

Gateshead Volunteer Centre Support into Volunteering Service 2025/2026 Highlights



**Gateshead resident Vernon
was supported to volunteer
as a Gardener at Pelaw
Bowling Club in March 2026.**

Gateshead Volunteer Centre: Celebrating the positive impact of volunteering

From April 2025 to March 2026, Gateshead Volunteer Centre (GVC), through the OurGateshead website, processed over 930 enquiries from residents for volunteer roles featured on the site.

Through GVC's Support into Volunteering service, we supported 42 residents with additional needs and multiple barriers into volunteer opportunities. GVC welcomed referrals from Gateshead Council (Working Gateshead, Adult Social Care, Refugee Resettlement Employment Service), Gateshead and Blaydon Jobcentres, the local VCSE sector, and more.

This booklet contains examples of residents who have been supported in person, and highlights the positive impact volunteering has had on their lives.

Vernon's story

Vernon was supported to volunteer at Pelaw Bowling Club as a Gardener in March 2026.

Vernon met Gateshead Volunteer Centre during a drop-in held at Gateshead High St's Jobcentre in February 2026.

Identifying barriers to volunteering; Vernon shared that he had been long term unemployed, severely dyslexic and suffering with arthritis. Receiving support from his wife, Vernon would 'sit at his computer all day', unable to connect with his community in East Gateshead. He had experience in horticulture and loved being outside.

Gateshead Volunteer Centre explored a range of options such as Bill Quay Community Allotment and Herb Hub. The aim was to find roles which could support Vernon's identified barriers – shorter volunteer sessions to address his mobility and spoken communication to address his dyslexia. Sharing these suitable options with Vernon, he chose Pelaw Bowling Club as his priority.

Introducing Vernon in person to Geoff, the clubs chair, Geoff provided a warm welcome to the gardening role. Since then, Vernon has been attending weekly – taking on 'more and more responsibilities'.



**"I feel much better
in myself"**

Shadan's story

Shadan was supported to volunteer at YMCA Charity Shop in Gateshead Town Centre in February 2026.

Shadan expressed interest in receiving support to volunteer by self-referring via OurGateshead. Meeting initially in January 2026 at Age UK Gateshead, close to where she lived, Shadan shared that she was new to the UK. Shadan didn't know anybody in her local community.

With limited English skills, it was Gateshead Volunteer Centre's role to explore opportunities with her that would help her develop her speaking confidence. Shadan was keen to directly work in a retail environment. With a range of charity shops available in Gateshead Town Centre, each store was considered with Shadan – finally choosing YMCA as her preference.

Speaking with the store manager ahead of a visit with Shadan, Gateshead Volunteer Centre confirmed that store is suitable for an individual at this stage of her language development. At Shadan's first visit, we explored adjustments to her induction – for example sharing recruitment documents via email for Shadan to translate at a later date.

Successfully recruiting Shadan, she now volunteers in the store on a weekly basis; sorting stock, speaking with customers, making friends and building her professional experience.



"I feel very good because I have new friends. In the UK I don't have anyone, now I have friends."

Charlie's story

Charlie was supported to volunteer with Arthritis UK providing Boccia session support in March 2026.

Charlie was referred to Gateshead Volunteer Centre by Blaydon Jobcentre in October 2025. Charlie is autistic and was nervous about the world of work, lacking the confidence to apply for roles independently. He had previously completed a personal trainer qualification.

Gateshead Volunteer Centre met with Charlie close to where he lives, at Blaydon Library. At their first meeting it was clear Charlie was keen to volunteer in sports and leisure to help develop their professional skills.

Contacting organisations such as Healthworks, Gateshead Redheugh Football Club, National Autistic Society and Arthritis UK – Gateshead Volunteer Centre was keen to find sports groups that are friendly, supportive and provided break out spaces.

Arthritis UK delivers boccia sessions for older residents at Dunston Activity Centre, and were looking for volunteers to help coordinate these sessions on a weekly basis. Charlie found this an ideal fit for his interests, skills and support needs.

Gateshead Volunteer Centre introduced Charlie to Arthritis UK Volunteer Coordinator Annie, who took him through every step ahead of him being fully recruited – such as Safeguarding Training, which aids Charlie's CV for future employment opportunities. Charlie has been volunteering every week now.



(Volunteering makes me)...“feel good, happy and fulfilled”

Contact details

If you would like further information on how GVC can support your organisation or how we can support people you are working with into meaningful volunteering opportunities we would love to hear from you.



Harley Kuyck-Cohen
Gateshead Volunteer Development Coordinator

Email:

volunteering@connectedvoice.org.uk

Telephone:

0191 235 7038

Website:

<https://www.connectedvoice.org.uk/services/connected-voice-volunteering/gateshead-volunteer-centre>