

# Information Sheet

## 25 Leisure Ideas

This information sheet contains ideas to help you enjoy and make the most of your retirement. Even if you can't find anything in it that you'd like to do, it might give you some ideas for other activities you'd like to get involved in. Please do get in touch with us if there's something you'd like to know more about but can't find any information on.

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One of the best places to find out what's going on in your area is your local **library**. Some of the activities mentioned in this information sheet suggest that you take a trip to your library to find out more. Libraries are an excellent source of information about things such as social activities, events, education and courses, and leisure facilities such as sports clubs and fitness classes. Many libraries also have local newspapers and magazines and access to computers and the internet.

Many activities are cheaper for older people. Cinemas, theatres, museums and transport companies often offer **concessions**. You should always ask if there are discounts available, as they may not always be offered automatically.

Being a disabled person shouldn't deter you from taking part in many of the activities talked about in this information sheet. In many sections, we mention organisations which offer advice and information to disabled people on specific activities. For more general advice, try contacting the **Disabled Living Foundation**; it gives advice on equipment for daily living as well as ways of helping you to enjoy all kinds of activities.

### **Disabled Living Foundation**

380–384 Harrow Road

London W9 2HU

Helpline: 0845 130 9177

Textphone: 020 7432 8009

Web: [www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

## Community services

Community services include things such as **day centres**, **drop-in centres**, **lunch** and **social clubs**. To find out what's available in your community, try contacting some of the following:

- Your local council **social services department** will have details of services for older people. It may run its own clubs and centres, or it may contract them out to local organisations, such as Age Concern groups.
- Your local **library** should have information on local activities and clubs.
- Have a look in your **local newspaper**.
- Get in touch with your local **Age Concern** group (check your phone book, or ring **0800 00 99 66**). Each group often runs its own activities.

Even if it doesn't, it should know what is available locally, and where to go to find out more.

- If you're a carer, your local social services department will be able to tell you about **sitting services** or **respite care**. You can also contact:

**Crossroads Association (England or Wales)**

10 Regent Place  
Rugby  
Warwickshire CV21 2PN  
Tel: 0845 450 0350  
Web: [www.crossroads.org.uk](http://www.crossroads.org.uk)

**Crossroads (Scotland)**

24 George Square  
Glasgow G2 1EG  
Tel: 0141 226 3793  
Web: [www.crossroads-scotland.co.uk](http://www.crossroads-scotland.co.uk)

**Crossroads (NI)**

7 Regent Street  
Newtownards BT23 4AB  
Tel: 028 9181 4455  
Web: [www.crossroadscare.co.uk](http://www.crossroadscare.co.uk)

## Day trips, holidays and transport

Getting away from home, even if it's only for one day, can be a wonderful way to relax and have fun. You can plan a day out or holiday yourself, or maybe go away with a group of people and have everything planned for you. There are a few organisations that can help you to arrange your time away if you are having difficulties with things such as transport and accommodation, or if you have a low income.

### Day trips

Some local groups, such as **Age Concern**, organise day trips. To find out where your local group is, call Age Concern on **0800 00 99 66**, or look in your phone book.

### Holidays

Help the Aged produces a free information sheet no. 12, *Holidays*, which goes into more detail about how to plan your time away, and where to get advice on accommodation and transport. Contact the Information Resources Team at the address on the last page for a copy. Or you can download a copy from [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)

**Tourism for All** specialises in providing holiday and travel information to older and disabled people. It can also give advice to people on a low income. The contact details are:

### **Tourism for All**

c/o Vitalise  
Shap Road Industrial Estate  
Kendal  
Cumbria LA9 6NZ  
Tel: 0845 124 9971  
Web: [www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk)

### Transport

Help the Aged produces a free advice leaflet called *Staying Active and Independent* which gives advice on getting out and about and includes sections on public transport, mobility aids, disabled drivers and financial help. Contact the Information Resources Team for a copy.

You should get concessions or free travel on local public transport. Contact your local council to see what it offers.

#### Travelling by coach

Coaches are often cheaper than trains and many coach companies offer discounts to older people. For example, National Express offers discounts on travel on most of its services if you book a 'routesixty' fare. You can get information about fares, timetables and the coach's facilities from the coach company itself or a travel agent.

