



Glamorgan Voluntary Services

STEP FORWARD

End of Project Report

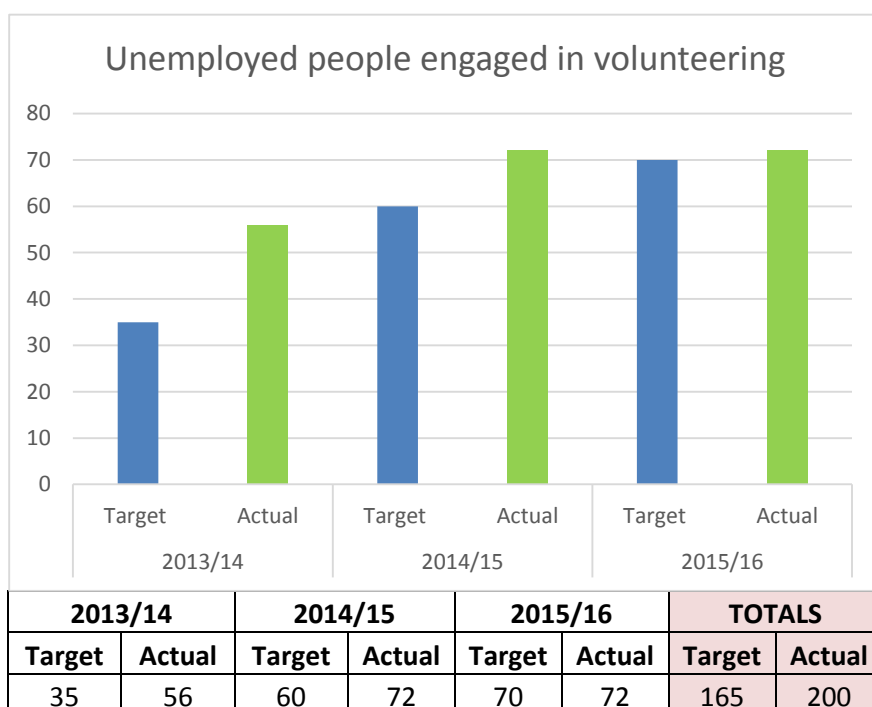
BACKGROUND

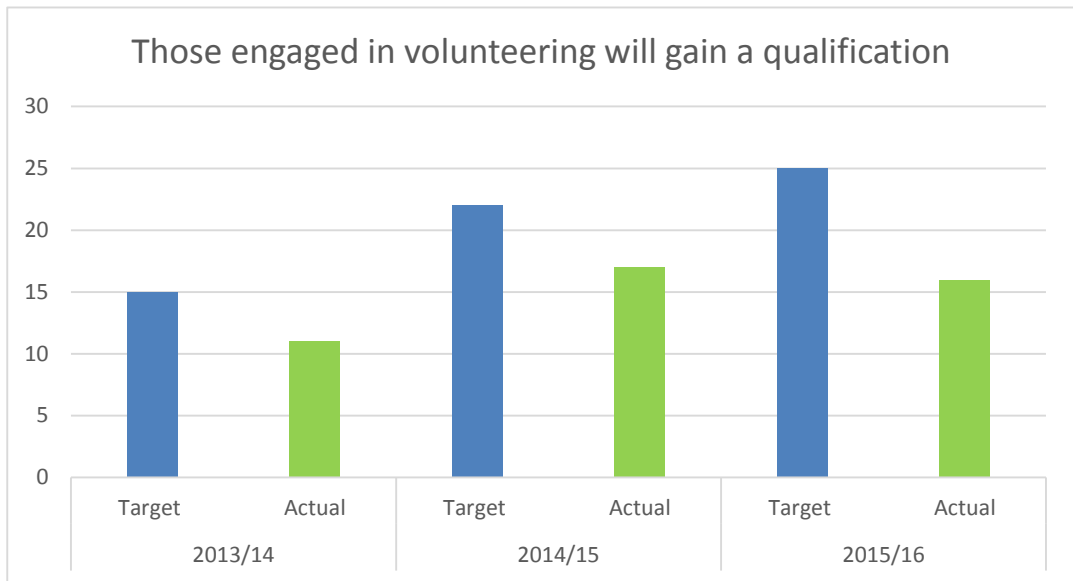
Through funding from the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Glamorgan Voluntary Services – GVS (formerly Vale Volunteer Bureau – VVB) were able to provide additional support to help individuals over the age of 25 and unemployed to volunteer. This included help to fill out application forms and one-to-one support and assistance with volunteering qualifications.

