

why become more inclusive?

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Because it's fair

Inclusive volunteering is essential to avoid discriminating against individuals.

“Discrimination against young disabled people is unfair and a huge waste of potential for the individuals and organisations involved. Young disabled people need their rights recognised, and that includes their right to access volunteering.”

Nick Palfreyman, young deaf person

Because it's beneficial for your organisation

Your pool of potential volunteers increases so you can benefit from more volunteers.

You will attract a more diverse group of volunteers that will:

- offer a wider range of skills, experiences and perspectives
- be more flexible
- be more sustainable
- better reflect the community as a whole
- offer increased opportunities to develop community relations and partnerships
- help to broaden your client group's understanding of diversity.

By involving a diversity of volunteers, the stereotypes of volunteer work are broken down and the profile of volunteering is improved.

Involving previously untapped groups of volunteers can bring new ideas and 'a breath of fresh air'.

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Specific benefits of involving young disabled volunteers can include:

- Additional enthusiasm.
- Commitment from young people who need work experience prior to paid employment.
- Young volunteers can relate to their peer group and can work well with young clients and provide positive role models.

“Diversity brings many advantages to organisations. They are more likely to find the right person for a role if they do not exclude talented young disabled people.”

*Jo Carter, Head of Development,
NSPCC*

what does it mean to volunteer?

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For young disabled people, volunteering is an important opportunity to:

- Do something worthwhile
- Demonstrate their capabilities
- Develop self awareness and confidence
- Gain work experience
- Get involved and meet new people
- Challenge attitudes to disability
- Get their voice heard
- Try something new and have fun

For young people, leaving education and starting out on their adult lives can be a stressful time. For disabled people, such transitions can be even more challenging. They may find themselves leaving a residential school and moving into independent living where they will need to make informed choices about services they receive.

Volunteering can be helpful during transition: in building confidence; in making friends and contacts; in providing opportunities for new experiences; and in giving structure and continuity during times of change and upheaval. Further information is available from the Transition Information Network*.

*see contacts page 69

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“Volunteering is a way of making a difference but also of showing people that there are people who care and who want to improve things. Volunteering has also helped me to think about what I would like to do as a career.”

Chris Styles, canal restoration volunteer

“Having benefited as a disabled person from others, this has motivated me to reciprocate. I have come to believe that life is a matter of give and take. I have experienced a real sense of team spirit.”

Jessica Wild, primary school volunteer

