace others from all backgrounds and they just help each other. A sense of joy. It's heartwarming although it can be physically tough.'*

*'... it keeps me talking to people, being forced to go out and meet people with different views and to learn to rub along.'*

*'when you volunteer at (charity providing meals) you get to sit with the people and eat, as well. You can join a table and properly meet people. So, it's not just giving out food but you get to meet people and chat... it's so much more of a deeper connection...'*

*'If it's a good day and I've had good conversations or met interesting people and made coincidental family connections that's great. In the space of one shift you can have multiple conversations where you discover connections and common ground with people.'* 10

## ‘You learn about yourself’

For some, they recognised and welcomed the opportunity to learn - either new skills or about themselves. In some cases, volunteering positively helped with their career or employment.

## ‘Using a lifetime of experience to help’

For others, the opportunity to continue to use the knowledge and experience gained in their career or lifetime, was an important factor in deciding to give their time voluntarily. Volunteering also continued to meet a need for ongoing purpose or structure for people who retired or had reduced their employment hours.

*‘You will learn new stuff from other volunteers, the charity and the visitors.’*

*‘I learned a lot from talking to ambulance personnel that allowed me to notice early my wife's stroke symptoms and we got very early treatment as a result’*

*‘Through doing these roles I was able to reflect on whether I personally wanted to continue (a career) in this type of role ... the voluntary role helped me make up my mind I wasn't going to continue (in my current career). It really helped with my career change decision.’*

*‘Developing new skills often outside your career experience.’*

*‘It's great for the CV ... there's never any harm in doing it for yourself. It broadens your own vision of yourself and the world. It's part of the tapestry of your life.’*

*‘I was able to put it on my CV and I could use them as a reference. It grounded me a little bit in Portsmouth as well.’*

*‘It's good for young people or people changing careers. It can be a benefit to your next career development.’*

*‘society is about how community lives together and supports each other. Retirement is not the end and it's incumbent on everyone to participate.’*

*‘It is mostly elderly people who come in so, for me, I can definitely draw on my previous career. I was used to all that.’*

*‘It doesn't replace work but it has a similar role in your life. It makes you feel part of life.’*

*‘The structure of work goes when you stop working, so volunteering gives me this structure. It got me out of the house. It drives me to do things.’*

*‘It makes you feel valued, it gives you a purpose and for people who have had a busy work life and have retired it gives them a continuing role, purpose and a chance to meet more people.’*

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# Feedback for organisations who use volunteers

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# Have a well organised recruitment & induction

Experiences of applying for a volunteer role were mixed. The most common frustrations spoken about were lack of communications from the organisation to the volunteer about what roles were available, the outcome of their application or the nature of the role.

The first experiences as a new volunteer with an organisation were seen as critical. Many people had good experiences, with the common feature being good organisation - this included clear role descriptions, a comprehensive induction programme and supply of the right equipment (if required).

Many people also talked about the style of their induction being important - with positive experiences including the organisation taking time to introduce new volunteers to other members of the team and established volunteers.

*‘It’s important for the public to know these opportunities are available and that they could do it’*

*‘Delays in getting information are too common and online information is lacking, especially when applying for volunteer roles; it often seems to be the same faces who end up being picked’*

*‘Some charities do not respond to applications that HIVE sends out to them’*

*‘Having a platform for advertising your volunteering opportunities is helpful to many.’*

*‘I also think people with mental health issues should be supported to volunteer’*

*‘Charities should ask volunteers what they are hoping to get out of their volunteering role’*

*‘Give them training and explain they can ask questions whenever they want to and can ask as many times as they want.’*

*‘I had half a day induction and briefing and was supplied with good quality kit to do the job such as a rucksack and gloves etc. Therefore you felt you were equipped to do it. That forethought was impressive.’*

*‘Experienced or long-standing volunteers sometimes were very distant or pulled away and often did not respond when I approached them. This broke my trust and confidence’*

*‘The onboarding was very bad, some via email, logins and passwords for example, and they were in different locations and very confusing.’*

*‘You need to give people a clear structure with simplified documentation. It would have been nice to be introduced to the team. It wasn’t clear what was required of me.’*

*‘It’s necessary for charities taking on volunteers to have some guidelines for volunteers about working with that charity. Induction needs to be as comprehensive as possible and it is very important.’*

# Consider the welfare of your volunteers

Volunteers spoke most enthusiastically about positive experiences when those organisations who engaged them had an active approach to volunteer welfare that had many of these features:

