



Service at King's Volunteering Inspiration Pack

Volunteer and make a difference in our local, national, and international communities



King's has been ranked [eleventh in the world](#), second in the UK and fourth in Europe in the 2021 *Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings*, in recognition of the university's positive social and environmental impact. A key way we achieve this is through volunteering – a way in which all King's students, staff and alumni can serve society.

What is volunteering?

In line with The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, we define volunteering as '*any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.*' Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and social action.

This pack is designed to be used all year round, to help you get involved in various easy and safe ways to support your community - whether this be remotely from the comfort of your home, individually, or socially distanced with other volunteers. You could even organise an event for other members of the King's community to join. Wherever you are, you can make a difference.

This pack includes:

1. Why volunteer?
2. What counts as a Service activity?
3. How can I get involved?
4. Organising your own activity
5. Informal group activities
6. What support can I receive from the Service team?
7. Top tips for the day, including tips for sharing and celebrating

Service at King's

Service is the term we adopted at King's in our [Strategic Vision 2029](#) to describe our commitment to society both through and beyond the traditional roles of education and research.

The ethos of King's is to try to make a better world, putting the needs of others first beyond what might be expected of a university.

This means helping to shape and transform local communities and societies around the world through social reform; embedding service to society within the educational experience; delivering research focused on meeting societal need; supporting volunteering amongst our students, staff and alumni; and helping to protect the environment around us – all leading to positive change now and in the future.

Service at King's embodies our commitment to positive social impact, at home in London, across the UK and around the world. Find out more about Service [on our webpages](#).

1. Why volunteer?

Volunteering has been shown to improve wellbeing and reduce isolation. It can be a way to improve your sense of purpose and belonging, connect with others and contribute meaningfully to communities. We believe that volunteering should be mutually beneficial, so don't be afraid to choose an activity that prioritises your wellbeing first.

Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:

- Creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- Giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- Helping you connect with others

Volunteering activities can include informal, small acts of kindness towards others, or larger ones such as volunteering in your local community – either way, you can find a way of making a difference.

The NHS [wheel of wellbeing](#) is a great place to start when thinking about how volunteering can support your health and happiness.



2. What counts as a Service activity?

Quite a lot, actually! There are many things you can do to give back to your local community. This year, we are encouraging staff and students to volunteer individually, with members of their household, or in permitted groups (in the UK it is six, but check your local COVID-19 guidance). Here are some ideas to give you some inspiration for a Service activity, including ones that can be undertaken socially distant or remotely:

- Pick up litter in your local streets, park, green space. Check out Clean Up UK's advice [on their webpages](#).
- Donate to a local food bank. Use this [website](#) to locate your nearest one.
- Help tend to a community garden, such as [Brighten Up London](#)'s drop-in sessions.
- Go shopping or collect essential items for someone in need – visit [GoodGym](#) for local requests (you will need to register before signing up).
- Create and send a wellbeing box to healthcare and key workers, or contribute most needed items to your local [homeless shelter](#) e.g. [The Manna Centre](#).
- Initiate a campaign for a social issue that is important for you, for example by starting a petition.
- Write and send thank you notes to key service workers such as teachers, vets, postal workers and essential retail staff.
- Take part in befriending phone calls with isolated or elderly people. The charity [Silverline](#) is a great place to start.
- Share info, donate or write a blog for a charity or cause you care about.

More ideas can be found on our [Service in Action webpages](#). To see what members of the King's community did in 2020 to support their communities through the outbreak of COVID-19, please [visit the Alumni Continuing to Serve webpages](#) and read the [Service annual report 2019-20](#).



