

Careers Guide

Highlighting careers in the **voluntary**
and community **youth** sector.



This careers guide published by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, is **aimed at young people aged 13-25 years old**. It provides a brief introduction to careers in the voluntary and community youth sector, and the different jobs available working with and for young people.

The term the voluntary and community youth sector refers to a range of **organisations who work with or for young people**. These organisations are generally not-for-profit and are registered charities. Some are large national organisations whilst others are smaller, more community-led groups. Some employ hundreds of staff, and others just a few. The sector also recruits a large number of volunteers, an estimated 500,000 across England alone.

What's it like?

Working in the voluntary and community youth sector can be exciting, challenging and a rewarding career choice. The sector offers an incredible variety of jobs that can make a difference to society and young people's lives. As one Youth Adviser Alistair Langton put it

"It is a diverse, free spirited and creative sector"

The sector offers opportunities to work indoors, outdoors, face to face with young people or even campaign work that might have you knocking on politician's doors. Although the level of pay in the sector is often lower than corporate companies, it does offer great job satisfaction. The work is interesting, often providing flexible working hours and a chance to work in a diverse workforce with a higher proportion of women, disabled workers and a greater ethnic mix, as compared to other work sectors.

Type of work on offer

There is a fantastic range of jobs out there like working for young people's rights; increasing youth participation; advice work; counselling; youth work; mentoring; sport and outdoor activities; youth fundraising; campaigning; celebrity management; events; media work; or direct work with young people helping them with issues such as drugs, alcohol, sexual health and homelessness etc.

It is estimated that 20% of youth work in the UK is delivered through Christian faith-based organisations e.g. The Methodist Association of Youth Clubs. In addition, vital support services are provided by other faith organisations such as The Muslim Youth Helpline who offer an advice service to young Muslims.

There are also the job roles which support staff and volunteers to deliver services, for example, marketing, IT, personnel, finance, and administration. These roles are vital to the smooth and effective running of a voluntary organisation.

An additional task for many staff working in the voluntary and community youth sector is working with volunteers. This may involve recruiting, supervising and training volunteers.

Case Study

Ewan Main
Online Young Carers' Worker,
The Princess Royal Trust for Carers
www.carers.org
Time in post: three years

How did you get involved in working in the voluntary sector?

'Volunteering for York Nightline, the student-run listening service. I became coordinator of the service and that experience helped me get a job in a young people's information and counselling service.'

What is your career history to date?

'Various part time jobs (at the same time) in youth projects - it's been a way to follow opportunities that interest me. I also worked as a student financial adviser for 18 months.'

Did you do any other training or voluntary work to progress your career?

- MA post-graduate qualification in Community and Youth Work, part-time
- Various short-term training on subjects to do with debt, benefits, housing and homelessness, working with suicidal young people, sexual health, drugs and alcohol

What does your job involve?

'I am one of two youth workers behind the online support service for young carers, www.youngcarers.net. I provide confidential and sometimes intensive support to young carers by email and in one-to-one web chats. We supervise all web chats to make sure they are safe. I'm also one of our official agony aunts for young carers.'

Career Progression and Development

There are good opportunities for promotion and career development. The structure of larger charities can offer clearer career paths and in-house training schemes for both paid staff and volunteers. Smaller charities can offer good opportunities for roles which involve more multi-tasking and are a great way of picking up lots of different skills. These skills can then help you progress on to other jobs.

Many smaller voluntary organisations are community based. And so skills for working in communities can be picked up. Skills such as: speaking on behalf of young people and the community; community leadership; working with different agencies and people from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures can be developed.

Both large and small organisations offer the potential to work your way up to chief executive level, and it is not uncommon for smaller national organisations to have chief executives under the age of 30.

An Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) will be introduced by 2010, based on what is known as the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge. This common core sets out the basic skills and knowledge needed by people (including volunteers) whose work brings them into regular contact with children, young people and families. It will make it easier to see what qualifications and progression routes are available both within and across the children and young people's workforce to improve career pathways.

“Both large and small organisations offer the potential to work your way up to chief executive level, and it is not uncommon for smaller national organisations to have chief executives under the age of 30.”

Case Study

Daniel Rose
Youth Volunteering & Participation Officer
The National Trust
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Time in post: two years

How did you get involved in working in the voluntary sector?

‘Volunteering in my teens I campaigned for young people to be involved in decision-making and chaired my local Youth Council. I later became a trustee of a local heritage preservation trust.’

What is your career history to date?

- Youth Worker in various locations including schools
- Coordinator of Swindon Youth Council
- Manager of National Youth Council Conference
- Coordinator, Activities for Disabled Children (Social Services)
- Youth Worker, Swindon College

Did you do any other training or voluntary work to progress your career?