- Treating volunteers as an equal member of the team
- Attending to and supporting volunteer growth and development
- Clarity of expectations and roles
- Appreciation that volunteers may worry about the challenges facing the organisation as much as any other member of the team – and including them in communications
- Extending healthy workplace practice and culture to volunteers
- Utilising volunteers' experience where appropriate

*'I have helped others the whole of my life, so I've seen it from both sides. I ask 'How would I like to be treated as a volunteer?'*

*'there's got to be a feel-good factor for the volunteer. This is conveyed to the people you help.'*

*'Keep new blood coming in and keep the growth and progression. Give new people a chance. Use the more experienced volunteers to bring on people new to volunteering.'*

*'Treat the volunteer as an equal member of the team. The likelihood is volunteers have been somewhere else.'*

*'Give clear instructions and value your volunteers. Sometimes volunteers alongside paid members of staff can be weird, so you need to continually big up the volunteers. You need to treat volunteers very well, perhaps better than paid staff, and value them as people.'*

*'You should be treated the same as paid staff. You're not 'just' a volunteer. It wouldn't run if the volunteers weren't there.'*

*'You need to really look after your volunteers, including a welfare aspect. Volunteers are not idiots, they have a lifetime of experience and being treated dismissively is not acceptable.'*

*'Feeling part of a team, such as fundraising, and being appreciated when you come back to future events.'*

*'Funding or the lack of it and the loss of income can impact on volunteers which means they can often worry and be concerned.'*

*'Non-prejudicial, non-discriminating, these are the key to a healthy culture and this facilitates volunteers, as some need to use volunteering to grow or get work.'*

*'Volunteers have their areas of expertise and organisations could benefit from acknowledging this and benefit from it.'*

# Be organised

Volunteers welcomed opportunities to work with organisations that have a well organised approach to utilising their time and skills.

Many talked about poor experiences where they felt under-utilised, where the role they applied for did not match the work they ended up doing or where there was a lack of visible co-ordinators at events or in the place of work.

*'Be organised, give people multiple opportunities. Being well organised is a way of valuing your volunteers. HIVE has multiple opportunities which allows people to try different things'*

*'The takeaways for the sector are try to be organised, especially important when working with volunteers. For the (annual outdoor event) it seems to be a bun fight and not very well organised. There was unclear information about the role and where to get resources. The people who turned up to volunteer ended up coordinating themselves.'*

*'As a volunteer I'm always taken aback when there is a lack of organisation. At the (one-off large event), I turned up and they didn't know who I was. The coordinator was not present and I ended up not being used. I had walked down and they didn't know what to do with me.'*

*'I did an ad hoc volunteering for (large city event) and there were a load of volunteers in one place. I felt we were underutilised, there were just too many volunteers in one place.'*

*'Mostly they are well organised. The bigger events with multiple coordinators can be confusing on the day ... It's all down to the organisation.'*

*'If a charity has an established place, it is very useful for me to go somewhere that didn't change physically and allowed me to lay down roots and steady myself. ... this continuity allows organisations to invest in the volunteers and the volunteers to invest in the charity.'*

*'I understand that charities operate as a business, but I think there may be a better way of using volunteers in these organisations. The value of volunteers could be used in a more thorough and thought-through way. Amongst charities there is a lot of competition. For example, there are nine charity shops locally and so there must be opportunities.'*



# Give feedback and stay in touch

Good communications were appreciated by volunteers - particularly as they often volunteer on a part-time or periodic basis. Volunteers were looking for regularity in communications using different methods so that they can stay up-to-date in-between their volunteering sessions. Not only does this improve clarity about their role but also contributes to a sense of inclusion in the broader aims of the organisation.

The most appreciated piece of feedback by volunteers was when the organisation took the time to demonstrate how their volunteering specifically contributed to the outcomes of the work or event. This became even more important for people who volunteered in roles that were less obviously connected with the event or the organisation's front line delivery - such as car parking, directing people or clearing litter. Having feedback about the outcomes of the organisation's work and the specific role the volunteer played in achieving these was seen as an important way of recognising their contribution.

Most of the volunteers did not expect to be thanked for their contribution, but when it happened they acknowledged that this was significant and motivating. Whilst formal ways of thanking volunteers, such as organised events, were appreciated it was often the smaller gestures that had greater impact - such as certificates of thanks or spontaneous actions made in the moment.

