

expenses you get.

## Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance

Volunteering in the UK will not affect your Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance. You can also volunteer abroad for up to six months without your benefits being affected.

## Full-time Volunteering

If you decide to become a full-time volunteer you may receive an allowance of around £50 to £60 a week, however it is less likely that you will still be eligible for benefits.

## Further Information

The Jobcentre Plus and the Department for Work and Pensions has produced a booklet containing further information about volunteering whilst receiving benefits, including the impact of volunteering on:

- National Insurance Credits and Home Responsibilities Protection
- Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Carer's Allowance

It also explains more about how full-time volunteering may affect your benefits. Please let us know if you would like a copy or visit: [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev\\_015837.pdf](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/stellent/groups/jcp/documents/websitecontent/dev_015837.pdf). Alternatively please contact your benefit provider before starting your volunteering.

## Contact us

Poole Volunteer Centre  
The Advice Centre, 54 Lagland Street  
Poole, Dorset, BH15 1QG  
Telephone: 01202 675100  
Email: [vc@poolecvcs.co.uk](mailto:vc@poolecvcs.co.uk)  
Website: [www.poolevolunteercentre.org.uk](http://www.poolevolunteercentre.org.uk)

Bournemouth Volunteer Centre  
Boscombe Link, 3-5 Palmerston Road  
Boscombe, BH1 4HN  
Telephone: 01202 466130  
Email: [contactus@bournemouthcvcs.org.uk](mailto:contactus@bournemouthcvcs.org.uk)  
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***A guide to  
volunteering while  
receiving benefits***

*Funded by GoldStar to share good practice*



**Can I afford to volunteer?**

## Will volunteering

### benefits?

Are you thinking about volunteering but worried about how it might affect the benefits that you are currently getting?

### The simple answer:

You can volunteer for as many hours as you like whilst you are receiving benefits, as long as you still meet the terms for getting them.

### The basic rules:

So you have decided that you would like to volunteer, just follow these basic rules:

- You must not be paid or receive anything for your volunteering
- You can claim expenses but you may have to declare them so keep receipts
- You must be undertaking volunteering, not 'unpaid work'
- You must inform your benefit provider about your voluntary work, for example the Jobcentre Plus or your local Council
- You must still meet the terms for receiving your benefits

### What if I am offered money or other benefits for volunteering?

You must not be paid or receive anything for your volunteering as this could affect your benefits. You must inform your benefit provider if you are given money or anything else on top of expenses as this could also affect your family or partners' benefits.

### What if I chose not to get paid for my work?

Choosing not to be paid is not the same as

volunteering. If you get Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, the Government might decide that what you would have been paid for the work are 'notional earnings' and this may affect your benefits.

### Key considerations are:

- Would someone normally be paid to do the same kind of work?
- Does your work help society or the community in some way?
- Is your work for a charity or similar group?

You are allowed to be paid your expenses, for example travel, but you may have to inform your benefit provider so make sure you keep your receipts.

## What about my expenses?

### What are expenses?

Expenses are the direct costs of your volunteering. For example:

- Bus or train fare to get to and from your volunteering
- The cost of accommodation if you have to stay away from home overnight because of your volunteering
- The cost of meals while you are volunteering
- The cost of any special equipment you need to carry out your volunteering

## Part-time Volunteering

This part of the leaflet explains how you can become a part-time volunteer without common benefits being affected:

### Jobseekers Allowance

You can volunteer and still receive Jobseekers allowance as long as you:

- Follow the basic rules
- Are still actively looking for a full-time paid job
- Are available for work
- Are still able to go to an interview at 48 hours notice
- Are still able to start a job at one weeks notice
- Let the Jobcentre Plus know before you start and tell them about any expenses you may get

### Incapacity Benefit and Income Support

You can volunteer and still get Incapacity Benefit and Income Support as long as you:

- Follow the basic rules
- Can still go for a work focused interview when asked
- Tell the Jobcentre Plus before you start and about any expenses you may receive

### Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit

You can still get Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit if you follow the basic rules for volunteering. You must tell your local Council about any volunteering you do, and any