

8. Getting involved in your community – making a difference

There are many ways that you can get involved and make a difference in your community. Some are listed below:

Volunteering

Around 22 million people in Britain do voluntary work. It is a rewarding way of helping others while helping you keep active. There are many reasons to get involved in volunteering. These include becoming more involved in your community, meeting people, developing new skills, using it as a stepping stone to employment and making a difference to people's lives. Many volunteers find the work they do, for instance helping charities, getting involved in activities for young people, or giving people information on a telephone helpline, has given them a huge sense of satisfaction and self-worth.

There are many volunteering opportunities throughout Kirklees. Volunteering Kirklees can help you to start. They can give you information on what volunteering opportunities are available and help you decide on the kind of volunteering you might want to try.

- Volunteering Kirkless, Tel: 01484 226608, email vk@voluntaryactionkirklees.co.uk, or visit www.volunteeringkirklees.org.uk

To find volunteering opportunities in Kirklees, go to www.do-it.org.uk and search the national database.

Volunteering can change your life

There are lots of different roles for volunteers in health and social care, and anyone can be a volunteer. You don't need any special skills, and even if you can only spare a short amount of time, there is something that you can do.

Here are some of the things that volunteers can do:

- drive a disabled person to a weekly social group
- ring an elderly person for a regular chat
- help out at a luncheon club
- walk the dog for someone recovering from an operation
- help with a community gardening project

Through volunteering you can:

- increase your self-confidence and skills
- improve your own health and well-being
- meet new people and make new friends
- gain experience and training that could help your job prospects

Did you know.....?

- you might be able to claim expenses such as travel costs, meals, and in some circumstances, child-care costs
- volunteering need not affect your entitlement to benefits - for more information ask Volunteering Kirklees for a copy of the Department for Work and Pensions leaflet 'volunteering whilst receiving your benefits.'

For more information or to find out if volunteering in a health or social care setting could be for you, please contact the Gateway Volunteer Coordinators, Tel: 01484 416503, email gatewayvolunteers@kirklees.gov.uk

You could also come to one of the drop in sessions:

Monday 12.30pm – 4.00pm
at Batley Resource Centre
Thursday 10.00am – 2.00pm
at Gateway to care, Huddersfield

Setting up your own voluntary or community group

There are various ways you can get support to develop a new group or organisation in Kirklees. Listed below are the three main contacts.

Kirklees Adult Services Community Liaison

Community Liaison is part of Kirklees Council Adult Services. The team provides funding, development opportunities and support to develop health and social care organisations who want to deliver their own projects and activities.

The team aim to:

- give funding and support to community and voluntary organisations to deliver their own projects
- support development of new groups and organisations
- maximise external funding and income generation
- enlighten groups on other funding available to them and how to generate income within their project
- help organisations to make well informed choices through networking, education and connection with voluntary support organisations.



Why not get an allotment?

Community grants of £500 to £3000 per year might be available to groups providing a project focused on encouraging people to remain active or a community contract with a target grant of £5000 are available to fund a commissioned based activity service, based on the different needs of people.

If you have an idea of a potential project or would like information on funding please contact:

- Kirklees Council Adult Services Community Liaison on 01484 225142 or email: community.liaison@kirklees.gov.uk

Voluntary Action Kirklees (VAK)

Voluntary Action Kirklees is an independent local voluntary organisation which can offer support to people wanting to set up new groups. They offer advice on:

- finance
- funding
- legal and policy issues
- personnel and management matters
- resources available in the community
- support around volunteer management including policy development
- training for the voluntary sector

New organisations and groups can also become a member of the Voluntary Action Network. The network addresses local health and social care issues.

For more information contact:

- Voluntary Action Kirklees, Tel: 01484 518457 or email vak@voluntaryactionkirklees.co.uk

Kirklees Adults and Communities, Community Support Services

Community Support Services are part of Kirklees Adults and Communities. They provide community work support and funding advice to people who want to develop new and existing community groups. They also help groups to get external funding.

The service provides capacity building and training events for local people helping community members to improve their skills in community and group settings.

Community based community safety initiatives are developed through the specialist Priority Neighbourhoods Project.

Community Support Services manage six community grants schemes.

For further information contact:

- Kirklees Council Community Support Services, Tel: 01484 221022 or email safestronger.communities@kirklees.gov.uk

Adult social care

The Working in Partnership Team supports people, networks and groups to be involved in shaping health and social care services in their local area.

All health and social care services are planned. This means that someone makes decisions about how services should run, what money is spent on them and when changes are needed.

You can get involved by taking part in consultations, joining a network or by simply telling us how you think services can be developed to better meet your needs. You can tell us what works and doesn't work and put forward suggestions for improvement.

- Working in Partnership Team, Tel: 01484 226927, email: working.in.partnership@kirklees.gov.uk or visit www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/health-care/work-partnership/partnership_menu.shtml and click on the on-line comments form.

Complaints, comments and compliments

You might feel the need to complain, give a comment or compliment about a service you received from Kirklees Council Adult Services. You can do this by contacting us at:

- Kirklees Council Adult Services, Complaints, Comments and Compliments, 3rd Floor, Oldgate House, Huddersfield, HD1 6QF, Tel: 01484 225115/6 or email: SSCUL@kirklees.gov.uk

Kirklees Older Peoples Network – a voice for older people

The network brings together older people to work in partnership with key organisations. They have a strong voice and help influence policy decision making in Kirklees. The network supports older people. It also helps to create a positive image of older people in our communities.

Everyone over the age of 55 is welcome to join as part of a group or on their own. For more information call:

- Working in Partnership Team Tel: 01484 226927, email working.in.partnership@kirklees.gov.uk

Sharing life experiences

Networks are groups of people who meet together to discuss the services they receive. They exchange information, plan how they can get involved to change and improve services, and sometimes offer each other support. Networks address all areas of concern in people's lives. For example, members might want to talk about benefits, do something about making transport accessible, or change people's views and perceptions.

For more information on local health and social care networks call:

- Working in Partnership Team on 01484 226927, email working.in.partnership@kirklees.gov.uk

Joining NHS foundation trusts

Being a foundation trust member is a great opportunity to meet clinicians and hospital staff and help to shape the future of healthcare.

To find out more contact

- Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust Tel: 01484 347342, visit www.cht.nhs.uk
- South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. Tel: 01484 343000, visit www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk