

Volunteering, unemployment and the church

Being unemployed can be an anxious and distressing time. Volunteering can be a way of using skills, developing new ones and maintaining a pattern of work.

A recent publication by the Department of Work and Pensions states:

'Volunteering helps other people and can also help you in many ways. It can give you a better chance of getting paid work, by helping you to:

Learn new skills, practise the skills you have, become more confident, put some volunteering skills on your CV, pick up good ideas from other people, show employers you can keep regular hours and handle commitment meet people who can help you find paid work, have things to talk about in a job interview and get references.'

BY PROVIDING VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES YOUR CHURCH COULD SUPPORT SOMEONE AND GIVE THEM A BETTER CHANCE OF GETTING PAID WORK

There is work to be done in every church, church members may know of opportunities in other organisations or be able to help with CVs and other skills.

VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED COULD ...

- ☆ *Join planning teams for church events e.g. pilgrimages, fetes, social events, church weekends.*
- ☆ *Use their computer skills to develop church communications and help with administration.*
- ☆ *Teach church members new skills*
- ☆ *Start or help run a church library or information resource*
- ☆ *Help maintain the church grounds*
- ☆ *Help maintain the church building*
- ☆ *Assist with toddler groups, youth groups or groups for the elderly (after appropriate checks)*
- ☆ *Establish a taxi service to bring people to church activities*
- ☆ *Be involved in fund-raising*
- ☆ *Be part of the Welcome Team*

AND SO MUCH MORE ...

The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose

I Corinthians 12:7

Resources

The following resources can support your church ministry to the unemployed...

‘Volunteering while getting benefits’ - jobcentreplus leaflet

This leaflet sets out the benefits of volunteering for someone who is unemployed and gives details of how volunteering affects benefit payments etc. Available from jobcentreplus or online at direct.gov.uk

Volunteering England – a national resource for volunteers and volunteer managers
www.volunteering.org.uk

In their Recruitment Guide Overview, 2009, they state:

‘People who are unemployed often have a huge amount to offer and can gain a great deal from volunteering. They need not put their benefits in jeopardy, although they should tell the Benefits Agency about their volunteering. Unemployed people can gain skills and experience from volunteering, and it can help them to remain in touch with the world of work. They are likely to want voluntary work that provides them with a chance to gain skills and experience that will be helpful in getting paid work.’

If your church is unable to offer an appropriate role to a volunteer do encourage them to make contact with their local Volunteer Centre.

Birmingham Volunteer Service Council (BVSC) is an independent charity working to promote and develop voluntary and community organisations in the city. Contact details: BVSC, 138 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6D. Tel: 0121 643 4343. www.bvsc.org

Solihull Sustain provides information and volunteering opportunities. Contact details: Tel: 0121 705 8820. email: volunteering@solihull-sustain.org.uk www.solihull-sustain.org.uk

Sandwell Volunteer Bureau provides information and opportunities in Sandwell. www.sandwellvolunteerbureau.org

Hospitals, schools and charities can be approached directly about volunteering opportunities.

National Volunteer Centres include:

DO-IT www.do-it.org.uk which has lists of opportunities in your area.

Changemakers, working to unlock the leadership potential of young people, 16—25, offering training, coaching, peer support and real-world leadership experience www.changemakers.org.uk.