#### Travelling by train

You can get a **Senior Railcard** or a **Disabled Persons Railcard**; both of these offer discounts on rail travel around the country. You can get more information and an application form from main railway stations or from the website [www.railcard.co.uk](http://www.railcard.co.uk)

For information on fares and timetables, ring **National Rail Enquiries** on 08457 48 49 50.

#### Travelling by car

Many local organisations, such as WRVS and the British Red Cross, run driving schemes where volunteers drive you to social events. Check your phone book for local groups.

Help the Aged produces a free information sheet, no.29 *Entitlements for the Over 60s*, which has more information on travel concessions.

## Education

There are many opportunities to carry on learning when you're retired: you could learn a new language, play the piano, learn to cook different types of food, or do a degree. It can be a good time to start doing something you always meant to, but never had the time for. You don't have to choose something academic or that involves lots of studying. You can choose to learn something practical, or learn simply for the pleasure of knowing something new. Classes can also be a good way to meet new people, particularly as they are likely to share your interest. Learning doesn't have to be expensive either, as there are often concessions for older people (although you may have to ask for them).

You can learn in your own home too. Many organisations run distance long learning programmes (see below on pages 6–7).

### Finding out more

- Ask at your **library** for details of local courses. It may run its own courses and can help you with personal study and research. Some libraries can provide services in your home and may have special resources for people with hearing and sight difficulties. Some can also teach you to use computers and how to access the internet.
- Your **local council education office** should be in the phone book under the name of your council. It will provide a wide range of adult education activities. Some can also provide tutors for classes in clubs, day centres and care homes. It will also keep details of local colleges.
- Local **museums** and **galleries** often run special activities or courses. Check with them for details, or look in your library or local paper.

### Useful contacts

#### **AbilityNet**

PO Box 94

Warwick CV34 5WS

Tel: 0800 26 95 45

Web: [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)

Provides advice on computing to disabled people.

#### **Age Concern Information Line**

Age Concern Freepost (SWB 30375)

Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7ZZ

Tel: 0800 00 99 66

Web: [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)

Produces a free factsheet called *Leisure and Learning*.

**Learn Direct**

Advice service

Tel: 0800 100 900

Courses

Tel: 0800 101 901 (in Scotland, call 0808 100 9000)

Web: [www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk)

Network of local centres. Also provides advice and information on over 900,000 courses.

**National Extension College**

The Michael Young Centre

Purbeck Road

Cambridge

Cambridgeshire CB2 8HN

Tel: 0800 389 2839

Web: [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk)

Offers over 100 home study courses in a range of subjects.

**Open and Distance Learning  
Quality Council**

16 Park Crescent

London W1B 1AH

Tel: 020 7612 7090

Web: [www.odlqc.org.uk](http://www.odlqc.org.uk)

Provides a list of accredited courses on a chosen subject and information on distance learning; can also give advice on how to choose a course.

**National Adult School  
Organisation (NASO)**

Riverton, 370 Humberstone Road

Leicester LE5 0SA

Tel: 0116 253 8333

Web: [www.naso.org.uk](http://www.naso.org.uk)

Organises local study groups and produces a handbook and magazine.

**The National Institute of Adult  
Continuing Education**

Renaissance House

20 Princess Road West

Leicester LE1 6TP

Tel: 0116 204 4200

Web: [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

Provides general information to adults keen to find out more about learning in England and Wales.

**Open College of the Arts**

Michael Young Arts Centre

Redbrook Business Park

Wilthorpe Road

Barnsley S75 1JN

Tel: 0800 731 2116

Web: [www.oqa-uk.com](http://www.oqa-uk.com)

Study at home courses which include painting, sculpture and interior design.

**The Open University**  
PO Box 197  
Milton Keynes MK7 6BJ  
Tel: 0845 300 6090  
Web: [www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)

Study for diplomas and degrees at home.

**University of the Third Age (U3A)**  
19 East Street  
Bromley BR1 1QH  
Tel: 020 8466 6139  
Web: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

Local groups of older people who organise themselves for the purpose of learning. U3A also provides online courses.

