



Volunteering at parkrun

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What is parkrun?

- parkrun is a global charity that provides free, weekly, timed events in 22 countries, organised by local volunteers.
- Everyone is welcome at parkrun - whether you walk, jog, run or volunteer.
- 5km events take place on Saturday morning; 2km junior parkrun events for 4-14 year olds are on Sunday morning.
- We hold around 1300 weekly events in the UK.
- parkruns are free, for everyone, for ever.



How does parkrun

work?

- parkrun empowers local communities to deliver weekly community events.

- parkrun is positive, welcoming and inclusive, there is no time limit. We celebrate participation rather than performance. Everyone is welcome to come along to be active, social and outdoors.
- Last weekend there were **over 30,000** volunteers at events in the UK. Over **550,000** different people have volunteered at parkrun in the UK.



How do volunteers add capacity at parkrun events?

- **Impact** - thousands of people getting outdoors, active and social every week thanks to volunteers
- **Sustainability** - having a pool of volunteers to draw from enables events to remain viable
- **Safety and support** - variety of roles means support can be provided to those who require it, and events can be delivered safely
- **Local representation** - building and maintaining key relationships with landowners, local authorities and local communities
- **Development** - new initiatives can be supported through creating volunteer roles
- **Participation** - at parkrun, volunteers are participants. Most people who volunteer also run and walk sometimes.

How does volunteering work at parkrun?

- Everyone registered with parkrun is eligible to volunteer, no skills or experience are required for most roles
- Volunteers can sign up in advance or turn up on the day
- There are a range of roles that volunteers can sign up to by emailing an event
- Roles are simple, and are the same at every parkrun event
- Event teams manage volunteer rosters week by week
- A thank you email is sent to all volunteers after each event
- Volunteers receive a volunteer credit each time they volunteer, which recognise participation and relate to our milestone clubs and merchandise



What do the volunteers

do? There are loads of volunteer roles at parkrun so everyone can find something to do that suits them (some roles allow volunteers to run too). Some examples include:

During the event:

- Marshals
- Timekeepers
- Funnel Managers
- Finish tokens
- Barcode scanner
- Tailwalker

Before/after the event:

- Course check
- Course set-up
- First timer's welcome
- Course close down
- Token sorting

Outside of event day:

- Volunteer coordinator
- Social media
- Outreach

Safety and safeguarding

Volunteers play a key role in ensuring our events are safe. The parkrun event delivery model is designed to minimise opportunities for harm or abuse:

- no coaching or supervising or 1-2-1 time
- no changing rooms/ toilets or other facilities managed by parkrun/ volunteers
- no lifts to events or transport organised by parkrun
- marshals every 100m and in line of sight (at junior parkrun), tail walkers at all events
- parents/ carers at the event (required for under 11s)
- No regulated activity (other than Run Directors at junior parkrun) so no need for DBS checks or other paperwork. We keep it simple to keep it accessible and inclusive



Benefits of our approach to volunteering

- People can volunteer when it suits them (e.g. when injured/resting)
- No need to plan too far in advance
- An opportunity to try out volunteering without feeling 'pressure' to come back regularly (over 70% have returned after their first time)
- Volunteers can choose roles they feel comfortable with, or can volunteer alongside friends and family
- Many roles are visible during the event - runners and walkers can see what they would be doing if they volunteered



Challenges of our volunteering

- **approach** Some events find recruiting enough volunteers every week a challenge and occasionally have to cancel due to lack of volunteers
- Accessibility and availability of volunteering can create an expectation that everyone should volunteer, and lead to judgement of those who choose not to or can't volunteer
- A feeling of expectation to volunteer may prevent some people from participating at parkrun
- Some volunteers can see a particular role as belonging to them, which can make it difficult for new volunteers to get involved
- Reliance on a small, invested group who will fill gaps, which means there can always seem to be enough volunteers



What is the impact of volunteering at parkrun?

- Volunteers report an increased connection to and sense of ownership of their event.
- Greater understanding of what is required to put an event on each week.
- Volunteers ensure events are sustainable.

In addition to the benefits to parkrun events, there are significant benefits to the individuals who volunteer too.

A survey of parkrun volunteers found:

- 90% reported feeling happier
- 83% reported improved mental health
- 74% found volunteering widened their social network
- 63% reported benefits to their physical health





THANK YOU

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