

Philip Jones - My Volunteering Journey



My volunteering journey started 3 years ago, volunteering for my local charity shop. Whilst initially it boosted my confidence and helped me with my social anxiety, I realised that retail wasn't the right environment for me, and decided I needed to make a change into a field I was passionate about, and had qualifications in.

The field I wanted to enter was to do with computers and administration, but I had no experience! An 8-week work experience with the DWP, helped me to overcome the fear of approaching strangers. On occasion I would help them on the computer if they weren't computer literate and this was a huge step for me at the time due to the previous months of social isolation and sometimes being fearful to leave my home and my comfort zone. Nigel Morgan a representative from the DWP referred me to CVSC at my request, where he felt my skills would develop even further as we didn't want the skills I had learned to disappear by isolating myself at home again.

I had had previous discussions with CVSC about volunteering, so I knew about the organisation and that helped me to make a decision to try with CVSC. I had enquired before but felt that I wasn't ready, due to lack of confidence and skills. Once I felt I was ready, I was referred to CVSC for a work experience program where the skills and experience I had learnt were invaluable, I have built great relationships with the staff and other volunteers who are friendly and always willing to help, and I feel like part of a team and feel excited to volunteer on a daily basis.

I then realised that this was what I wanted to do. Whilst initially I was very nervous and was afraid to look people in the eye, with the support of my colleagues, I soon became comfortable and feel I have come on leaps and bounds during this time. I am now comfortable going to social functions and feel more confident on the telephone. I am re-learning the skills I haven't used in a long time, such as on excel spreadsheets at a local college, and am looking into Welsh language courses. None of this would be possible without the support of my colleagues.



When the initial work experience program ended, I decided I wanted to stay on with CVSC as a volunteer and as part of the team, I have now started working part-time for CVSC and I never thought it would have been possible to start work in an area that I am passionate about. I definitely feel like there is more to come and now feel ready to apply for full time roles within the admin field, when a year ago I never thought this would be possible.

I have been involved with volunteering promotional events with CVSC that I never thought I would have thought about doing, such as going to Job Centre provider events where I can now share my story and tell them that volunteering does change lives, because it has changed mine. I am forever grateful to those who took a chance and never gave up on me.

Jan Smith, Senior Development Officer with CVSC states "Philip joined CVSC initially on a work experience scheme, but continued volunteering with us and gained a range of customer service and administration skills. All credit to his efforts he then gained short term part-time paid employment with us. A full member of team CVSC, Philip oversees our reception desk, joins us at promotional events and is an excellent ambassador for the value and benefits of volunteering. we are all very grateful for his regular and reliable contribution. Thanks indeed Philip!"