**Workers' Educational Association**  
3rd Floor, 70 Clifton Street  
London EC2A 4HB  
Tel: 020 7375 3092  
Web: [www.wea.org.uk](http://www.wea.org.uk)

The WEA runs over 10,000 courses through local and regional centres. There are also WEA associations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## Exercise and sport

It's never too late to take up a new sport or to get fit. There should be a sport or form of exercise to suit you, whatever your ability. You could join a club, and take part in a competitive sport such as tennis, or you might prefer something more relaxing, such as yoga, or a bit more private, such as exercising to a video in your own home. Dancing is also a very good form of exercise and you can combine exercise with making new friends.

There is no doubt that exercise is good for your health and increases your sense of well being. Not only does it lower your blood pressure, reduce the effects of heart disease and help you to lose weight, but it also helps with muscle and joint pain. In addition, it can help to prevent osteoporosis and improve your strength and balance, making you less likely to fall. And apart from the physical benefits of becoming fitter, it can help you emotionally, improving your mood and lifting your spirits.

If you want to take up a sport or start exercising, but have any health problems, you should **discuss it with your doctor**. This is particularly important if you have had a stroke, or have high blood pressure, heart problems, chest pains, dizziness, asthma, bronchitis or diabetes – but if you have any worries about your health at all, it's always worth talking to your doctor first.

Remember that you need to take it slowly to begin with, and build up your stamina, particularly if you have been quite inactive for a few years.

## Finding out more

- Your local **leisure centre** is an excellent place to find out more about what's going on in your area. Many centres have exercise programmes specifically for older people, and often offer the use of its facilities at a lower price.
- Pay a visit to your **library**; it will keep lists of local clubs and societies.
- Your local **Age Concern** branch may run its own activities, and will probably know what else is available locally.
- Ask your **doctor**; sometimes your doctor can refer you to a particular form of exercise, for medical reasons.
- Look in your **local paper**; it may list local groups and activities.

You could also get in touch with the organisations below to find out more about a particular activity, or to see if there is a group where you live.

## Useful contacts

### **The British Wheel of Yoga**

25 Jermyn Street  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire NG34 7RU  
Tel: 01529 306851  
Web: [www.bwy.org.uk](http://www.bwy.org.uk)

Details of local yoga classes.

### **Central Council of Physical Recreation**

4th Floor, Burwood House  
14–16 Caxton Street  
London SW1H 0QT  
Tel: 020 7976 3900  
Web: [www.ccpr.org.uk](http://www.ccpr.org.uk)

Provides information and advice on sports and recreational activities.



## **EXTEND**

2 Place Farm  
Wheathampstead  
Herts AL4 8SB  
Tel: 01582 832760  
Web: [www.extend.org.uk](http://www.extend.org.uk)

'Movement to music' classes for older and disabled people in many parts of the UK.

## **Ramblers' Association**

2nd Floor, Camelford House  
87-90 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7TW  
Tel: 020 7339 8500  
Web: [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

Britain's biggest walking charity with over 500 local groups.

## **Veterans English Table Tennis Society (VETTS)**

Harwood House  
90 Broadway  
Letchworth SG6 3PH  
Tel: 01462 671191  
Web: [www.vetts.org.uk](http://www.vetts.org.uk)

Promotes friendship through table tennis, and organises regional and national competitions, by age.

Publications, videos and DVDs  
Help the Aged resources:

- *Be Strong, Be Steady*: chair-based exercise video (price £12 plus £1.75 P&P)

## **Keep Fit Association**

1 Grove House  
Foundry Lane  
Horsham  
West Sussex RB13 5PL  
Tel: 01403 266 000  
Web: [www.keepfit.org.uk](http://www.keepfit.org.uk)

Provides information on exercise and movement classes for all ages and abilities as well as training courses.

## **The Tai Chi Union**

Peter Ballam  
5 Corunna Drive  
Horsham  
West Sussex RH13 5HG  
Tel: 01403 257918  
Web: [www.taichiunion.com](http://www.taichiunion.com)

For details of local tai chi classes, send a SAE to the above address.

