

Volunteering

Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling Project Information For Referrers



Brighton and Hove Wood Recycling Project is a financially self-supporting social enterprise. Founded in 1998, it was the first in a now growing nationwide network of Community Wood Recycling social enterprises that:

- Save resources by rescuing and re-using/recycling waste timber
- Create sustainable jobs and volunteering opportunities for local people

Our volunteer scheme is a **valuable resource for organisations throughout the area**, giving you the chance to refer people who may not be ready for employment, or who need work experience to show employers that they have something to offer.

Volunteers start the day at our centrally located office and workshop on Elder Place, just by Preston Circus. Our retail outlet **The Wood Store** is based at FIELD Brighton, an exciting development at Preston Barracks on Lewes Road.

Last year we rescued 630 tonnes of wood from the waste stream.

Who can volunteer with us?

We welcome volunteers of all ages. We particularly encourage applications from **local disadvantaged people who may feel excluded from the labour market** and who want to build their confidence, self esteem and a range of useful transferable skills in a fun, supportive but disciplined and hard working not-for-profit enterprise. We also take on volunteers from the local community in general, making an inclusive environment.

We have experience of working with people from all walks of life, including long term unemployed and young people, who have not got going in the jobs market. We aim to be a supportive environment for volunteers and to understand their needs. However we do not receive any outside funding, and everyone working with volunteers has a job to do running the enterprise.

This means that there may be some people facing challenges who are not yet ready to volunteer with us - particularly if they need constant supervision or are looking for support with events in their day to day lives.

Volunteers need to have the ability to work independently and not be at risk to themselves or those around them.

What our volunteers do

We collect waste wood (primarily from builders) that would otherwise go into skips. We take it back to our premises where we sort it and prepare it for re-use. It is then sold to the public for DIY, or made into a wide range of products or into firewood and kindling.

Volunteers can be involved with:

- Collecting wood from building sites and other premises
- Preparing the timber for sale
- Serving the public and dealing with inquiries
- Learning woodworking skills and making simple products

Volunteers with appropriate skills or experience can also be involved in sales and marketing, administration, supervising other volunteers, designing products or any of the other myriad tasks required to operate a busy and successful small enterprise.

Hours are flexible, starting at a minimum of 4 hours a week.



What our volunteers get

Volunteers receive travel and lunch expenses and are given full health and safety and other appropriate training before being expected to carry out any tasks. Suitable protective clothing is always provided.

The most important thing that volunteers receive is the opportunity to build their confidence and self-esteem in a supportive but disciplined environment. They will learn a range of soft skills helping them along their journey back to paid employment.

For longer-term volunteers we can sometimes fund other appropriate training. In addition, we encourage volunteers to apply for any paid jobs that might be created as the business expands. We're always happy to provide references for current and former volunteers applying for jobs.



Our volunteer recruitment process

We work with local agencies to ensure that the people they refer are a good fit for the opportunities we offer.

We ask all potential volunteers to come in for a visit at our central office (and workshop) on Elder Place. This gives them a chance to find out about what is involved with volunteering with us. We also talk to them to make sure that they will be able to benefit from a volunteer role. On application we ask them to fill in a simple information form.

If we feel that the potential volunteer will require more support than we can give, we will contact the agency who referred them to discuss the next steps.

New volunteers are given an induction which will include:

- An explanation of the work the volunteer will be asked to do.
- An introduction to the staff and an explanation of who they will be managed/supervised by.
- A reminder about the expenses they're entitled to, and an explanation of how to claim them
- A basic health and safety introduction covering key information like the location of fire exits and possible hazards in the areas they'll be working.
- An opportunity for the volunteer to ask questions.

Over their first few sessions, they will also get specific health and safety training for working in a wood recycling enterprise.

Contact us

We're happy to welcome referrers to visit us and find out more about what we do and how we can work with you.

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Wood Recycling Project
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Some of our recent volunteers

Anna, 22

Anna dropped out of university and struggled to find work. Now she has learned new skills at a community wood recycling enterprise and is planning to go back to college. She says:

"I was out of work before I came here. I had been at university but I wanted to change course and it fell through. I found it hard to find work and could only get a part time job in a coffee shop.

"It's a really nice atmosphere here. It's nice to know what you are doing is helping. I found it pretty hard coming out of university then not being able to find a job. It can really get you down".

"I started to think I wasn't worthy of a job or not good enough. But here I'm learning skills, doing something and I feel that my contribution is worthwhile."

Steve, 26

Steve had spent four years as a carpenter's mate when he was younger, but progressed from heavy drinking to heroin use and by his early 20's was sleeping rough and had a criminal record. When his girlfriend became pregnant he was motivated to turn his life around, and having obtained local authority housing he got a place on a training scheme run at his local community wood recycling enterprise. After a difficult initial settling in period adjusting to the new routine, he began to enjoy his work and was delighted to be offered a part time job by a carpenter customer of the enterprise. He says:

"It was great to work at the enterprise and I was so lucky that they helped me to find a part time job. It made me want to get out of bed in the morning."

Dave, 40

Dave started at his local community wood recycling enterprise as an unemployed volunteer but when the enterprise was left without a bookkeeper he learned the trade and took over. He now does the books for his local enterprise three days a week. He says:

"After being shown the basics, I've kind of taught myself the rest.

"I had never done bookkeeping and I didn't even like maths. It's nothing I expected to do. I was out of work and this has given me skills I would never have thought of.

"You meet lots of different people here. Some people can be a bit disorganised in their lives, but volunteering can give you your confidence back. This is work. Everyone should have work."

Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.