3. How can I get involved?

- Visit the [Service in Action webpages](#) or [KCLSU Volunteering](#) to discover a range of external volunteering opportunities to inspire you. If you're a student, you can build up your volunteering record to receive awards. There are also links to other volunteering platforms such as [Reach](#) and [Do-it](#).
- **Arrange your own activity:** You can pick a Service activity to undertake in your community on your own, with your household or with a group if permitted by local COVID-19 safety guidelines. See section 4 of this guide to find more info on how to organise your own activity. If you need some additional help organising or promoting an event, contact service@kcl.ac.uk
- **Participate in an existing activity:** Throughout the year, we will be promoting various volunteering events run by our King's community on [Twitter](#) and the [Service in Action webpages](#). Previous events have included crafting, recycling workshops and ways to support community campaigns with [Citizen's UK](#).
- **If you are staff, remember you can use your Service Time.** Did you know that King's staff members get three paid days each year to volunteer? This is pro-rated if you work part-time. Don't forget to use them up before the end of the year!
- **If you are alumni** and need further guidance or volunteering ideas, visit their [webpages](#) or contact the Alumni Team: volunteering@kcl.ac.uk

Safety first

Remember that the main priority when volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic should be to keep yourself and others safe. Before volunteering you should carefully read the government guidelines for wherever you are. You can read the UK government's guidelines on how to help safely on the [UK government website](#). If you are volunteering with a charity or community organisation, please also carefully read their health & safety guidelines.

4. Organising your own activity

The King's community is full of passionate people and ideas. We'd love you to organise your own event so others can join, so here's some guidance to get you started. (KCLSU also have a [useful guide!](#))

1. **Pick a cause** – take a look at your [local Volunteer Centre](#), local council Twitter feed, or the [Service in Action](#) pages for groups who are seeking help. Search 'volunteers needed' plus the name of your area, or the hashtag **#NeverMoreNeeded** on social media channels. If you're in London, check out [HandsOn London](#) or [TeamLondon](#).
2. **Speak to your colleagues, friends, family, and neighbours:** Does someone you know already have a connection with a charitable organisation that may need some extra help?
3. **Brainstorm an idea.** You could think about:
 - **Unique skills and talents:** What special skills and expertise do you, your peers or colleagues have that could help a community? For eg. [Olivia Capozzi](#) used her fundraising communications skills to support the charity Home-Start. Platforms such as [Link Up](#), [Goodsted](#), [The Fore](#) and [UN Volunteers](#) advertise requests for skilled help.
 - **Resources to share:** How could you share your services with the community? For example, King's Sport opened up their sessions for the King's community, including free mindfulness sessions and yoga.
 - **Fundraising challenge!** A virtual walk, run, or a friendly competition for your team or peers to cook for less than £10 a week, such as the [Live below the Line](#) food challenge, and donate the rest of your usual weekly food budget to charity.
 - **Creative opportunities:** Could you spread happiness through getting crafty? The Culture team's [Make Do Play](#) includes lots of creative sessions, from drawing to origami, and these creations could be sent to a charity, community or key workers to say thank you. Or you could host a virtual poetry club and write cards for elderly people in care, or for sick children with [Post Pals](#).
 - **Wellbeing:** Think about calming activities which might help to give you some time out away from the desk, but which give back to the community at the same time. This could be a litter pick or weeding in your local area, then joining together virtually to celebrate.
4. You could speak with a charity or community group about your idea for some helpful pointers.
5. Build a volunteering team and assign roles – e.g. a main point of contact, an organiser, someone to help document the activities. This could be any size and does not have to be people in your immediate circle!
6. Provide simple instructions – people love to get on with it themselves but need some guidance first to know how.
7. Organise your schedules and request [Service Time](#) with your line manager.
8. Run through – do you have everything you need?
9. Promotion – make an Eventbrite and share with the Service team.

10. Afterwards – how can you celebrate and evaluate what you’ve achieved? Perhaps you can stay in touch, make it a regular occurrence, or share the idea with another team!

5. Informal team activities if you’re stuck for time

Small acts make a huge difference. Which of the individual activities listed [here](#) could you do as a team to make an even greater impact? Success is not only measured in numbers or output, but also in the opportunities and connections when people come together. Lots of small actions accumulating over time can make a huge difference.