- *Exercise for Healthy Ageing*: an illustrated programme of exercises for older people (price £4 plus (1.75 P&P)
- *How to Thrive Past 55*: explains how exercise and a good diet can improve health (price £8.99 plus £1.75 P&P)
- *Strength and Balance Exercises for Healthy Ageing*: collection of illustrated exercises that can be safely undertaken at home (price £6 plus £1.75 P&P).
- *Step to the Future*: exercise video and DVD (price £12 plus £1.75 P&P). The DVD version is bilingual in English and Hindi.

To order any of these publications, contact Help the Aged Publications department on **020 7239 1486**.

#### Other resources:

- *Staying Healthy in Later Life*: free factsheet giving advice on physical activities for older people. Available from the Age Concern Information Line on 0800 00 99 66 or [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)
- The organisation **Excel 2000** offers a holistic approach to health and produces gentle exercises and chair-based exercises on audio and video tape. For more information see [www.excel2000.co.uk](http://www.excel2000.co.uk) or send an SAE to:

#### **Excel 2000**

1a North Street  
 Sheringham  
 Norfolk NR26 8LW  
 Tel: 01263 825670

## Hobbies and special interests

One of the best things about retirement can be the extra time you have to take up new activities, and start all those things you've been meaning to do for years. Here are a few ideas for some pastimes and activities, as well as some organisations you can contact for more information. If you can't find a group for your particular interest or hobby, why not start one up? For example, if you love reading, start a book club; get your friends together, decide which books you want to discuss and then meet in each other's homes on a rotating basis.

## Art

Many national art galleries and museums no longer charge an admission fee for people who are over 60. You may also want to check the 'Education' section of this information sheet for details of organisations that offer art courses.

The **Living Paintings Trust** offers a free postal library of audio tactile pictures for sight impaired people:

### **Living Paintings Trust**

Queen Isabelle House  
Unit 8, Kingsclere Park  
Kingsclere  
Newbury RG20 4SW  
Tel: 01635 299771  
Web: [www.livingpaintings.org](http://www.livingpaintings.org)

## Gardening

Help the Aged publishes a free information sheet no. 20, *Gardening*, which contains ideas for gardening, particularly if you are disabled or have an illness such as arthritis. You can also contact an organisation called **Thrive**. Thrive provides information and guidance on how to make gardening easier and more enjoyable. You can contact Thrive at:

### **Thrive**

The Geoffrey Udall Centre  
Beech Hill  
Reading RG7 2AT  
Tel: 0118 988 5688  
Web: [www.thrive.org.uk](http://www.thrive.org.uk) or [www.carryongardening.org.uk](http://www.carryongardening.org.uk)

## Computers and the internet

The internet offers a wealth of information on just about every subject you can think of. Not only can it be used to find out information, you can also use it to keep in contact with your friends and family by email and in chat rooms. It can also be a way to meet new people, through message boards, chat rooms and even dating websites. If you decide to meet someone you haven't met before, make sure you think about your personal safety. Arrange to meet in a busy public place. Tell a friend or relative where you are going and what time you expect to be home – or even take them with you. Don't feel pressured into meeting someone; trust your instincts if something doesn't feel right.

You can find out how to use computers and the internet at your local library or adult education centre. There may be an internet cafe in your local town which offers introductory sessions.

Help the Aged publishes a free advice leaflet entitled *Computers and the Internet*, which gives details about choosing and buying a computer, how to get online, and details of computer training courses for older people. Contact the Information Resources Team for a copy.

**Age Concern** publishes books on computing including:

- *How to be a Silver Surfer*, a beginner's guide to the internet for the over-50s (price £7.59 plus postage)
- *Everyday Computing* (price £8.54 plus postage)
- *Computing for Beginners* (price £8.54 plus postage).

They can be ordered from:

**Age Concern Bookshop**

Linhay House

Linhay Business Park

Ashburton

Devon TQ13 7UP

Tel: 0870 442 2120

Web: [www.ageconcern.org.uk/bookshop](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/bookshop)

Websites

You may like to visit the Help the Aged website [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk) for more information about the charity and the services it provides.