Volunteers were able to gain new skills and take on new challenges. As well as offering access to Agored accredited training in Volunteering and Community Involvement volunteer's outcomes included:

- Confidence building
- Meeting new people
- Enhanced CV
- Improvement to health and wellbeing
- New skills gained.

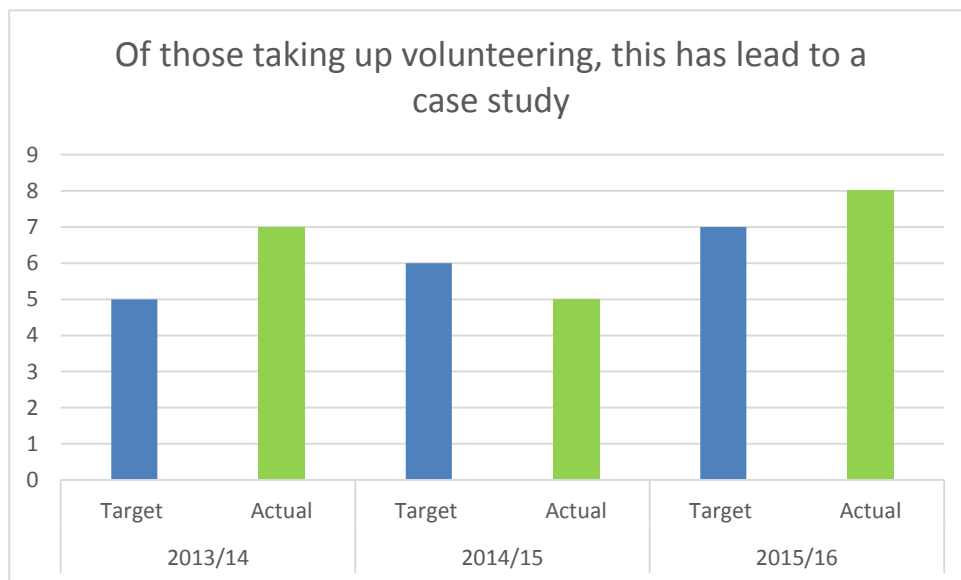
TARGETS & OUTCOMES





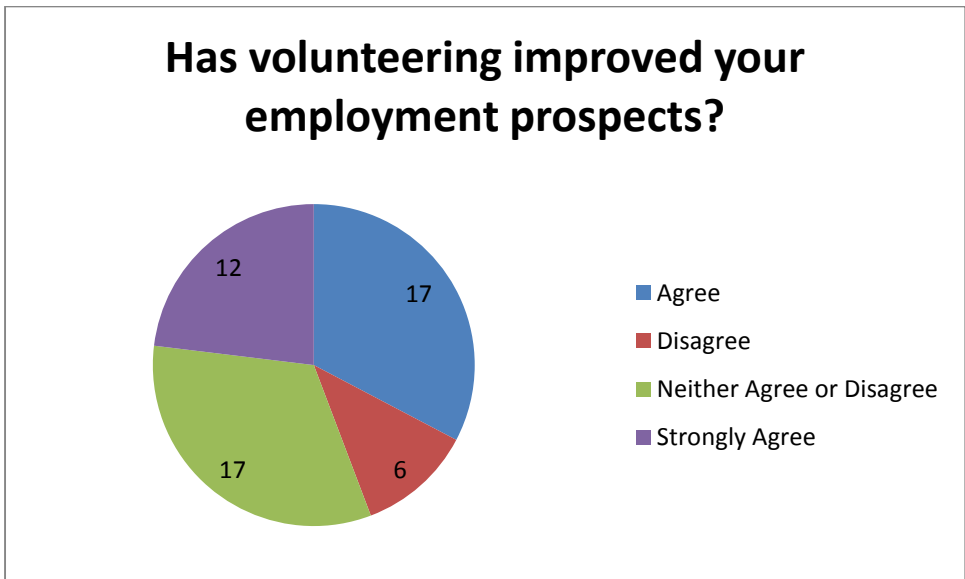
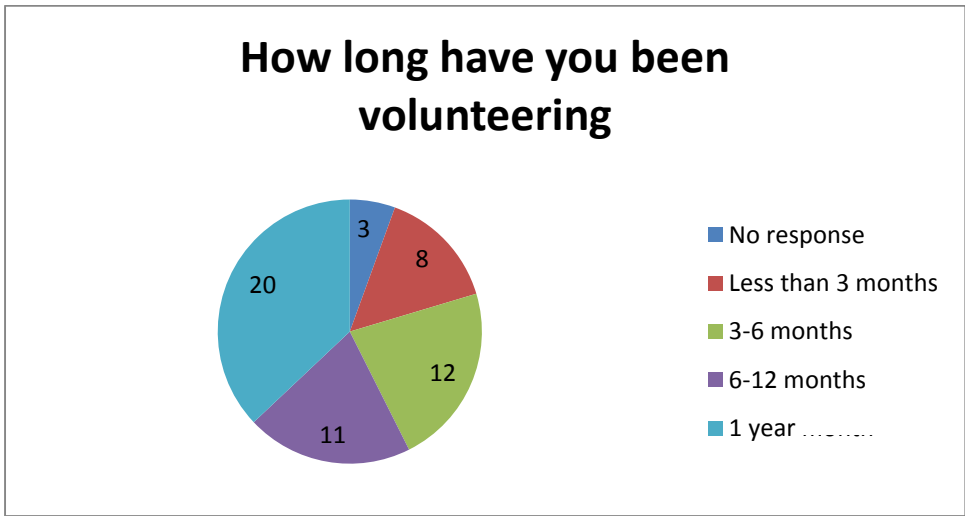
2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		TOTALS*	
Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
15	11	22	17	25	16	62	44

