

Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland Volunteering and Benefits Guidance



Introduction

At Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS), we encourage anyone from age 16 onwards to volunteer for us. There are various opportunities, which can be very rewarding, and it is a great way to meet new people, gain new or use existing skills, get experience and make a big difference to your community.

We acknowledge that you may be in receipt of benefits and you may be worried about losing any benefits you receive. Therefore, if you claim Universal Credit such as income based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, this guidance will help you understand what you need to do before entering into a volunteering role with CHSS.,

What qualifies as voluntary work?

This is work undertaken without payment.

Whilst you do not have a contract of employment as a volunteer, you will be given a Volunteer Agreement and comply with relevant CHSS policies, procedures and guidelines and we value the support that you provide.

Volunteering and benefits

You can volunteer and claim benefits if:

- the only money you get from volunteering is to cover expenses, like travel costs;
- you continue to meet the conditions of the benefit you get.

How much voluntary work can you do?

There is no upper limit on the number of hours you can volunteer for each week however, we would expect it to be no more than 32.5 hours per week. You must actively look for paid work as agreed with your personal advisor at Jobcentre Plus.

Your Responsibilities / Benefit Conditions

- You must tell the Jobcentre Plus at which you make your claim that you are about to start voluntary work. The personal advisor can stop any payment if they find you have started volunteering without sending them the proper notification. The form attached can be used to notify the appropriate Jobcentre Plus office, once you have identified the role that you would like to undertake.
- If you are claiming Job Seekers Allowance you should be actively seeking work as agreed with your personal advisor and contactable if the chance of a job comes up.
- If you are claiming Job Seekers Allowance you should be available to go for an interview within 48 hours and start paid work within one week.



Please check with your Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisor if volunteering will affect your personal independence payment.

Claiming expenses

You are able to claim out of pocket expenses as detailed in the CHSS Volunteer Expense Policy.

Expense claims should not exceed actual expenses incurred. You will be reimbursed for what is recorded on receipted out of pocket expenses. If you are paid in excess of your expenses, this will be interpreted as payment for work done and your benefit could be affected. You could be liable to pay tax on the additional expenses claimed.

Further information

- [Directgov: Volunteering](#)
- [Department of Work and Pensions: A guide to volunteering while on benefits](#) 
(1.4Mb)
- [Jobcentre Plus: Volunteering while looking for work](#)
- [Jobcentre Plus: Volunteering while unemployed helps others and can help you](#) 
(156.1Kb)

Please complete this form and give it to your Jobcentre Plus Advisor where you make your claim before starting your voluntary role. If there is a problem with you doing a voluntary role while claiming benefit, a member of the benefits office staff will contact you. If you have any further questions about volunteering and your benefits, please contact your Jobcentre Plus Advisor

Title	
Surname	
First names	
Date of birth	
National Insurance No.	
Address	
1. The name of the organisation you intend to volunteer for:	Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland
2. What date does the volunteering begin?	
3. Please describe briefly the volunteer role being undertaken:	
4. How many hours/days will be volunteered per week?	
5. Give details of expenses incurred in respect of voluntary work (e.g. travel):	
Please sign	
Date:	

This form was prepared on advice from Jobcentre Plus