Other websites you may find useful are:

- [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk) – Age Concern
- [www.digitalunite.com](http://www.digitalunite.com) – Digital Unite: encourages older people to get involved in information technology
- [www.saga.co.uk/saga-magazine](http://www.saga.co.uk/saga-magazine) – Saga magazine
- [www.silversurfers.tv](http://www.silversurfers.tv) – website with useful resources for the over-50s

## Jigsaws and games

### **Association of British Scrabble Players**

8 Glen Clova Place  
Kirkcaldy  
Fife KY2 6UL  
Web: [www.absp.org.uk](http://www.absp.org.uk)

Co-ordinates all contests in UK.

### **British Jigsaw Puzzle Library**

Clarendon, Parsonage Road  
Herne Bay  
Kent CT6 5TA  
Tel: 01227 742222  
Web: [www.britishjigsawpuzzlelibrary.co.uk](http://www.britishjigsawpuzzlelibrary.co.uk)

A lending library for jigsaw puzzles.

## **The English Draughts**

### **Association**

54 Mayfield Road  
Ryde  
Isle of Wight PO33 3PR  
Web: <http://home.clara.net/davey/>

Members can play postal draughts.

## Local history

### **British Association for Local History**

PO Box 6549  
Somersal Herbert  
Ashbourne DE6 5WH  
Tel: 01283 585947  
Web: [www.balh.co.uk](http://www.balh.co.uk)

Every year the British Association for Local History delivers an annual lecture on its current research, and holds a regional conference. It also produces a number of publications and arranges guided visits to places not usually open to the public.

Also, libraries often have local history sections.

## Music

### **Benslow Music Trust**

Little Benslow Hills  
Ibberson Way  
Hitchin SG4 9RB  
Tel: 01462 459446  
Web: [www.benslow.org](http://www.benslow.org)

Runs residential courses for adult amateur musicians.

### **Making Music** (National Federation of Music Societies)

2–4 Great Eastern Street  
London EC2A 3NW  
Tel: 0870 903 3780  
Web: [www.makingmusic.org.uk](http://www.makingmusic.org.uk)

Contact for details of musical groups throughout the UK.

## Photography

### **Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain**

Fenton House  
122 Wells Road  
Bath BA2 3AH  
Tel: 01225 325733  
Web: [www.rps.org](http://www.rps.org)

Can let you know about workshops, field trips and lectures nationally or in your local area.

## Researching your family tree

Tracing back through your ancestors can be extremely rewarding, as well as fascinating, addictive and frustrating! For more information on how to get started, write to:

### **Society of Genealogists**

14 Charterhouse Buildings  
Goswell Road  
London EC1M 7BA  
Tel: 020 7251 8799  
Web: [www.sog.org.uk](http://www.sog.org.uk)

## Talking books

Many books, newspapers and magazines are available on audio cassette. These are a great idea for people who have visual problems, reading problems, or people who, for various reasons, have difficulty holding a book.

You can often get them from your local library. Alternatively, there are a number of organisations that provide them, as well as tape recorders and specially modified equipment if you have a disability. Often you will need some confirmation from someone like your doctor or social worker to say that you would really benefit from a subscription to a talking book service. For more information, get in touch with the organisations below.

### **Calibre Audio Library**

New Road  
Weston Turville  
Aylesbury HP22 5XQ  
Tel: 01296 432339  
Web: [www.calibre.org.uk](http://www.calibre.org.uk)

A lending library of books on tape and CD for people with visual and handling problems.

### **RNIB Learning & Skills Library**

PO Box 173  
Peterborough  
Cambs PE2 6WS  
Tel: 0845 762 6843  
Textphone: 0845 758 5691  
Web: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Mainly non-fiction and academic talking books for people who are blind or partially sighted.

### **Talking Newspaper Association of the UK**

National Recording Centre  
Heathfield  
East Sussex TN21 8DB  
Tel: 01435 866102  
Web: [www.tnauk.org.uk](http://www.tnauk.org.uk)

Provides national newspapers and magazines on tape, CD, CD-Rom, Daisy format, email and download.

### **Listening Books**

12 Lant Street  
London SE1 1QH  
Tel: 020 7407 9417  
Web: [www.listening-books.org.uk](http://www.listening-books.org.uk)

A library service of audio tapes for anyone who has difficulty reading.

### **RNIB Talking Book Service**

PO Box 173  
Peterborough  
Cambs PE2 6WS  
Tel: 0303 123 9999  
Web: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Leisure fiction and non-fiction books in Daisy format for people who are blind or partially sighted.