* Although the final targets for gaining a qualification are below expectations, those initially attending were higher but removed themselves from the training for a number of reasons, such as moving onto employment, change of circumstances or poor health.

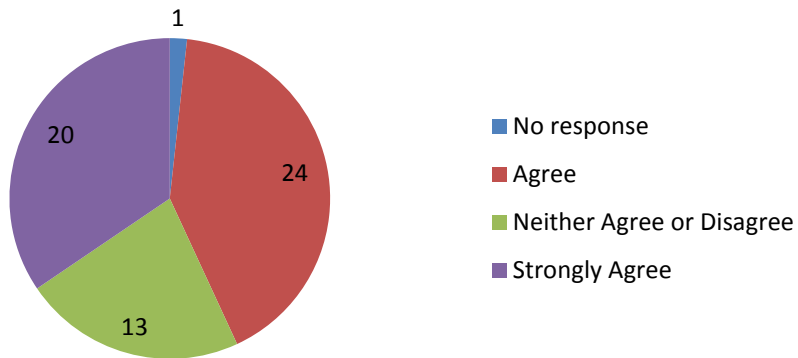


2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		TOTALS	
Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
5	7	6	5	7	8	18	20

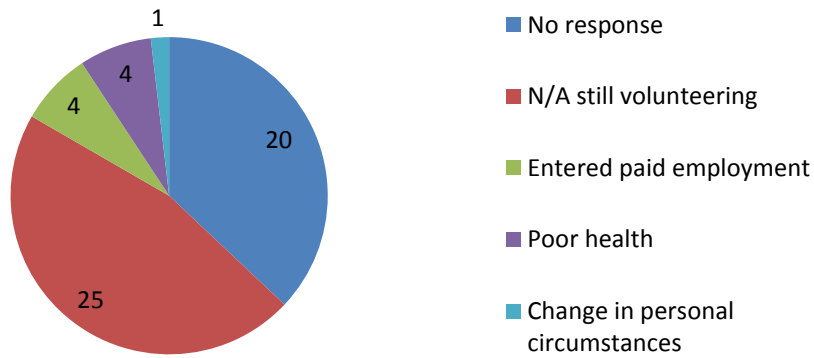
THE VOLUNTEER’S JOURNEY – Of the 128 total number of volunteers engaged in volunteering in the first 2 years of the project, and were then contacted in the third year, over a third responded to the following questions:



