

5 December 2024

International Volunteers Day takes place on 5 December every year and is a chance to recognise the fantastic contribution volunteers make to our communities and to say thank you.

Volunteers play a key role in making a difference to our communities.

Today is a great time for us to thank all volunteers for their invaluable contribution and also consider volunteering ourselves.

Volunteering doesn't just help others and the community but is has also shown to improve volunteers' wellbeing too.

It's human nature to feel good after helping someone out. But volunteering can also help you gain valuable new skills and experiences, boost your confidence and be your chance to make a difference.

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge. Regardless of the motivation, by volunteering they are making a difference to the community.



Volunteering is a hugely valuable and rewarding experience for the volunteers and the communities they support.

There are many reasons to volunteer, including:

Community - volunteering helps us giveback to those around us, particularly in the community we live or work in. When you volunteer you strengthen your community, improve the environment you live in, give something back to an organisation, make a difference to the lives of others and help others less fortunate or without a voice

Volunteering enables people to play an active role in society and contribute to positive social change. Volunteers support vulnerable people in society and enable them to live a healthy and rewarding life.

This could mean support with things we take for granted, such as practical help at home for disabled or older people, mentoring a care leaver and helping them to find their feet as an adult, or taking part in a litter pick or at a local scouting group.

Your mental health and self-esteem

- volunteering also makes you feel good. In fact, a study has shown that not only is volunteering associated with increased happiness and lower depression, but it also reduces the risk of premature death.

This is especially true if you enjoy volunteering and feel valued and part of a team. You will spend quality time away from work or your busy lifestyle and be in the moment. It may help you gain confidence and improve your self-esteem. Volunteering can also help to improve your mental health.

Evidence suggest there are 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. One of which is to give to others, research suggests that acts of giving and kindness and being part of community life can improve your mental wellbeing. For more details on the **5 steps to mental wellbeing** click [here](#).



Action for Happiness list ten key ingredients for a happy and fulfilling life: giving, relating, exercising, awareness, trying out, direction, resilience, emotions, acceptance and meaning. Volunteering ticks most if not all of these boxes. For more details click [here](#).





Your Physical health – there are lots of different ways you can volunteer, but many of them involve physical tasks, like litter picking, dog walking for a local shelter, wildlife conservation and sports coaching, all of which will help keep you fit whilst you are also enjoying nature and the outdoors.

There is lots of anecdotal evidence that volunteering has a positive impact on both your physical and mental health.

Social – volunteering is a way to get a better understanding of people, cultures, places and organisations which can also lead to more social connections.

Researchers believe that volunteering can extend a person's life because humans thrive on social connections. Eye contact and smiling for example release the hormone oxytocin, which helps us handle stress better. Social interaction improves mental and physical health. When you volunteer you strengthen your social network, you make connections with the people you are helping, and you cultivate friendships with other volunteers. Volunteering creates stronger bonds between friends, family, and co-workers. People build closer relationships, better connections, and more powerful attachments to people when they work together.

Personal Development – volunteering is an opportunity to learn new skills, and can boost employment prospects. For some people, volunteering can be a route to employment, or a chance to try something new which may lead to a career change. Volunteering can also be a way of enhancing a CV, improving employment prospects, gaining an accreditation or using your existing professional skills and knowledge to benefit others.

By volunteering in a specific profession you can gain valuable experience for a future career, for example, becoming a Police Special before joining the force.

Values – volunteering can satisfy personal values or humanitarian concerns. For some people this can have a religious component. For instance, helping those less fortunate is a large part of Christianity and the concept of karma in Hinduism means those good deeds come back to you.



People who volunteer, report a greater sense of purpose and meaning in their lives.

Volunteering within the Police Service

There are many volunteering roles within and connected to the Police Service, including the Special Constabulary, Police Chaplains, Police Service Volunteers and our own FAO and AO's.

Police volunteering roles provide an opportunity to do something worthwhile in your spare

time, making a real difference to your local Police Force and to your community.

It allows you to become involved with Policing and to be part of the Policing family and to make a positive contribution to your area.



Police Mutual FAOs and AO volunteers

At Police Mutual we have volunteer Force Authorised Officers and Authorised Officers who represent Police Mutual customers within their own forces.

Our volunteers are a vital part of the team and assist us hugely in promoting the financial wellbeing support we offer. Their assistance and advocacy are greatly appreciated.

We would like to thank all of our FAOs and AOs for their continued support.



Do you want to give something back and make a difference with your spare time? Many serving and retired Police Service employees volunteer.

If you're interested in volunteering, here are some websites where you can find out more information:

[Volunteering Matters](#)

[NCVO](#)

[Police UK Volunteering](#)



Worrying about money can be extremely stressful and may lead to mental health conditions. Police Mutual are here to help. We want to break down the stigma surrounding debt and get people talking about money.

We've teamed up with **PayPlan***, one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call **PayPlan*** on **0800 197 8433**.

Police Mutual Services

Our Care Line Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support.

Wisdom App



Download the **Wisdom App** provided by **Health Assured** and register today - your code is **MHA107477**



To read more of our wellbeing guides take a look at our **Wellbeing Hub** [here](#).

Call us **0151 242 7640** Visit **policemutual.co.uk**
We're open from **9am - 5pm Mon - Fri**

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