‘I put off going to university as I felt I was learning so much through my voluntary and paid work. I feel you cannot underestimate the importance of practical learning in the real world.’

What does your job involve?

‘I am nationally responsible for developing a culture of youth participation within The National Trust and creating opportunities for young people to be listened to (e.g. organising a youth debate at the Trust's AGM). I am also responsible for developing youth volunteering and making it more accessible to diverse groups of young people.’

Salaries

As in any career area, salaries vary; starting from around £11,000 for a first post/trainee and rising to an average of £24,000 across the UK (London posts have additional weighting of around £3,500). Senior staff responsible for projects, employees and heading up charities earn on average between £30,000 - £60,000.

Salaries 06-07:

First post/trainee
£11,000 - £24,000

Senior staff
£30,000 - £60,000

Case Study

Anita Khan

Project Manager

Wycombe Youth Action

www.wycombeyouthaction.co.uk

Time in post: one year

How did you get involved in working in the voluntary sector?

'Volunteering at a youth club in the holidays, I went on to become paid staff. Initially I was thinking of becoming a teacher and wanted to gain experience but I found I enjoyed it and the classroom wasn't for me.'

What is your career history to date?

- Youth Worker - Youth and Community Centre - in an under privileged area.
- Millennium Volunteer Co-ordinator - Wycombe Youth Action - delivering volunteering projects and providing young people with accreditation.
- Key worker - PAYP (Positive Activities for Young People) Wycombe Youth Action - supporting young people to stay in education, employment or training.

Did you do any other training or voluntary work to progress your career?

'Part time youth worker training.'

What does your job involve?

'We work with young people aged 14 and 25 years old to engage them through volunteering and positive activities that aid personal development. We deliver the 'v' volunteering project, which provides a nationally recognised volunteering award. I manage a team of six staff and work with a range of funders and partners.'



Volunteering

Voluntary work is a good way to gain experience and find out whether working in the voluntary and community youth sector is for you. You get the chance to learn more about what you like doing and are good at. Mixing with staff, accessing specialist magazines that advertise jobs and being the first to hear about any temporary/internal vacancies are also a bonus.

Volunteering can be full-time, part-time (alongside studying or paid work) or through gap year schemes (UK or abroad). There are a wide range of volunteering opportunities available and it is a fantastic way to help others.

You might like to consider becoming a trustee of a charity (this is the board of governors responsible for managing charities). Charities large and small are keen to increase young people's participation on their trustee boards and it's a great way to develop your skills.

“Voluntary work is a good way to gain experience”

Volunteer Application Form: Example

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Mobile: _____

E-mail: _____

Are you a student: _____

Which school/college do you attend? _____

List any interest or hobbies: _____

Have you done volunteer work at another organisation? _____

If so where? _____

What type of work would you like to do here? _____

Tell us why you want to volunteer for this position: _____

Please indicate the days and times you can volunteer: _____

Other comments on schedule: _____

We may wish to take up references. Please list two personal references (one should be your current/last employer/volunteer supervisor/teacher-if a student). Include phone numbers where they can be reached.

Case Study

Russell Brooks Volunteer Support Officer

STAR (Student Action for Refugees)
www.star-network.org.uk

Time in post: almost one year

How did you get involved in working in the voluntary sector?

‘Volunteering with the student wing of St. John Ambulance. I started as a volunteer first aider at events, then ran the Warwick Student Society. Elected Chair of the National Student Volunteering Committee for St. John I went on to work with their National Youth Strategy Group.’

What is your career history to date?

‘This is my first paid post (aside from short term holiday jobs and internships.)’

Did you do any other training or voluntary work to progress your career?

- Two voluntary internships: British Red Cross, Youth and Retail Development Intern (12 weeks) and Cancer Research UK, Volunteer Development Intern (12 weeks)
- Currently working towards a vocational qualification in Volunteer Management

What does your job involve?

‘Supporting students and other young people (16-25) to volunteer with refugees and asylum seekers across the UK. Working for a youth-led organisation, I support members in establishing, delivering and evaluating their own volunteer projects locally, as well as providing resources and training. The range of activities our volunteers do is breathtaking, which makes the job enjoyable and challenging!’

Case Study

Jessica Reddy Assistant to the Chief Executive

The Scout Association
www.scout.org.uk
Time in post: four years

How did you get involved in working in the voluntary sector?

'I was looking to get more job satisfaction and more events experience. The real selling point was the opportunity to assist with the huge international event, the World Scout Jamboree - involving more countries than the Olympic games (40,000 Scouts from 200 countries.)'

What is your career history to date?

'On leaving college I worked for the local council. I then worked for one of the big four accountancy firms in the City of London as Personal Assistant (PA.)'