*'Communication between the charity or the business. and the volunteer is really key. Some are good and others are very poor. Checking in with your volunteers is really welcome and makes them feel as if they are part of the team.'*

*'Communications in person improves the get-to-know-you factor and should be part of induction'*

*'One session per week means I miss out on some of the comms'*

*'Be communicative from start to finish, even if the volunteers are not regarded as equal to team members. Treat them with respect. Give everybody a chance.'*

*'Communication and dialogue - if volunteers feel included, it can be stimulating, especially if they are in a negative space. It kept me focused and keeps me motivated'*

*'At one-off events, even an email after to give feedback about the event's impact, i.e. this is what you were a part of, whatever role you took.'*

*'Be aware that some volunteering positions can feel mundane, so it's worth explaining that the role is important regardless.'*

*'Give feedback about what has been achieved.'*

*'It would be nice to get feedback about the contribution the volunteer has made.'*

*'Show your appreciation. It doesn't have to be grand gestures. For example, it could just be a cup of tea or food, a certificate of thanks or an in-the-moment gesture'*

*'When employers and charities say thank you, that goes a long way.'*

*'The Lord Mayor's event and the drinks afterwards was a great idea. Appreciation is important'*

*'I was very impressed to get a thank you certificate from D-Day event.'*





# Feedback for Together in HIVE Portsmouth

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Although we did not ask any specific questions about HIVE or Together in HIVE, many of the people we spoke to offered feedback to us based on their experiences ...





# Advice from volunteers

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# If you are thinking about volunteering ...

Be aware of your limits - understand what you can give and take care of yourself as well.

Be observant when working with people - the problem they bring to you may mask a deeper issue.

Starting with a new organisation, it may feel as if existing volunteers and staff are a bit clique-y – but don't be worried about talking to them.

Don't volunteer for large events thinking you will get a VIP pass to all areas - often the roles most needed are as car parking attendants or stewarding people.

Be brave and take a friend if its your first time.

There are so many volunteering roles out there, have a look and see which ones fit with you best - it is not just about charity shops.

Take time to understand what you want from volunteering - what do you want personally from volunteering and what roles offer this?

Give it a go - just do it - it could change your own life for the better.

*'When you're working with people, you do need to be observant. One small problem is brought to you (by someone you're working with) but another bigger one often lurks behind it.'*

*'Know your limits about what you can do for someone.'*

*'I think it's really helpful if people are able to volunteer and use their career experience, but volunteers have to recognise they are volunteers that have specific roles and you have to recognise you are part of a larger team ... there is a risk you enter an (organisation) and begin to use your experience inappropriately. There has to be self-regulation.'*

*'It can be initially clique-y'*

*'Don't go into it thinking you're going to get some VIP pass. It's not like that. For example, for the (one-off large) event, I was a car parking attendant.'*

*'if people are thinking about doing some volunteering, be brave & take a friend if it's easier for the first time as it does take courage to do something new.'*

*Perceptions about volunteering opportunities can be a problem. It's not just about charity shops.*

*'Go into it with open eyes and a lot of the time it can be frustrating. Be clear what you need from it. Some roles have elements of physical work. I like fixing things and it will help others. Someone else is benefiting'*

*'I think that people tend to think that volunteering is really time consuming but really it isn't... a couple of hours can have a massive effect on someone's life...'*

*'There's so many opportunities out there. I'd say take a look at yourself and ask what you want from volunteering as there will be very different roles on offer. Know what you are comfortable with and consider what you love doing. Also consider your own health and well-being, including your mental health'*

## ‘Just do it!’

If you are wondering whether to volunteer, here are some final words from people currently volunteering ...

*‘I would encourage people, if they've got the time available, there's no downside, as long as you do something that's okay enough.’*

*‘If you're thinking about it, then do it. Just go on that HIVE website. If you don't like it, you can always change.’*

*‘Do it. If you don't have a go, you won't know. It can have such a positive impact on your own life.’*

*‘I'd say do it. It gets you out of the house and it gives you opportunities. It makes you think about things and about other people. You go home often feeling, ‘well that was good and that has done some good’.*

*‘Give it a go. It could change your life for the better.’*

*‘It's a great idea, go for it. Depending on what you're looking for you can really find things such as meeting new people, learning more what a sector or business needs, physical activity. It stimulates your brain in a different environment, it takes your mind off bereavement, it's a fresh place to go to. Anything you like really, from really small impact to large impact.’*

*‘They (the organisations) are sensitive to the needs of volunteers.. don't be afraid about your skills being out of date... do it, you'll enjoy it!’*

*‘I'm very enthusiastic about volunteering, I always try to encourage people to try it. You just get so much out of giving up a little bit of your time. I would encourage them to give it a go!’*

*‘... it's the diversity of the work that's what I love about it. We could do so much more in Portsmouth.’*

*‘I had little interest in volunteering outside the city. There is a sense of belonging in the city. It's specific to Portsmouth, I think. It seems unique to Portsmouth.’*



*Innes Richens  
December 2024*

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