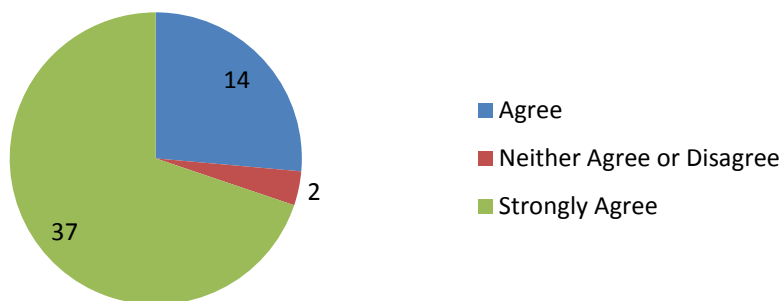
Has volunteering improved your CV?



Reason for Leaving



Would you recommend volunteering to other people?



CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1

Male Aged 31 Interviewed 11/11/2013

I started volunteering for the VVB in July as an admin volunteer updating databases and enquiries from the volunteering wales website. From 4th November I was taken on as a paid member of the admin team. I have also been volunteering for Cowbridge Hub updating the website and managing the Facebook page. I also volunteer for The Blurt Foundation working as a mentor to support people with mental health problems via email. I haven't got involved in volunteering before as I wasn't sure what I wanted to do and haven't had the confidence to talk to people to ask for help. I've suffered with anxiety and depression in the past which has held me back. I decided I needed to do something to build my confidence and build on my CV to get back into paid work. There were very little paid opportunities available and I wasn't sure how I would cope going from nothing to paid employment so volunteering bridged that gap. The VVB have been amazing and very supportive, staff are kind and friendly and made working here really easy. Volunteering has been great for me, my mood has gotten better and my confidence has grown and I got paid work out of it.

Case Study 2

Female Aged 29 Interviewed: 26/11/2013

I have been volunteering in Marie Curie charity shop for 8 weeks. I wanted to volunteer because I have a 10 year gap on my CV due to an illness (brain tumour). I am volunteering to build up my CV. I got involved to gain experience and meet new people. I'd like to work in retail in the future. Gemma from the Vale Volunteer Bureau arranged my placement and kept in contact to see how things were going. She also referred me to a confidence building course as I was lacking in confidence. Volunteering has actually made me more confident, I have gained retail experience such as using the till, serving customers and processing stock. From doing the confidence building course I have now started counselling and am looking into doing a retail course soon. I really look forward to my volunteering as it gets me out of the house. I have got my sister involved in volunteering and would recommend it to anyone. Next year my aim is to hopefully get a job in retail.

Case Study 3

Male Aged 31 Interviewed 25/11/2013

I have been volunteering for Venture Out Cymru supporting disabled adults on nature walks in Cardiff. I have been doing this for one month. I didn't really think about doing any sort of volunteering work before, I have suffered with anxiety and depression in the past which sometimes affects me now. I got involved because I had too much spare time, I had been on the dole for 9 months. Nobody wanted to pay me to work so I thought I'd volunteer to show willing. I wanted to provide a worthwhile service to the community and give something back. Keeping busy keeps my mind active so my mood doesn't drop.

I was advised to volunteer by an Occupational Health Therapist in the job centre who directed me to Gemma and the VVB. Gemma researched the different options available to me and did background checks and chase ups to get me volunteering.

Volunteering has given me the first opportunity I've had in almost a year – it's a chance for me to get out and meet people. It boosts my confidence; after months of being on job seekers my confidence started to be affected. I can't afford to go out and socialise so volunteering helps me meet people.

The support I receive from Gemma and my volunteer supervisor, Jon, helps to keep me going – their enthusiasm has transferred to me. In the future I would like to work in the third sector maybe doing Youth Work or counselling. I would definitely recommend volunteering to others – it's not about getting paid it's about doing something for somebody else. It shows you are willing and using your initiative to work rather than sitting on your backside.

