



## New Leaf Volunteering – Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. What can you expect from CVS?

A. CVS will meet with you to provide support with volunteering; completing a skills plan and agreeing three objectives you aim to achieve by volunteering over a total of 20 hours e.g. improve confidence, gain a reference or improve your CV. We will work with you to find opportunities that will allow you to meet your goals and provide support with making your applications and will support you as you continue your volunteering journey into a placement.

### Q. What is volunteering?

A. Volunteering is giving your time freely to help and support society or your community. Volunteering can help you to develop new skills and try something new. It can help you prepare for paid work by increasing your confidence and experience.

### Q. What are the benefits of volunteering?

A. There are many benefits to volunteering – for example learn new skills, add to your CV, gain a reference, meet new people, add to your confidence and get into a routine. Many employers look more favourably on people who have spent time volunteering and many of the skills you gain can be transferred to work.

### Q. What sort of organisations do you refer volunteers to?

A. We refer volunteers to not for profit organisations, such as charities and community groups.

### Q. What can I do?

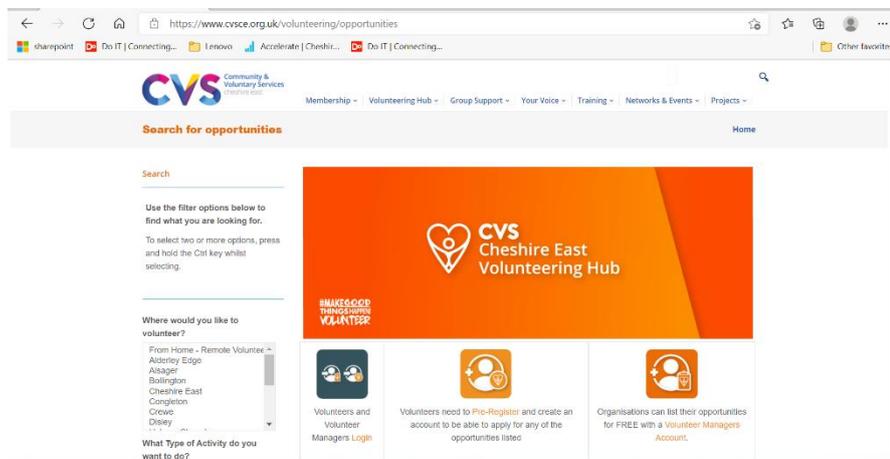
A. You can get involved with all sorts of things.... Retail and customer service, administration, driving, fundraising, buddying, youth work to name just a few. Think about your action plan and your end goal. What skills you would like to get? Also, think about the activities you that like doing and whether there is a specific cause or group that you would like to help.

If you would like some ideas - look at [Search for opportunities | CVS Cheshire East \(cvsce.org.uk\)](https://cvsce.org.uk) to see the full range of current opportunities and see which appeal to you most.

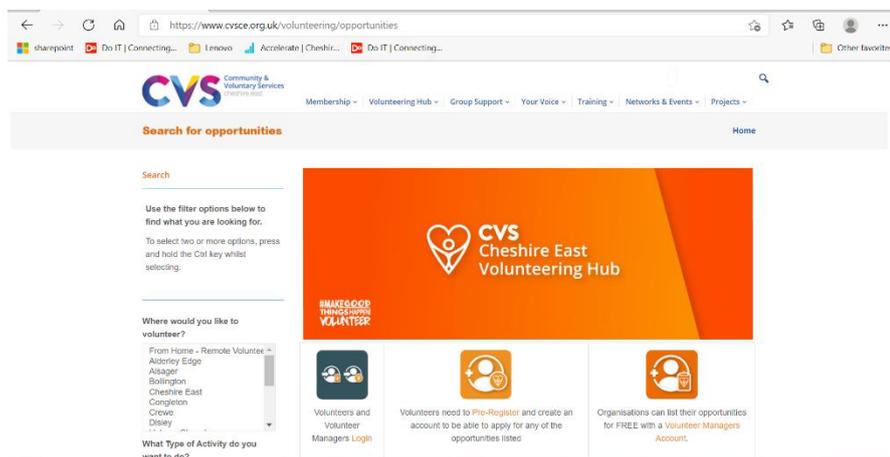


Please have a look at the videos below for a step-by-step guide to searching our current opportunities and applying for an opportunity.

### [How to Search Our Current Volunteering Opportunities:](#)



### [Applying for a Volunteering Opportunity:](#)



### **Q. How much time do I need to give?**

A. Every volunteer role will vary in the time that is required on a weekly basis. Your commitment to volunteering as part of your New Leaf action plan is a total of 20 hours (with a minimum of 2.5 hours per week); however we encourage you to continue to volunteer for as long as possible.

**Q. Can I leave if I don't like it?**

A. Of course you can. You are not under a contract (like paid staff). However, we would advise you to speak to your mentor and volunteer advisor and we can help you to make changes to the role or find something else.

**Q. Do I get paid?**

A. No. Volunteering is not about being paid for the task/role that you applied for. However, you should get support with any expenses incurred whilst you volunteer through the New Leaf project.

**Q. Do I need any qualifications?**

A. This just depends on the type of volunteering role you are doing. There are many roles that do not need qualifications.

**Q. Can I get a qualification?**

A. This depends on your role as a volunteer. Training may be offered by an organisation if it is relevant to the role.

**Q. Will I be interviewed?**

A. Most organisations will ask you to go along for an informal chat / interview. This is a great way for you to find out a little more about each other and whether the role is right for you.

**Q. Will references be taken up by the organisations I apply to?**

A. It depends on the role, but as part of their good practice management, most organisations will require at least two references. To support you through New Leaf we may be able to help provide you with references.

**Q. I have a criminal record – can I volunteer?**

A. Yes, usually. If you think that, your criminal record may prevent you from volunteering, please discuss this with your mentor and volunteer advisor, as this is not always the case.

**Q. Do I have to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?**

A. It depends on the role, but some groups will carry out a DBS (formerly CRB) check but always with your permission. If this worries, you then speak to your mentor or volunteer advisor.

**Q. Will my benefits be affected if I volunteer?**

A. If you are in receipt of benefits, you should let the Job Centre or Benefits Agency know that you intend to carry out a voluntary role. You can volunteer for as many hours as you want, as long as you still meet the conditions to receive your benefit or tax credit. Your volunteering can count to up to half the time you agree to spend looking for and preparing for work in your Universal Credit 'Claimant Commitment'.

**Q. How will I be supported?**

A. This depends on how much support you/ your mentor think you need. We will try to match you with an organisation, which will provide this support.

If you are still not sure and would like more information - ask your mentor to arrange a chat with the volunteer advisor.

**CVS Cheshire East contacts:**

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