

# BCVS Worksop Guardian Column: Younger people have key role to play in area's volunteering sector

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Volunteering is a fantastic way to learn new skills, gain confidence and make friends with people you may have never met otherwise – all of that on top of the overwhelming sense of achievement and pride you will feel for “doing good” and helping others when they need it the most, writes Annie Parry from Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service.

According to the NCVO-led UK Civil Society Almanac 2022 published in October, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on volunteer numbers across the UK, resulting in an overall reduction of seven per cent in volunteering numbers, with the largest reductions seen in age groups under 35 and over 65.

This is reflected in Bassetlaw too.

The voluntary sector contributes over £20bn to the economy representing one per cent of GDP and spends over £50bn, in addition to the positive impact on health and wellbeing, social connections, skills development and confidence building on top of the specific forms of specialist support that many charities provide.

BCVS has engaged with more than 300 young people over the last six months to understand more behind the reasons for the decline and what can be done to address this.

Some of the barriers mentioned include transport issues (access and cost), finding time that fits around studying, low confidence levels and not really knowing what they are able to get involved with.

When asked what type of volunteering would interest them, the young people involved in the BCVS-led “Point of View” and “Y-Volunteer” young people volunteer projects, said that they prefer volunteering to be outdoors and many are interested in working with animals or the elderly.

Young trustees are also very underrepresented in the sector, with the average age of trustees being 65-74 for smaller charities.

National Citizenship Service volunteers at Willow Gardens in Worksop are pictured. Columnist Annie Parry, BCVS volunteer co-ordinator, says young volunteers are always welcome in the area.

We have seen a large spike in the need for trustees locally as many older volunteers haven't returned to volunteering following the pandemic.

Now more than ever, charities need to diversify and seek new board members from people and places they may have not tried before.

BCVS is developing support for local young trustees through coaching and mentoring to help address this gap and will launch a series of young people-led initiatives over the coming months to address the barriers young people themselves have identified.

Whatever type of volunteering a person decides to do, one thing we know through 50 years of BCVS experience is that volunteering has a huge and positive impact on the lives of volunteers, the organisations they support, our wider communities and can be life changing.

Many BCVS staff themselves started their journey into paid employment through volunteering for local charities and BCVS is

appealing for new young trustees to join our board to feed in the voice and needs of young people into the governance of our organisation too.

If you would like to find out more about the opportunities available and are interested in volunteering in Bassetlaw, please email me on [involve@bcvs.org.uk](mailto:involve@bcvs.org.uk) or ring 07923 256 976.

If you are an organisation in need of volunteers, you can create a FREE volunteer manager account on the BCVS website and submit your opportunities to us on a regular basis so that we can share them, and people can find them.