Did you do any other training or voluntary work to progress your career?

'I am now one of 100,000 adult volunteers for the Scouts. I work on the Transport Team for the Jamboree.'

What does your current job involve?

'In an ever changing and challenging role, I am involved in making the centenary celebrations happen. For example, I have been organising visits by our Chief Scout via helicopter. I am also coordinating the attendance of 1,000 guests including Heads of State and Ambassadors, to visit the Jamboree. Knowing that what I do directly helps young people, gives me great job satisfaction you just don't get from a 'normal' job.'



Entry Requirements

Some jobs in the voluntary and community youth sector require more specialist training, such as drug advice work. However when recruiting staff, many employers are more concerned about your abilities, for example the ability to relate to and work with young people. Employers will look at your skills, experience and personal attributes. Once you are in post, many employers then provide opportunities to undertake training and qualifications.

Gaining further and/or higher education qualifications before you start in your first post is beneficial and may put you ahead of the competition! but it is not always a requirement. A good guide is to look at job vacancies in newspapers, recruitment magazines and on recruitment web sites as this will provide information on what employers are looking for.

Do also talk to people you meet in the sector about their career history and how they got started.

If you are interested in becoming a youth worker then please see the NCVYS information sheets *Introduction to youth work and getting started* and *Qualifications in youth work*.

Graduate training schemes

These are occasionally offered by some large charities. Internships are more common (work placements where basic wages or expenses are paid). See specific charity websites and press adverts for details.

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What do I need if I want to get in to the voluntary youth sector?

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Passion and commitment will be helpful but you will also need to have some skills and ideally some experience to offer.

Case Study

Rebecca Hargreaves

National Development Manager

PHAB www.phabengland.org.uk

Time in post: eight years

How did you get involved in working in the voluntary sector?

'A degree in Community and Youth Work and after five years of working for the NHS, I saw the Phab role and thought it would put my qualifications and experience into practice.'

What is your career history to date?

- Solicitor's office - for two years after leaving school
- University - I decided that I wanted to do something more than my office job
- NHS worker - five years working at secure unit for people with learning disabilities

Did you do any other training or voluntary work to progress your career?

- Volunteered at two youth clubs
- Studied for an MA in Health and Welfare Management

What does your job involve?

'Working from home I travel a lot to visit Phab Clubs countrywide. Phab encourages people with and without physical disabilities to come together on equal terms to achieve complete inclusion within the wider community. I support Phab Clubs (many for young people) and attend all residential projects for young people. I recruit volunteers, many of whom are looking for experience in the voluntary sector.'



Useful Publications

National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)
www.ncvys.org.uk
Information sheet: Introduction to youth work and getting started
Information sheet: Qualifications in youth work

Working for a Charity project (NCVO)
www.workingforacharity.org.uk
Working for a better world: Your guide to careers in the charity sector

Volunteering England
Information sheet: Careers in the Voluntary Sector
www.volunteering.org.uk

Useful Links

- National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)
www.ncvys.org.uk
- National Youth Agency (NYA)
www.nya.org.uk
- Youth Active
www.youthactive.org
- Volunteering England
www.volunteering.org.uk
- Youthnet
www.youthnet.org
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk freephone 0800 2798 798
- National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)
www.navca.org.uk
- Youth Development Association
youthwork@msn.com
Tel: 0871 288 6935
- National Council of Voluntary Childcare Organisations (NCVCCO)
www.ncvcco.org.uk
- Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)
www.cwdcouncil.org.uk
- Every Child Matters
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk
- UK Workforce Hub
www.ukworkforcehub.org.uk

Volunteering Opportunities

Volunteer vacancies. Volunteering England
www.do-it.org.uk

Volunteering web site for 16-25 year olds
www.vinspired.com

Community Service Volunteers
www.csv.org.uk

Job Vacancies

Children and Young People Now
www.cypnowjobs.co.uk

Third Sector magazine
www.thirdsector.co.uk

The Guardian newspaper
(particularly Monday and Wednesday for job sections)
<http://jobs.guardian.co.uk>

FPM jobs e-newsletter
www.fpmnewsandjobs.co.uk

Charity Recruitment Agencies

- www.charitypeople.co.uk
- www.jobsincharities.co.uk
- www.charitycareers.co.uk
- www.charityjob.co.uk
- www.goodmoves.org.uk

The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England. A diverse network of voluntary and community organisations and local and regional networks, NCVYS works to inform and influence public policy, support members to improve the quality of their work, and raise the profile of the voluntary and community sector's work with young people. Visit www.ncvys.org.uk

Equal Opportunities

If you require this information in different formats or have any other need then please contact Nichola Brown at nichola@ncvys.org.uk or ring 01905 619139.

Thanks

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Disclaimer

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