Case Study 4

Male Aged 34 Interviewed 06/05/2014

I have volunteered for the British Red Cross for 3 years and Marie Curie for 4 months both as a Retail volunteer. I have a brain injury so I need additional support to volunteer which I receive from my support worker. My disability can affect me in different ways – my brain lacks thinking so I sometimes say things I don't mean and people don't understand me. I feel I have been discriminated in the past due to my disability. My support worker, Tracey, contacted Gemma at the VVB as I was looking to do more with my time. I wanted to meet new people and make new friends. I knew I would receive the right support from Gemma and Tracey.

Volunteering has helped me learn new skills and given me an insight into how charity shops are run. It has given me confidence, without volunteering I wouldn't have gained my Agored Cymru level 1 in 'Volunteering and Community Participation' and I wouldn't be working towards my Level 2. Tracey helps to keep me going. I enjoy being busy and meeting new people, having regular meetings with Gemma also helps me to stay focussed. My long term goal is to find part time employment unsupported.

Case Study 5

Male Aged 25 Interviewed 7/8/2014

I have been volunteering at Marie Curie charity shop, Barry Beavers Disabled Swimming club and Venture Out. I hadn't previously volunteered because of lack of confidence, I was scared. I would walk past the VVB and think 'should I give in' and I never did. I was scared because I didn't know what to expect. I was scared of what the staff might be like but everyone is really kind and friendly. I eventually got involved because the Job Centre told me to come over and Angelina at Communities 1st suggested it. I haven't worked since 2012 and had a gap on my CV. Gemma came to the job club and sat down with me to go through my options. Gemma arranged appointments for me at Venture Out and Marie Curie. I now get support from everyone at the VVB – if I pop in they all know me.

I am interested in horses which is why I wanted to volunteer at Venture Out, before I didn't know you could volunteer with horses. I wanted to gain retail experience and confidence of working in a shop which is why I chose Marie Curie.

Volunteering has given me confidence, it's helped me to speak to other people and I'm gaining experience of working in a shop. I've met loads of new people, it's helped me get out of the house instead of being bored. I now go and enjoy myself. I've done my Agored Level 1 certificate in 'Volunteering and Community Participation'. I've also gained my Millenium Volunteering 50 hour certificate and I'm working towards my 100 hour.

I keep volunteering because I enjoy being out and about. I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy it. I would recommend volunteering to other people – I tell everyone about the Volunteer Bureau. I would like to eventually find paid employment, maybe work with horses.

Case Study 6

Male Interviewed 27/08/2014

I have been volunteering with Newydd Housing as a Digital Champion since March 2014. I teach basic IT skills to OAPs in sheltered accommodation. Volunteering wasn't something I had given much thought to. It's terrible to say but I didn't have an interest in it. Now that I've started volunteering I really enjoy it and wish I had done it sooner. I got involved because I was told to by the Job Centre – it was part of my job seekers agreement. I met with Gemma and she gave me a list of options and didn't make me feel I HAD to choose, there was no pressure. Once I had made a decision she gave me lots of information on what the role would entail so that I didn't go in 'blind' when I had my initial discussion with Newydd's volunteer coordinator.

Volunteering has given me my confidence back and my self-esteem. I've been out of work since December 2011 and in that time I've had 2 job interviews. Volunteering is an enjoyment, it's fun and it's not a chore. I know I am making a difference – I've helped people get to know their grandchildren via skype, I've helped a gentleman recover photos of his deceased wife. It gives you a glow helping people – I get a good feeling that I've done something useful and they reap the rewards.

It is from volunteering that I've been able to do POVA and listening skills training. I have attended Digital champion training and I've completed and gained my Agored Cymru Levels 1 and 2 in 'Volunteering and Community Participation'. I have also signed up for the Volunteer Star award which recognises the hours contributed in my volunteering placement.

I keep volunteering because it is fun, I've even been in the rain! It's not the same thing every week, sometimes we just sit down and chat. It's nice that they think of me as someone to talk to.

I would definitely recommend volunteering to others. It keeps you ticking over. It's an opportunity to meet new people – some of whom you may not have met otherwise. I'd say give it a try, if you do your best you will reap the rewards. I think it's the fear of the unknown sometimes.

