

# Volunteering Handbook

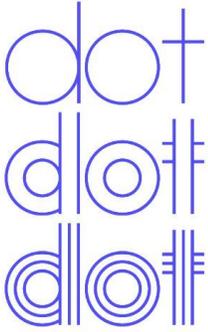
*Getting started with volunteering:*

- **STEP 1:** Write a list of the causes that you feel passionate about
- **STEP 2:** Think about what skills you have and what you enjoy doing (e.g. being outside, talking to people, organising projects, getting creative and making things etc). Volunteering can be more rewarding and impactful if you're doing what you're good at!
- **STEP 3:** Think about your availability and lifestyle. Consider when you will be available to volunteer and how it needs to fit into your schedule. Where can you travel to? Can you commit to a regular weekly slot, or do you need something more flexible? All of these things might guide your choice of volunteering.
- **STEP 4:** Begin doing research online or over the phone - or even by dropping into smaller charities to talk to staff. Look for opportunities that line up with your preferences. Start making applications or arranging your first volunteering.

This step can feel intimidating, and sometimes there can be paperwork to complete - keep going! The more you reach out, talk to organisations and get involved, the quicker you will find something that you love.

The following organisations are good at connecting volunteers to charities looking for volunteers:

- Do-it: [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)
- Reach: [www.reachskills.org.uk](http://www.reachskills.org.uk)
- Jewish Volunteer Network: [www.jvn.org.uk](http://www.jvn.org.uk)
- Volunteering Matters: [www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk](http://www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk)
- Team London (London only): [volunteerteam.london.gov.uk](http://volunteerteam.london.gov.uk)
- Neighbourly: [www.neighbourly.com](http://www.neighbourly.com)
- You can also try the local volunteer centre in your borough or county

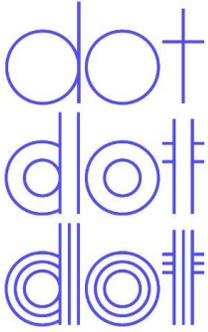


*Top tips for finding volunteering opportunities:*

- Apply for a few volunteering roles, as it's likely some organisations may not get back to you quickly
- Speak to fellow Dot Dot Dot guardians, local libraries or community centres for ideas
- Find some remote/easy to set-up volunteering for months where you're under 16 hours
- Ask your Relationship Coordinator what other guardians in your area are doing
- If you're interested in working with children or vulnerable people, you'll need a DBS check. This can take a while and could delay your start in a role so think about some short term volunteering in the meantime.

*Dot Dot Dot's approach to volunteering:*

- **Getting up to 16 hours:** We understand that moving into a new home in a new neighbourhood means that you need time to familiarise yourself with the area. This is why we give our guardians three months to build up to volunteering 16 hours each month. Our expectation is that in your first month, you have contacted voluntary organisations, by the second month you have begun recording your volunteering and by the third month you are on target to complete 16 hours. In these first 3 months, you should still be completing your Volunteer Report Form to update us on your progress.
- **Recording your volunteering:** To track volunteering, we require that you complete a monthly Volunteer Report Form. Please fill these in regardless of how many hours you've done - your first month might be zero hours due to research, whilst your 10th month might tell us you've done fewer hours due to a holiday. The main thing is to keep us informed.
- **Monitoring volunteering:** We conduct monthly checks to ensure volunteering is happening. The typical procedure for sanctions regarding rule-breaking also applies to your volunteering, and failure to meet your hours or fill out report forms can lead to a termination of your license agreement with Dot Dot Dot.



### *More volunteering ideas:*

- **Conservation charities** often run one-off events like litter-picks or canal clean-ups. Some London guardians work with Thames 21, and most areas have an equivalent, like the Chiltern Rangers in High Wycombe. You can also organise your own litter-pick in your area.
- **Get fit** while you volunteer! Look into organisations like Good Gym or apply to do dog walking for the RSPCA
- **Running one-off events** is an easy way to start volunteering. Try:
  - Team London: <https://volunteerteam.london.gov.uk>
  - Sport + Recreation Alliance [www.sportandrecreation.org.uk](http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk)
- **Organise a template event** for charities - such as Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day or a letter writing event for Amnesty International
- **Create bespoke events** like a clothes swap (and get an organisation like TRAIID to collect your goods for you) or a litter picking day with guardians in your area. Send us pictures and we can spread the word about your good work!  
*If you are planning your own event, Tesco have a resource that helps you plan and fund it: Bags of Help [www.groundwork.org.uk](http://www.groundwork.org.uk)*
- **Remote volunteering** is a great way to fit volunteering into your busy schedule.
  - Use do-it.org's 'Do it at home' function or try googling "online volunteering" to find opportunities you can do remotely
  - EthicalAngel.com is a website for people with specialised skills (e.g. lawyers, marketers etc) who want to take on complex projects in volunteering capacity

### *Other resources:*

- **ValueYou card:** Sign up for rewards for volunteering by registering for a ValueYou card. Contact: [coordinator@valueyou.org](mailto:coordinator@valueyou.org) / 07926 164 827
- Keep an eye on the monthly volunteer email for ideas and opportunities. If you'd like to shout about your volunteering in a blog, or have any volunteering opportunities you would like us to promote to other guardians, please let your Relationship Coordinator know.