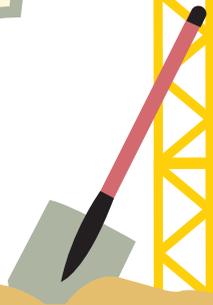
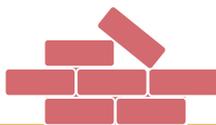




Setting
up
Volunteering
PROJECTS

Your guide to
getting involved



What's in the leaflet?

This information leaflet is a guide for students wishing to set up volunteering societies or projects whilst at Leeds University. It contains some useful information on what to think about and do as well as where you can go for support at Leeds University Union.

A student-led volunteering project or society is an initiative established, organised and run by a student or group of students for the benefit of others or a cause. It could be anything from setting up a bike project for refugees and asylum seekers to visiting residents of hostels.

Why set up your own project?

Students can get involved in volunteering for charities and community groups as well as with already existent student-led volunteering projects and societies. However, setting up your own provides you with a different experience. Here are just a few things you gain from establishing your own projects:

Skills and employability: you will gain skills such as communication, leadership, planning, organisation, management, team work, problem-solving and creativity.

Personal goals: it will give you the opportunity to set your own goals and achieve them.

Personalised volunteering: rather than volunteering for an organisation, you can individualise your volunteering experience so it meets your interests.

Passion: develop a passion for a cause, enthusiasm to improve things and ownership over solutions to community problems and needs.

Community benefit: do something worthwhile for the community.

Fun: you will meet new people, make new friends and have a lot of fun!





Setting up a project

You can set a project up under numerous themes whether that is children, older people, sport, conservation or international development. A good thing about setting up a volunteering project is that you can incorporate your interests into it, so, if you play football, you could establish a football training project for young people and if you like animals, you could set up a dog walking project walking dogs for those unable to.

Clubs and societies and volunteering

Clubs and societies at Leeds University Union are supported by the Student Activities department. A team of Development Coordinators look after particular categories of clubs and societies with the support of an admin team.

Volunteering societies and projects are supported by the Volunteering Development

Coordinator, based in the Opportunities office on level 2 of the Union building.

Clubs and societies can set up a volunteering branch in addition to their usual activity. If you are in a club or society and want to do this, please speak to your Development Coordinator or the Volunteering Development Coordinator.

Meet the Volunteering Development Coordinator



Hello everyone! My name is Claire and I am the Volunteering Development Coordinator. My role is to help students love their time at Leeds by getting involved in community volunteering projects and societies. I support 11 unique societies who have more than 50 projects between them and any other non-volunteering societies who want to get involved in community volunteering whether that is by setting up their own projects or working with existing groups.

If you want to set up new projects or develop projects in societies that exist, get in touch! c.henly@leeds.ac.uk / 0113 3801 326

How can Leeds University Union help you?



Leeds University Union is one of the best student unions in the country and has been awarded gold twice in the Student Union Evaluation Initiative, 2008 and 2011. We are a member-led organisation of 32,000 students with a vision to make sure students love their time at Leeds.

We can help you with:

- Organisational aspects of the project
 - Health and safety
 - DBS checks and safeguarding
 - General advice
 - Space - you can book meeting rooms
 - Volunteer recruitment and publicity
 - Booking stalls
 - Training in food hygiene, child protection
- and more
- You can apply for a union subsidy
 - Office and storage facilities
 - Funding and banking - we give you a Cash Office union bank account
 - Networks and links with local organisations
 - Insurance - any official LUU activity is covered by our public liability insurance.

Where to begin

It all starts with an idea but where do you go from there?

Step one

Is there a need for your project in the community?

Research community need, talk to organisations, find out where gaps exist. Be flexible with your project idea as you learn more about what the needs of the community are and what is already happening. Avoid duplicating work that is already being done.

Step two

Firm up your project idea by planning.

Now you have established the need, you have

to develop the idea into a viable project. Begin with a mission statement and objectives; what do you want to achieve and how will you do it with this project? Plan how it will work including issues around funding, space, resources, volunteers, administration and management. How will you get what you need, from where and how much will it cost? You need to also be clear with yourself how much time you have to dedicate so you don't bite off more than you can chew; set realistic deadlines. And, where possible, keep your project accessible; think about equality and diversity.

Step three

Do it!

Start the project. Be open to change as you find out what works and what doesn't. Make sure you seek advice and support and keep the Volunteering Development Coordinator updated.

Step four

Evaluate.

Evaluation is important so you can see whether you are achieving what you set out to. Consistent monitoring is better than leaving it all to the last minute. Take action on your findings.



Project Coordinator commitments

Don't forget, if you are running a project, you have certain commitments to keep in order to ensure the project is a success and in order to maintain good relations with LUU.