Case Study 7

Male Aged 50 Interviewed 12/09/2014

I volunteer for Valeways as a walk and clear volunteer, I've been doing this for 6 months. I had previously lived in Cardiff and found there weren't many outdoor opportunities. Since living in Barry I've done loads. I'm not in the best of health but it doesn't hold me back. I got involved in volunteering to get me out of the house and to keep busy. My niece recommended that I come to the VVB who then put me in touch with Mark at Valeways. I've met loads of new people through volunteering and I've learnt more about the footpaths around the Vale of Glamorgan. I've been able to work towards my volunteer star award and have achieved my 50 hour certificate. I've recommended the VVB to other people – volunteering looks good on your CV. My main aim is to get a job although I've found my age is probably against me, employers want younger people.

Case Study 8

Female Aged 28 Interviewed 12/02/2015

I have been volunteering in the cultural sector – Glamorgan Archives for 1 and a half years and Vale of Glamorgan Libraries since August 2014. I suffer with Generalised Anxiety Disorder and Depression which has a big impact on my life. It affects my confidence which can hold me back from doing things I want to do. I got involved in volunteering in order to increase my confidence and reinforce focus; to distract me from my personal issues and to create a long term career plan. I've always been interested in history so wanted to gain experience in the cultural sector.

Gemma has made it easier for me to volunteer. I really wanted to get involved in culture and heritage as they are both my passions. Gemma has been there to help me, if I want to chat about any of my issues she is available for advice and support.

Volunteering gives me a sense of satisfaction and I feel wanted in my chosen surroundings. Volunteering helps me focus and provides a distraction from my personal issues which have had a major impact on my life over the past few years. I don't feel worthless and I'm so grateful for the support and advice I have had from the organisations I volunteer for.

I am kept going by the fact that I am constantly learning in my voluntary roles and that volunteering is helping my anxiety. To be able to focus, I feel, is a big thing for individuals with anxiety disorders and depression. I really feel that I've made progress, it lifts my mood and I'm able to further plan my goals.

Case Study 9

Female Aged 61 Interviewed 06/02/2015

I have been volunteering for Marie Curie and Tenovus charity shops as a Retail Assistant for the past year. I had previously worked in Healthcare for 19 years and when I finished I looked to change career into Retail. I hadn't really thought of volunteering until my Job Centre Advisor recommended it. I was referred to Gemma who went through my options with me. She has also provided me with a lot of support. I keep volunteering because it is providing me with excellent experience in the field I wish to work. Volunteering also helps me meet new people and the managers in both shops are pleased with my work. I have met a lovely group of people through volunteering and have made new friends. It has also improved my confidence. I would recommend volunteering to other people – give it a go, everyone is different and it has helped me a lot, no matter how old you are. I am hoping from volunteering I will be able to get a job in Retail.

Case Study 10

Female Aged 60 Interviewed: 07/05/2015

I have been volunteering with George Thomas Hospice charity shop for 3 months. I help with the stock processing – ironing, sewing on buttons, putting out stock etc. I had previously lacked confidence when considering volunteering. I kept thinking anywhere I would go would reject me. I thought they would want somebody who was confident at the front of house which I'm not. I got involved because I was getting bored in the house with just me and my cat – she's not a great conversationalist! My advisor at the job centre made an appointment for me to see Gemma to discuss my options. Gemma arranged my interview with George Thomas Hospice and helped me fill in the paperwork. She gave me moral support at my interview and followed up to check I was ok. Volunteering has helped me talk to total strangers, now I can do small talk! It has improved my confidence no end, I've met new people. I was never any good at socialising, my family thinks it's great that I'm volunteering. My main aim is to get paid employment. I would definitely recommend volunteering to other jobseekers – it does wonders for your confidence and gets you out of the house.

Case study 11

Female Age 44 Interviewed 08/05/2015

I have been volunteering at Recovery Cymru as an Admin volunteer for 4 months. I hadn't previously considered volunteering because of my health – I've suffered with anxiety and depression which has affected my confidence. I have always had an interest in substance misuse so popped into the Bureau to enquire about charities which help those with an addiction. Working Links and the VVB were really helpful and supportive when I started looking into volunteering. I have gained so many positive things from volunteering. My confidence has grown and I have learnt a lot from an educational viewpoint. Most importantly I have met some wonderful individuals. I have also able to access courses such as 'Understanding Drugs and Addictions' which is affiliated by Kings College London. I have also completed Agored Levels 1 and 2 in Volunteering and Community Involvement. I'm currently looking into volunteering with Newlink Wales in their needle exchange program to compliment my volunteering at Recovery Cymru. I would definitely recommend volunteering to other people. The experience has been invaluable. I enjoy the concept of learning and learn something new each time I volunteer at Recovery Cymru. My confidence was low and it took a lot for me to offer to volunteer. But with support from both members and Recovery Cymru staff my confidence has grown and I'm starting to believe I have something to offer.