## Meeting new people and relationships

It can be difficult to meet new friends. Many people meet their friends at work, or through friends of their children, and when we become older these opportunities don't exist in quite the same way. You might find that your circle of friends has become smaller or you might want to widen your social network.

Many of the activities mentioned in this sheet could help you to meet new people, and friendships may arise out of this. However, there are some organisations which exist purely to help you meet people.

**Contact the Elderly** organises volunteers to provide transport for and host groups of people wishing to meet for tea on Sunday afternoons. Contact them at:

### **Contact the Elderly**

15 Henrietta Street

London WC2E 8QG

Tel: 0800 716543

Web: [www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk](http://www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk)

The magazine *Yours* has a 'Friends of Yours' section in each edition. People have the opportunity to write a few words about themselves and their interests, and invite people to reply to them – this could be to find a new partner, pen friend or just someone to talk to. It's a free service, and you can either write in yourself, or answer people's appeals. Or you could register with the [www.friendsofyours.com](http://www.friendsofyours.com) website which offers the same finding a new friend or partner service as the magazine. *Yours* also has a 'Where are you...?' section in the magazine where you can help readers find their long-lost friends, relatives or comrades. You can also write in yourself if you are looking for someone. *Yours* is a fortnightly magazine and you can get a copy from your newsagent.

## Relationships

If you are looking for romance, or maybe even a marriage partner, you can try all of the above ways to meet people. You could also try the 'lonely hearts' columns in newspapers and magazines, the internet, dating agencies or a marriage bureaux. If you do decide to meet someone, always be aware of your personal safety. Make sure that you arrange to meet people in public places and, if you can, let someone know where you're going at all times, or even take a friend with you.



## Pets

Having a pet can be a very happy experience. Animals provide companionship, loyalty and love. They can also make you feel less isolated and alone, and can even relieve stress and lower your blood pressure! However, getting a pet is something you need to think about very carefully, as all animals need varying degrees of care, attention and money spent on them.

The RSPCA produces factsheets on different animals which could help you to decide which pet may be suitable for you. These factsheets look at the needs of the animal as well as preparing your home for a pet and possible costs.

You might want to consider adopting a rescue animal. The organisations listed below all have centres with animals that desperately need loving homes:

### **The Blue Cross**

Shilton Road  
Burford  
Oxon OX18 4PF  
Tel: 01993 822651  
Web: [www.thebluecross.org.uk](http://www.thebluecross.org.uk)

### **Cats Protection**

National Cat Centre  
Chelwood Gate  
Haywards Heath RH17 7TT  
Helpline: 0870 209 9099  
Web: [www.cats.org.uk](http://www.cats.org.uk)

### **Dogs Trust**

17 Wakley Street  
London EC1V 7RQ  
Tel: 020 7837 0006  
Web: [www.dogstrust.org.uk](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk)

### **RSPCA**

Wilberforce Way  
Southwater  
Horsham RH13 9RS  
Helpline: 0300 123 4555  
Web: [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)

If you don't want to commit to having a pet you could always volunteer for an organisation that helps pet owners. The **Cinnamon Trust** has a national network of volunteers who help in several ways, including visiting dog owners, dog walking and dog fostering. For more information contact:

### **Cinnamon Trust**

10 Market Square  
Hayle  
Cornwall TR27 4HE  
Tel: 01736 757900  
Web: [www.cinnamon.org.uk](http://www.cinnamon.org.uk)

# Volunteering

According to the last national survey, there are around 22 million adult volunteers in the UK, with the number of older volunteers increasing. (1997 *National Survey of Volunteering in the UK*, Institute for Volunteering Research, [www.ivr.org.uk](http://www.ivr.org.uk))

There are lots of good reasons to volunteer:

- use your skills or learn new ones
- put something back into the community
- make new friends and get out of the house
- have fun and be part of a team or group.

Older volunteers in particular can have a great deal to offer, because of their broad range of experiences, skills and flexibility.

In addition, research has shown that older volunteers tend to be more loyal to the organisations they work for and are generally more content with their voluntary activities.

