

Volunteering at Your Voice Counts

Anthony's story



I have been volunteering for Your Voice Counts for nearly two years now and have enjoyed every moment of it, from meeting the people that use the charity's services and seeing their great characters as individuals, to working and supporting the staff with their drop-in sessions and activities.

How I got involved

I am a student at the University of Sunderland studying sociology and while doing my studies the staff within the social science department always emphasise the importance of volunteering or work experience while studying. I also think it's important to do other things outside of studying to help find another purpose and build new skills so I contacted the Sunderland Futures team at the university who help and support students with employment or to build up the skills that they need for a career goal by looking at other training opportunities or looking at volunteering and work experience.

When looking through the different volunteering opportunities, Your Voice Counts stood out to me, so a member of the Sunderland Futures team helped me to arrange a meeting with Danielle Falcus from Your Voice Counts. We talked about Your Voice Counts as a charitable organisation, why I was interested in volunteering and how I could get involved. After that we arranged for me to come along to the drop-in at Jarrow and since then I have been volunteering in any way that I can.

What I get out of volunteering with Your Voice Counts

Although I am there as a volunteer to help and support the charity I have found that Your Voice Counts is very supportive of their volunteers as well, they have always encouraged me to take up new tasks and to develop my own skills and this has helped me to build my confidence in trying new things.

For example, in early 2020, they asked if I would like to do a few days or weeks of paid admin work as there were a few staff off at the time. I have never thought of doing admin before and am also not that good at answering the phone since I have got a speech impediment and it did help me during this time to handle some of my anxiety around talking over the phone.

Volunteering during Covid

During Covid, I mostly volunteered by contacting one or two individuals a few days a week, this could just be for a little chat or sometimes doing activities like drawing. Sometimes this could be difficult as some people find it hard to talk over the phone or using communication tools like Skype etc, but we always managed.

I believe the way that Your Voice Counts stayed connected with people during the lockdowns has helped a lot, I believe that it has helped their services users to have more structure and something to look forward to during the weeks of lockdown. I know for myself that having a task or something to look forward to during the days of lockdowns helped me to stay focused and not lose it. It was also nice to know that I could have connected with some of the staff at Your Voice Counts if I needed anything or just a little chat myself.

Find out more about volunteering at Your Voice Counts and our current opportunities on our website at www.yvc.org.uk/jobs or by contacting us on 0191 478 6472 or volunteers@yvc.org.uk.