Case Study 12

Male Aged 39 Interviewed 14/10/2015

I have been volunteering at the Community allotment, the allotment is run by Newydd housing and based in Barry. The manager of the garden is Lisa Williams. I'm doing gardening/ allotment volunteering, duties include weeding, planting, watering, rebidding plants, grass cutting, digging.

In the past I have worked then I got ill, diagnosed with Asperger's Jan 2015. This diagnosis made sense why I am the way I am and why I have struggled through life.

I had been speaking with my Job centre advisor who had asked me if I'd like to go back to work, yes I said but didn't know how that could happen. Vivienne my advisor suggested volunteering and it was suggested to come and speak with GVS on Holton Road in Barry. An appointment was made and I met up with Clare Humphreys the Volunteer support officer.

Before the meeting I was a little nervous and found it hard to make eye contact with people but I was ready for something new. I was bored and felt useless that motivated me to do something useful. I thought the interview went well, very informative and helpful.

A week later an informal meeting was set up by Clare at the Allotment and Charity shop. I went along to both. I felt reassured having Clare come along with me it helped me feel more confident. I thought I would choose the charity shop volunteering but was surprised how much I liked the idea of volunteering outdoors. I felt there was no pressure, it was relaxed and had a good atmosphere. After having a think about it I decided to start volunteering with Barry Community Allotment.

I got involved to learn new skills, doing something for an organization, putting my skills to good use and help boost my confidence.

Having the volunteer centre to come to definitely helped, if I had to do it myself it just wouldn't have happened. Volunteering has helped me build my confidence, helping me get along with others and meet new people. I'm learning new skills and gaining the experience I wanted. I felt supported into the volunteering by the GVS Step Forward Project and also now by the Garden Manager Lisa.

It's made me feel happier in myself.

Would you recommend Volunteering to other people? Yes definitely, go for it. Makes you feel better about yourself, gets you out, meet new people.

Best thing I've done. ☺

VOLUNTEER COMMENTS

I am interested in volunteering within the hospitality sector. I have been referred to the 'Jobfit' programme through the Job Centre but would be grateful if you would have any help for me as I want my CV and experience updated to hopefully gain employment

I have had all the help I have needed from Gemma and the team :-). Very nice and helpful :-)

Volunteering is good. I would recommend it to anybody. It makes me feel happier and good about myself. It gets me out of the house.

I did enjoy working in the Charity Shop. But it was too much for my Back. So had to give it up but will be looking in future.

I volunteer for both Age Connects and British Red Cross. I prefer the Age Connects.

All experience I have had has been given well as has the training which was second to none.

They help me meet nice people

I really enjoy volunteering at the GVS office. I have more experience new skills and meet people.

It's a great way of getting to know people!

I like working in PDSA they are nice people and they are nice people at Vale Volunteer Bureau

I am a volunteer with Valeways. It gets me out of the house and in fresh air. It makes me feel a bit better with myself when I get my benefits I really enjoy my day out working and I find the leader, Rebecca a very nice and professional person I would like more voluntary work "outdoors". Thank you for everything Gemma and VVB

I think volunteering helps get me out of the house and I quite like being active and helping people. When I am not volunteering I am helping my mother at home. She is 80 this year and cannot cope much now.

It's given me experience and helped my CV. I've met people and gained confidence

Volunteering helps me to focus and manage my anxiety. I feel like I'm contributing and want to move forward in securing employment

Really grateful of the support, advice and referrals the VVB has provided for me.

Volunteering is a good way to meet new people and give something back to others who need help. You can gain skills and experience which will help you to find work.

Would recommend volunteering to anyone who has spare time to give, it opens up a lot of opportunities in a variety of placements and training avenues for all skills and ages.