

Gateshead Volunteer Centre

Supported Volunteering

2024/2025 Highlights



A group of young people with Kings Trust Dunston. The group was supported by Gateshead Volunteer Centre to volunteer with Felling Food Network, and St. Chad's Community Kitchen.

Gateshead Volunteer Centre: Celebrating the positive impact of volunteering

From April 2024 to March 2025, Gateshead Volunteer Centre (GVC), through its Support Into Volunteering service, helped 57 residents with additional needs and multiple barriers into volunteer opportunities.

Additionally, through the [OurGateshead](#) website, GVC has processed over 1,000 enquiries from residents for volunteering roles.

This booklet contains examples of residents that have been supported on a one to one basis and the positive impact volunteering has had on their lives.

Mohamed's story:

Mohamed is an asylum seeker, unable to currently work, but eager to access professional skills for future employment.

After self-referring at a September drop in at Peace of Mind, GVC worked with him to see how a volunteer opportunity could help him feel included.

A farmer in his home country, Mohamed was particularly interested in maintenance and 'hands on' roles. After exploring different opportunities, a role at Foundations Furniture was identified as something that Mohamed would enjoy and allow him to develop and maintain the skills he was looking for.

Holding a meeting with volunteer coordinator Brett at Foundations Furniture, and having a chat about the role, Mohamed agreed to begin volunteering. Brett also supported him under the Foundations4Work programme an additional professional development module, which has given Mohamed important skills such as CV writing and interview preparation. Starting the role, Foundations Furniture was also funded to buy Mohamed some steel toe cap boots to help the community in furniture delivery!

Speaking about his experience, Mohamed believes:



“It’s made me more self-confident, and it made me communicate with people more.”

“It makes you feel powerful and also improves my English.... Volunteering helps me be a social person and supports me to find work in the future.”



Olha moved to the UK 2 years ago with her 2 children (3 and 11) from Ukraine when the war with Russia began. She has slowly been building a life in the UK for both herself and her children. Olha's confidence was very low having to navigate a new way of life, feeling isolated and not being confident with her conversational English.

GVC met Olha at an Alive Church drop in. After discussions Olha shared that she would love to develop her skills and confidence, however her main barriers were her anxiety around her spoken English and the limited childcare for her 3-year-old daughter.

GVC worked with Olha to identify a light touch volunteer role she could be involved with. The Family Hub in Deckham was Olha's preference as with further discussions with the team they were more than happy to accommodate her needs incorporating some light touch duties at one of their under 5s activities but also supporting Olha to look after her daughter.

After meeting with the staff Olha and her daughter were welcomed to the group. This has been a great opportunity for both Olha and her daughter to build connections and make new friends.

Longer term Olha would like to be a teaching assistant, and this opportunity is allowing Olha to develop her skills, confidence, and aspirations for the future.

David's story...

David was referred to GVC by Edbert's House. David had suffered a stroke, resulting in communication difficulties and physical barriers requiring the use of a wheelchair. Prior to his stroke, he worked in a busy role for a large parcel company, managing deliveries across the globe with a high level of responsibility. Since his stroke he desperately missed working and this had a major impact on his mental health and wellbeing. Being unable to work also significantly increased his social isolation.

GVC staff met with David and his family to learn more about his background, his interests and any barriers he may have to ensure that they could find a volunteer role that could accommodate his needs, but also that he would enjoy.

GVC helped David to explore his skills to identify a suitable volunteer role. After discussing various options we identified Teams Life Centre as an organisation that could accommodate his needs and offer a role within the office that David would enjoy and could utilise his skills.

A meeting was arranged with Margaret, who is the Centre Manager. David was given a tour of the centre and further discussions were had to see how they could best accommodate his access requirements. David was extremely happy and began their induction process promptly.

Teams Life Centre has adapted their office to ensure David can access it freely with his wheelchair and provided him with a laptop, enabling him to work at his own pace either in the office space or in the communal area where he can socialise with other volunteers and residents.

This role has allowed David to regain his sense of purpose and be part of the wider community, whilst also being a valuable asset to Teams Life Centre in supporting them with administration and databases.



“In volunteering I have been cared for. It is very good. I feel less lonely.”

Contact details

If you would like further information on how GVC can support your organisation or how we can support people you are working with into meaningful volunteering opportunities we would love to hear from you.



Laurie Zebik

**Gateshead Volunteer Development
Coordinator**



Harley Kuyck-Cohen

**Gateshead Volunteer Development
Officer**

Email:

volunteering@connectedvoice.org.uk

Telephone:

0191 235 7038

Website:

<https://www.connectedvoice.org.uk/services/connected-voice-volunteering/gateshead-volunteer-centre>