If you decide that you'd like to be a volunteer, take some time to think about the kinds of things that you like doing and what you are good at. For example, if you're a sociable person who likes group activities you might like to help out in a day centre or club; if you're a careful driver, you might consider helping to transport people to hospital or on outings; or if you are particularly organised or good with money, you would probably be happy working in an office or on a local committee.

You might also like to think about the kind of organisation that you want to help. Some examples of organisations you could approach are:

- your local **church** or **faith group**
- your **favourite charity** – you could contact a local group, or ring a national charity's head office
- your local **Citizens Advice Bureau** – it relies on volunteers to provide advice and information; you will need to undergo training (volunteer hotline: 08451 264 264)
- **The Samaritans** – you will be trained (tel: 0870 562 7282)

- a **charity shop** – call in at charity shops in your high street; even if it doesn't need help in the shop, it may have information about other help it needs
- a **youth group** – if you like working with children, why not find out if there are groups, such as the Brownies or Scouts, that need help; your local newspaper or library should have details of local groups.

Details of other organisations that can help you find volunteering opportunities are given below. Anyone can be a volunteer – we all have skills and talents that we can use to help other people. There are so many different things that you can do to help that there should be something to suit everybody. Many people get a lot of satisfaction from knowing that they are helping out and providing a service for free. Volunteering can be a good way to meet people and make new friends. Most volunteers are paid something for expenses, such as travel or meals.

## Organisations that can help you find voluntary work

### **Intergenerational Programme**

Age Concern England  
1268 London Road  
London SW16 4ER  
Tel: 020 8765 7231  
Web:  
[www.ageconcern.org.uk/ageconcern/intergenerational.asp](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/ageconcern/intergenerational.asp)

Local projects arrange for older volunteers to work with young children and young people in England.

### **REACH**

89 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7TP  
Tel: 020 7582 6543  
Web: [www.reach-online.org.uk](http://www.reach-online.org.uk)

Finds part time, unpaid roles for professionals in voluntary organisations.

### **Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)**

61 Duncairn Gardens  
Belfast BT15 2GB  
Tel: 028 9087 7777  
Textphone: 028 9087 7776  
Web: [www.nicva.org](http://www.nicva.org)

Umbrella body for voluntary, community and charitable groups in Northern Ireland.

### **RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme)**

237 Pentonville Road  
London N1 9NJ  
Tel: 020 7643 1385  
Web: [www.csv-rsvp.org.uk](http://www.csv-rsvp.org.uk)

Places older people as volunteers in their local communities.

**Wales Council for Voluntary Action**

Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff CF10 5FH  
Tel: 0800 288 8329  
Web: [www.wcva.org.uk](http://www.wcva.org.uk)

Offers advice on how to get into volunteering in your local area.

**Volunteer Development Scotland**

Unit 157, Stirling Enterprise Park  
Stirling FK7 7RP  
Tel: 01786 479593  
Web: [www.vds.org.uk](http://www.vds.org.uk)

Scotland's national centre for volunteering.

**WRVS**

Garden House  
Milton Hill  
Steventon  
Abingdon OX13 6AD  
Tel: 01235 442 900  
Helpline: 0845 601 4670  
Web: [www.wrvs.org.uk](http://www.wrvs.org.uk)

Arranges for volunteers to assist in delivering 'meals on wheels' or helping to provide services in hospitals and during emergency situations.

**Volunteering England**

Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street  
London N1 9RL  
Tel: 0845 305 6979  
Web: [www.volunteering.org.uk](http://www.volunteering.org.uk)

Provides an information service on volunteering and can tell you where your nearest volunteer centre is.

**Volunteering for Help the Aged**

Help the Aged needs volunteers who can both help out occasionally or on a more regular basis.

If you would be interested in becoming part of a friendly and dedicated team, and can spare some time every week, you may like to become a volunteer in one of our Help the Aged shops. You will be given full training in all aspects of retail work. For more details call Katie O'Neil on 020 7239 1451 or ask at your local shop.

Local Committees help raise money by organising events such as fetes, fun runs, dinners and art exhibitions. If you would like to become involved call Gill Sargeant on 020 7239 1462.