You could also get involved in small micro-volunteering actions which take less than 30 minutes, such as:

- Switching to a green and fair energy supplier, and supporting others to do the same as part of the Citizens UK [Fair Energy campaign](#), which is currently led by King’s students and alumni.
- [Zooniverse](#) - contributing to people-powered, cutting edge research.
- Having a clear out of clothes and essential items and donating them to a local charity, for example find your closest Salvation Army bank [on this webpage](#).
- Signing petitions or writing to your MP, e.g. on [Change.org](#) or for the [Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill](#).
- [Sowing](#) seeds, planting, or weeding in a shared green space.
- Helping visually-impaired people with tasks on the [Be My Eyes](#) app.
- Support an elderly person with Age UK as a [digital buddy](#).
- Play games on [Free Rice](#) for donations to the United Nation’s World Food Programme.

6. What support can you receive from the Service team?

If you have an idea but need some additional support, we can help with:

- **Discussing your activity:** Our Volunteering team can help discuss your idea, practicalities and how to make it engaging for other members of the King’s community. Please get in touch with service@kcl.ac.uk
- **Promotional support:** If you do need a helping hand, we can support with setting up your event on Eventbrite and sharing it on our Service channels, such as Twitter, Instagram and on our [Service in Action](#) webpages.
- **Evaluation:** We can help if you’d like to evaluate your own individual activity!
- **On hand support:** If you have any questions before the day, on the day or after the day, please contact service@kcl.ac.uk.

- **Celebrating:** we are in the process of building a new coordinated approach to volunteering across the institution, as well as a network of Service Champions who will act as ambassadors in their schools, departments, faculties and directorates. Get in touch if you'd like to be added to the Service Champions mailing list to hear about developments as we grow the volunteering community across King's.
- **Emailing to local alumni:** if a group gathering is permitted by your local COVID-19 safety guidelines, the alumni team can also contact alumni in your region (city or country depending on the number of alumni which live in the locality) to advertise the activity and encourage them to join you on the day. Email volunteering@kcl.ac.uk

7. Top tips for your volunteering

- The simpler the better and think about how you can make it fun and accessible for all!
- If you are staff, book your [Service time](#) early with your line manager, and if you're a student, arrange the volunteering around your timetable.
- Keep yourself and others safe throughout the day by following local COVID-19 safety guidelines and social distancing measures.
- Although many of us are still at home, we're more digitally connected than ever. How can your activity bring people together across the King's global community? Could you check in at different points during the day on Teams, or have a virtual jamboard to collaborate or post ideas?
- Communicate well and in advance. If organising an event, make sure everyone knows how to meet, for example which platform, what time, what to bring, and if they need to do anything in advance.

Capturing the day: photos and video

- Let's celebrate and share all of your amazing work! Make sure to take photos and videos and post on social media, tagging us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by using **@ServiceAtKings** and if alumni, **@KCLalumni**. Don't forget the hashtags **#ServiceAtKings**.
- You can take a selfie, video, or screenshot of your volunteering, telling us why Service is important to you and why you want to support your community.
- Please get consent from any other volunteers before taking their photos as they may be posted online once shared with us.

- If you don't use social media, you can still share your photos and videos with us via email and we can post them to our website and social media channels. Please send them to service@kcl.ac.uk.

Some example social media posts you could use:

- I'm thanking our key service workers by writing thank you notes to send as part of Volunteering at King's! @ServiceAtKings @KCLalumni #ServiceAtKings #ForeverKings
- To make use of my Service Time I'm picking up litter in my area and joining people from across the world who are #MakingADifference this Volunteers' Week @ServiceAtKings #ServiceAtKings

Your photos and videos will help us spread the word about Service at King's and encourage more people to take part.



Most importantly, enjoy the activity and knowing that you are supporting others. You are taking part in a movement that is making a difference in communities all over the world.

Quotes from the King's community

'To anyone considering volunteering I would say definitely go for it, you never know where you might end up and the difference a committed team can make!'

Rebecca, Student Action for Refugees

'The most important lessons I have learnt this year are that there is no such thing as not having enough time or that it is not the right time. You always make time for things when you believe in them passionately... you will never regret the time you spend helping others and contributing towards making a meaningful difference.'

Nusaiba, Student led-outreach project



THIS IS YOUR PERMISSION SLIP TO
#BRIGHTENSOMEONESDAY AND PASS ON
SOME POSITIVITY.