You will need to:

- Plan your project thoroughly (this includes research and evaluation).
- Recruit and support volunteers.
- Maintain professionalism and good relations with any partner organisations and staff at LUU, as well as service-users of the project.
- Keep in touch with the Volunteering Development Coordinator.
- Complete any necessary training.
- Meet health and safety requirements including doing a risk assessment.



If you want to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, you need to make sure your project adheres to LUU's safeguarding policy and procedures. Arrange to speak to the Volunteering Development Coordinator to discuss this.



Case studies



Lizzie Lowenstein: STAR Bike project (renovates bikes to donate to refugees and asylum seekers in Leeds and provides bike maintenance support).

Why did you set up the Bike Project?

We wanted to provide a service to asylum seekers which would provide them with a bicycle, something useful in the day to day life of someone who has limited access to transport, but also

the skills involved in maintaining and riding a bike safely. One of the ideologies behind the project, and others like it, is that a bicycle can be used to combat isolation, something many asylum seekers struggle with. We saw this as a way of not only training and providing our student volunteers with new skills, but also giving them the opportunity to share a passion or knowledge of their own.

How did you go about setting up the project?

We did research into other similar projects around the country; Bristol, Sheffield and London. We also spoke to local organisations to check that a similar project didn't already exist in Leeds and that the service would be useful. We spoke to the union, and applied for funding from Leeds for Life, the Union and a Sports Relief charity. We contacted the Velocampus hub who were able to lend us their space and skills. We started to make inquiries about what sources of second hand bikes we might find.

Did you have any hurdles to overcome?

It was quite difficult to find enough people who really knew about bikes, and had time to come and help repair them, as well as teach other student volunteers, and asylum seekers. Make you sure you have a reliable set of experienced and committed volunteers with the right skills.

What was the best thing about setting up your own project?

The best thing about setting up our project, even though it remained small, was that it was very rewarding to see that small project come out of nothing from scratch. I was also very proud of our regular volunteers who wanted to continue the project and continue to make it a success. It's a really exciting feeling that other people also believe in your idea and will carry on what you started.

Do you have any tips for people wanting to set up volunteering projects?

Plan, plan, plan. Ask advice and set up schedules, targets for when you want or hope to get certain things off the ground. Do it to your own pace and be realistic. Keep asking people for help. Other people, professionals and community members, will be excited by your commitment and enthusiasm. Talk to lots of people about your project; we got a lot of bike donations just from word of mouth.



Natalie Tiu, Action-Youth Theatres-Open Theatre day of workshops (providing drama workshops to young people).

Why did you set up your project?

Youth Theatres is a charity based in one of the most deprived areas in Leeds providing free drama lessons for young people aged 7-19yrs, giving them the opportunity to voice their opinions through performance. The Youth Theatres' organisers approached Action with a proposal to bring their young people on to Leeds University to gain a view of university life, learn from our drama students in a series of workshops and to perform at the end of the day for their parents.

How did you go about setting up the project?

Before the summer holidays, I started to approach a number of different LRU theatre societies to see if they would be interested in leading workshops with the young people. After a number of initial meetings with the president of Open Theatre, we left it to them to gauge interest and find members to get involved with the project. A couple of months before the project, we began to meet with Youth Theatres to start making hard plans for the project, making sure everything we planned was risk assessed and within budget.

Did you have any hurdles to overcome?

Because we were working with a number of different groups, it was sometimes hard to coordinate times to meet so there was a fair bit of chasing up to do in the run-up to the project day. However, everyone was really enthusiastic and all organisation was completed such that the day went without any major problems.

What was the best thing about setting up your own project?

Supporting other students to use their talents and skills to benefit young people in the local community, and seeing the positive role models those students played.

Do you have any tips for people wanting to set up volunteering projects?

Make sure you have the interest and support from other students- whether that means getting your friends or your society involved- the more help you can get the better and the easier it will be for you to organise. Be enthusiastic, realistic with what you can do, and have fun with the project!



Checklist

If you complete the below in detail, you will be in a position to start your project.

- Spoken to LUU Volunteering Development Coordinator
- Affiliated your project to an existing society or set up a new society (if appropriate)
- Researched whether there is a need for the project
- Made contact with relevant organisations
- Firmed up the project idea including developing a mission statement and objectives
- Decided how much time you have to give
- Planned the details of the project (what, where, who, when, how)
 - timing
 - who is involved
 - volunteers involved
 - space
 - resources and equipment
 - funding
 - is your project accessible?
 - how will you monitor the project?
- Recruit volunteers
- Get resources, funding, space according to the needs identified above
- Sought training if required

Then you are ready to roll!

**For more information on
volunteering in Leeds, go to
www.luu.org.uk/volunteering**