## Public life

You may want to play a role in public life, using your experience and skills to make a contribution to your community through public service. There are many different public bodies, forums and committees that you may be interested in getting involved in. More information is given about some of these in this section.

### School governors and other public appointments

A public appointment is an appointment to the board of a public body. These are bodies set up by the Government either to provide independent advice or to deliver public services. They are involved in all sorts of activities including the arts, sports, education, health, the environment and more specialised areas.

There are:

- national public bodies, for example the National Consumer Council
- regional bodies, for example primary care trusts
- local bodies – one of the most common local appointments is as a school governor.

Some public appointments are paid and some are voluntary.

To find out about local public appointments you can contact whichever local government or NHS organisation covers the area that interests you – for example, your local education authority or your primary care trust. If you have internet access you can search a database of national and regional public appointments at [www.publicappts-vacs.gov.uk](http://www.publicappts-vacs.gov.uk)

To find out more about applying for public appointments contact:

#### **Public Appointments Unit (Wales)**

Welsh Assembly Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff CF10 3NQ

Tel: 02920 825372

Web: [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk) (use the A–Z index to find the Public Appointments pages)

### **The Public Appointments Unit (Scotland)**

The Scottish Government

E1 Spur

Saughton House

Edinburgh EH11 3XD

Tel: 0800 015 8449

Web: [www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/government/public-bodies](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/government/public-bodies)

### **The Central Appointments Unit (Northern Ireland)**

Room E4.15, Castle Buildings

Stormont Estate

Belfast BT4 3SR

Tel: 028 9052 8192

Web: [www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/public-appointments](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/public-appointments)

### Local council

Contact your local council to find out about local area forums or committees. These forums or committees meet to discuss local issues and give people the opportunity to raise views and concerns to the council.

### Local Involvement Networks

If you want to get involved in the way local health services are run in your community, you may want to join a Local Involvement Network (LINk). These replace the old Patients' Forums. LINks are made up of individuals and community groups who volunteer to improve local services. They find out what the public likes and dislikes about local health and social care, and then work with the people who run these services to help make them better. There are different ways to get involved – for instance, you could answer a short survey, attend an occasional meeting on an issue that interests you, or become an authorised representative who goes to see how services are run.

To find out more about your local LINk, contact the social services department of your local council. You can also visit the Directgov website at [www.direct.gov.uk/localinvolvementnetworks](http://www.direct.gov.uk/localinvolvementnetworks)

## Working in retirement

Once you reach retirement age, currently 60 for women and 65 for men, you may wish to carry on working full-time or part-time. This could be because you don't want to stop working yet, or because you need to carry on earning money. If you are looking for a new job, or are out of work, here are some suggestions for where to start looking:

- your local jobcentre – it may run a counselling service to help you find a suitable job, and may even be able to help you with job training
- employment agencies – look in your high street, or in the phone book; they can find you temporary as well as permanent jobs
- local and national newspapers – many of the national papers run different types of jobs on different days
- The Age and Employment Network (TAEN) – a network of member organisations with a shared objective to ensure better opportunities for mature people to work, earn and learn; contact TAEN on 020 7843 1590 or write to TAEN, 207–221 Pentonville Road, London N1 9UZ or visit its website [www.taen.org.uk](http://www.taen.org.uk)

Hopefully there is something in this information sheet that interests you, or that will encourage you to contact an organisation for more information about a particular activity. If you have something you'd like to do in mind, but can't find out how to go about it, ask at your local library or get in touch with the Information Resources Team and we'll see if we can help you.

## For further information contact:

Information Resources Team  
Help the Aged  
207–221 Pentonville Road  
London N1 9UZ  
Tel: 020 7278 1114

If you have access to the Internet you can download our advice leaflets and information sheets by logging on to **[www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)**

**SeniorLine** is the free welfare rights advice and information service run by Help the Aged for older people and their carers. Trained advice workers offer free, confidential and impartial advice about:

- welfare and disability benefits
- care at home
- residential care
- housing options and adaptations
- access to health and community services.

Freephone: **0808 800 6565**

Textphone: **0800 26 96 26**

**9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday**

If you are in **Northern Ireland**, contact **SeniorLine** on **0808 808 7575**

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Help the Aged is a registered charity No. 272786, registered in England at the above address.