

## Volunteering and Welfare Benefits

Claimants of welfare benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Disability Living Allowance are entitled to volunteer without losing their benefits. There are some important provisos though, which potential volunteers should be aware of before going ahead with their voluntary work.

### What qualifies as voluntary work?

This is work undertaken without payment. This can be helping out a neighbour, or volunteering with a not-for-profit organisation. The work should not be something that an organisation should have paid you to do, nor should it be for a close relative.

### How much voluntary work can you do?

As much as you like. If you're claiming Job Seekers Allowance though, you still need to be actively seeking, and available for work.

### Claiming expenses vs. being paid

Volunteers should not be out of pocket for the contribution they make to the community, so they can usually claim expenses. These can cover the costs of travel, food and specialist equipment required to carry out the voluntary work. Expense claims should not exceed actual expenses incurred. If a volunteer is paid in excess of their expenses, this will be interpreted as payment for work done, and the volunteer's benefit could be affected. The volunteer could be liable to pay tax on this money, and the organisation could fall foul of minimum wage legislation.

### Notifying the benefits office

Potential volunteers should notify the benefits office where they make their claim before they start voluntary work. The benefits office can stop benefits if they find that a volunteer has started volunteering without sending them the proper notification. The form on the reverse of this sheet can be used to notify the appropriate benefits office of voluntary work, once the volunteer has identified what they would like to do. (If benefits are claimed from more than one office this form should be copied to both.)

**Note:** if you are claiming Incapacity Benefit / Disability Living Allowance this should NOT trigger an extraordinary fitness for work test. The benefits office should not require a doctor's letter about volunteering.

### Duties of claimant

- Volunteers must tell the office at which they make their claim that they are about to start voluntary work (see overleaf).
- Volunteers claiming Job Seekers Allowance should be actively seeking work.
- Volunteers claiming Job Seekers Allowance should be available to work within one week.



### **More information**

If you need advice on volunteering and benefits, contact your nearest Job Centre Plus (or the office where you make your claim) or the Volunteer Centre in Glasgow.

#### ***Head Office***

84 Miller Street  
(4<sup>th</sup> floor)  
Glasgow  
G1 1DT

Tel.: 0141 226 3431

Fax.: 0141 221 0716

e-mail: [info@volunteerglasgow.org](mailto:info@volunteerglasgow.org)

Web: [www.volunteerglasgow.org](http://www.volunteerglasgow.org)



## Notification of Voluntary Work

Please complete this form and send it to the benefits office(s) where you make your claim before starting your voluntary work. If there is a problem with you doing voluntary work while claiming benefit, a member of the benefits office staff will contact you. Assuming proper notification of voluntary work by you was given, your benefits should not be affected.

If you have questions about this form contact the Volunteer Centre on **0141 226 3431**

Title	
Surname	
First names	
Date of birth	
National Insurance No	
Address:	
1. Please give the name of the body or person you intend to volunteer for:	
2. Is the work being done for a close relative?	
3. What date does the voluntary work begin?	
4. Please describe briefly the work being undertaken:	
5. How many hours / days will be volunteered?	
6. Give details of expenses incurred in respect of voluntary work (e.g. travel):	
7. Please give details of any other work being undertaken (either paid or unpaid):	
Please sign and date here:	

Job Centre Plus Staff: This proforma prepared by Volunteer Centre on advice from Job Centre Plus.

---