

Sean's story

Sean is a young father who lives in Ilfracombe, an isolated rural location with a small amount of industry and mostly seasonal work.

The Volunteering Access Worker met Sean in Transform4Work, an organisation in Ilfracombe which gives benefits advice, helps with forms, provides food parcels and offers access to computers for job searches. The Volunteering Access Worker (VAW) did outreach here once a week.

One day the VAW approached Sean and asked him whether he had thought about volunteering. After a conversation about how it could help him get new skills and meet new people, Sean registered [with the Volunteering for Stronger Communities project] and that was the beginning of his journey.

When Sean was asked whether he would have approached the Volunteer Centre himself, he said "No, because I wouldn't have known that much about it so the fact that I bumped into you over there and we got discussing it..." The VAW asked "That made a difference?" and Sean replied "Yes".

Sean signed up as a volunteer "to get experience with people and to get out and about more." He had been unable to find work for a long time, applying for jobs weekly in Transform4Work to no avail.

Sean said he would like to volunteer at the local swimming pool as he took his son there and "it fitted in with other things as well." The VAW contacted the swimming pool, met them and ensured they had volunteer policies and agreements, insurance, etc. The Volunteering for Stronger Communities project paid for Sean's CRB and then Sean started volunteering as a swimming coach to the young children at the swimming pool. Sean was also grateful to have his CRB done.

When asked if there was anything unexpected or surprising about the volunteer experience. Sean replied "No - because it had all been discussed beforehand." This shows the importance of inducting a volunteer into their role well so they know exactly what they are meant to do.

Within a short amount of time volunteering, Sean reports that “through talking to the mums and dads I got employment.” Sean got two jobs from his volunteering as a result of meeting new people and making new contacts.

When asked if he thought he was more involved in the community since volunteering he said “Yes, because I got to know more people and find out where things were and what jobs were going... I got to learn more skills through talking to the parents and I got employment from it which I wouldn’t have done if I didn’t do the volunteering... It’s all been very helpful [with regard] to finding employment and gave me new skills to approach people.” Sean said he would recommend it [volunteering] to a friend so they could find employment.