* The organization **Volunteer Now exists to** promote & support volunteering across Northern Ireland and our volunteering support officers (VSOs) can assist you in finding & applying suitable volunteering roles for yourself.
* **Volunteering is quite popular in Northern Ireland** – about 28% of the adult population volunteer in lots of different types of roles (e.g., fundraising, churches & religious roles, community events, on committees, working with children). You can volunteer on your own or as part of a group, and you can volunteer at a ‘one off’ event or you can be repeat volunteer who has a regular, ongoing role.
* Volunteering can help **you integrate with the local community**, meet new people, learn new skills, have fun, and it can also improve your mental & physical health.
* Volunteering should be done only because **you** **want to do it**, **of your own free will.** No one should ever feel forced to volunteer for any reason. If you feel worried or concerned about any volunteering role you are being asked to do or how you’re being treated as a volunteer, then please contact Volunteer Now for advice.
* You should be aware that **language may be a barrier** to getting some roles. *Many* volunteering roles in N.I. will require you to fill in a form, have meeting and even have some training before you begin, and this will almost always be done in English. Therefore, a lack of ability in English will limit the range of roles on offer to you. If possible, you should enroll in any free English classes available to you as soon as possibleand build your English language skills. Having a good level of English will improve your chances at securing a volunteering role**.**
* Many volunteering **roles that involve caring for others (children, the sick, or the elderly) will require a criminal history record check**. Such checks **(called Access NI checks)** require you to have many different forms of personal ID (e.g., passport, Driver’s license, Birth certificate, National Insurance card) that you may not possess. It also requires that you have been resident here for over 3 years. For these reasons, roles which require, an Access NI check might not be suitable for you to apply for – the VSOs at Volunteer Now can advise you more about this.
* You will usually have to get yourself to and from your volunteering role. Your **expenses for this travel will often be paid back to you** but this is not always the case so you should check on this before accepting a role. Also, repayment of expenses can take some time. For this reason, it may be more effective to look for volunteering opportunities nearer to you that you can walk to.
* Volunteer Now staff are here to help you with any questions or concerns you might have about volunteering, so please make contact with them any time you need – the phone number is 028 90 232020 and the email is info@volunteernow.co.uk