

## Volunteering whilst on benefits

**Job Seekers-** People on JSA can do as much voluntary work as they want as long as they remain available for and are actively seeking work.

**Income Support-** Volunteering should not affect someone's Income Support as long as they are not receiving any money other than reimbursement of expenses.

**Incapacity Benefit-** An individual in receipt of incapacity benefit can volunteer.

You are asked to inform your benefits agency that you are volunteering. If you are experiencing difficulties, please contact us.

**Disability Living Allowance-** Volunteering will not affect whether an individual receives this benefit or not.

**Expenses & Benefits-** Apart from DLA, the above benefits are open only to people who are not in paid employment. Any kind of paid work would jeopardise an individual's right to claim benefits, and they may find that their payments are docked or suspended. However, expenses do not constitute a payment, so volunteers can receive reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (any expenses that they have incurred because they are volunteering) without their benefits being affected.

For more information about volunteering contact  
**Volunteer Centre Swindon.**

Our office is at:

1 John Street  
Swindon, SN1 1RT

**01793 420557**

Email us at:

[info@swindonvolunteers.org.uk](mailto:info@swindonvolunteers.org.uk)

[www.swindonvolunteers.org.uk](http://www.swindonvolunteers.org.uk)

You can also search volunteering opportunities at :

[www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)

**Drop in Times**  
**Monday to Friday**  
**11:00am—3:00pm**

Registered Charity No. 1078012  
October 2006

## Volunteering Rights and Responsibilities



**Volunteer Centre Swindon provides free guidance for anyone looking for volunteering opportunities. We also give free support and good practice advice to volunteer-involving organisations.**

This leaflet outlines your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer. If you have any questions that this leaflet hasn't answered please contact us and we will do our best to help you.

## Equal Opportunities

We recognise that unfair discrimination exists in our society. However we believe that everyone has a right to equal treatment. We aim to treat all people fairly and will actively challenge prejudice where it occurs.

All volunteers are entitled to equal treatment irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, age, religion, community background or beliefs.

We currently collect equal opportunities data for statistical monitoring. Be assured this is confidential and is never used to assess suitability for volunteer roles.

## Confidentiality

All information we collect from volunteers will remain confidential unless an agreement has been made with the volunteer to pass this information on.

## Rights

Volunteer Centre Swindon believes that:

- volunteers should NOT be used to cover work that is, or has previously been done by paid workers
- volunteers should be recruited only where staff agree to the arrangement and welcome volunteers
- voluntary activity should be distinct from paid employment, it should complement paid work
- volunteers should be safe in the work they do and be covered by appropriate insurance
- volunteers should be reimbursed for all out of pocket expenses
- volunteers have the right to know why they were not accepted for voluntary work
- volunteers have the right to appropriate training/induction to enable them to carry out their volunteering
- sufficient resources should be budgeted to support volunteers, including management and/or peer support, office space and equipment
- volunteers should have the same protection under health and safety guidelines and public liability insurance as paid employees

## Responsibilities

As a volunteer, you have the responsibility to:

- be reliable
- work within the aims and objectives of the organisation
- be honest if there are any problems
- respect confidentiality
- treat all people equally
- meet time and duty commitments

## Additionally

We would recommend that:

- volunteers should be given an induction when they start and have a clear idea of the tasks they are to undertake
- volunteers should know who they are to be supervised by and should have the opportunity to have support meetings with this person
- volunteers should receive other support and training as appropriate

## Finally

If in the course of your volunteering you experience any problems, please feel free to come and talk to us at Volunteer Centre Swindon and we will do our best to help you.