



Community Action Project

BEN

Community Action Partner

BEN - The Automotive Industries' Charity

Aim: BEN is the Automotive Industry charity. A national charity, BEN provides care and support for anyone who works or has worked in these industries and this provision also extends to their dependants. BEN provides friendship, advice, emotional support and financial assistance to more than 15 000 people living in their own homes throughout the UK and Ireland. They also run four nursing and residential centres across the country, providing a home to more than 350 people of different ages and needs. They are not cause specific, which means that their only guiding principle is to care for their colleagues who have found themselves in need. The range of work their dedicated welfare and care staff undertake is truly diverse - from providing round-the-clock care for those with terminal cancer to the emotional and financial support of families where an accident has left the main earner injured or disabled and unable to work.

Roles: Various roles are available for volunteers which do get updated throughout the year;

- **Welfare Post Assistant** - A busy welfare department is in need of an individual who can take over the responsibility of sending out the monthly birthday cards. Duties include: packing and labelling beneficiaries' birthday cards ready for posting - around 380-400 per month, organising the cards into the date they need to be sent and any other tasks as asked by the Welfare Systems administrator.
- **Supporter Relations Volunteer** - A volunteer is needed in a busy office environment to carry out a range of administrative duties utilising the Microsoft Office suite of programs and other software packages. Duties include: Adding payroll mandate information on to the appropriate excel spreadsheet; filing of mandates; sorting cancelled and active mandates using bespoke software packages and any other tasks as required by the Supporter Relations Manager.
- **Events Administration Volunteer** - A volunteer is needed to assist the BEN Events Department with a variety of administrative activities. Duties include, using Microsoft Word or Excel to log National Draw information, produce thank you letters, raise invoice and purchase orders, prepare mailshots, logging income on the database (full training will be given), filing, and other ad hoc tasks.
- **Marketing Volunteer** - A volunteer is needed to assist the BEN Marketing Department with a wide variety of administrative activities. Duties include filing, invoicing/raising purchase orders, franking/posting, laminating, sorting stationary, product research (online and over the telephone), and other ad hoc tasks to assist the Marketing department.
- **Treetops (Dementia) Befriender** - Volunteers are needed to interact with residents on a specialist Dementia wing in a busy care home in Ascot. We are looking for individuals who are able to cope with individuals who need special care and attention. Volunteers will have the opportunity to interact with residents in a variety of different ways. Volunteers are encouraged to use their own skills and knowledge whilst

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volunteering with the residents.

- Activities can involve; One to one chats (looking at pictures, magazines, photos which can generate conversations), Reminiscing about the past and about the resident's past, Playing simple games, Listening to music. Singing together. Musical games and movement, Poetry reminiscence and reading together, Making scrapbooks for general use on the unit or for special interest of a resident, Playing musical instruments for a resident, Painting, papercraft or other forms of craftwork, Enjoying a tea party with the resident, A simple activity such as sitting with someone and holding their hand can make a big difference. Opportunities are not limited to what is on this list. If you have an idea for an activity then please let us know.

Training: In house training is provided for all roles in relation to the tasks that they are required to carry out.

- Those volunteering within the care home will be required to attend a presentation on safeguarding and dementia awareness. They are also encouraged to go along to future training sessions to improve their knowledge of a care environment.
- Those volunteering in the office will have staff provided Microsoft office and bespoke software package training as well as exposure to other administrative duties in a busy office environment.

Location: Lynwood, Sunninghill, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 0AJ (for all roles). Sunningdale is the closest station to BEN.

Times: Different volunteer opportunities require different times and commitments;

- Welfare Post Assistant - One day a month during office hours.
- Supporter Relations Volunteer - 2 half days per week (Monday - Thursday) or more if available.
- Treetops Volunteer - Flexible, preferably an hour or so a week to ensure continuity for the resident.

CRB: If required, a CRB disclosure will be processed by BEN as appropriate to the role.

Other: Volunteers will be reimbursed travel expenses and the project has accessibility.

Community Action volunteer quote: Annie Tippell

"Working for and with the BEN team has really made me appreciate the value of volunteering locally. From a young age, I've worked within my area for charities such as Oxfam and Barnardos, and now, during my time at university, BEN has cemented my belief in the importance of donating one's time to people in need. BEN's head office, my place of work, is attached to one of its major carehomes (Lynwood in Sunningdale), and there's no better place to truly observe the connection between BEN's major corporate campaigns and the residents whose daily lives are dependent upon charitable support. It's sometimes difficult to envisage the connection between charity work and the people it helps, but working in such close proximity to BEN's dependents is a real eye opener. One of the most pleasing reviews of my work came during my first week at BEN from our Chief Executive, who told our National Volunteer Co-ordinator that my reports had raised the bar, and were the most interesting reviews of BEN that he'd seen in a long time; this was later echoed at one of BEN's major volunteering events, in which numerous residents and volunteers told me how thoroughly they enjoyed BEN's volunteering newsletter, and how they would like to



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pass it on to others. The environment and community atmosphere at BEN has always been that of a family and a team, and I've done my utmost to maintain the professional and friendly services that were extended to me when I joined. BEN's newsletters are a small step towards our larger volunteering campaign – I am in discussions with our National Volunteer Co-ordinator regarding my ideas for expanding BEN's local and national image, with designs for a Wikipedia page, a fully accessible and updated blog, and newspaper coverage. My main aim is to alert others to the importance of volunteering not only at BEN, but for charities and benevolent funds across Britain and the world. BEN relies on volunteers for a major portion of its services, as do many other charities. As one resident stated in my latest article, 'without volunteers working at BEN, I would have no-where to go'.

My time at BEN has been a fantastic learning curve. With an English degree, I embarked on my new position feeling extremely confident in my written and analytical skills, utterly assured in the knowledge that writing reports and newsletters and interviewing my colleagues would be a piece of cake. Wrong. The voluntary sector is an entirely unique branch of our economy, dependent, when all's said and done, on people donating their time, energy and money to one of the hundreds of worthy causes consistently advertised in the media, on the high street, even at ethical fashion shows and in celebrity gossip columns. The challenge at BEN was thus to persuade the general public, of whom I'd count myself a member, that a benevolent fund for the automotive industry was worth ten minutes of their time just as much as the big players, such as Oxfam or the Red Cross. My challenge was to keep new and existing volunteers at BEN constantly updated with the fund's latest news and ideas, while simultaneously spreading the idea that made me join BEN in the first place – that volunteering locally, right in the vicinity of our dependents, is a fantastic way to see charity in action: the effect that volunteering has on people every single day. My communication skills have been thoroughly enhanced by my work at BEN; summarising an entire day's event into approximately two hundred clear, concise words in twenty minutes before press is not something I could have achieved without the motivating boost that charity work provides. If asked, I would have cited my key fault before working at BEN as dominating discussion in class debates or team projects, but by interviewing BEN's CEOs and residents, often in the same sitting, I have learnt to sit back and lead conversation with implicit suggestion, and steer debates towards satisfying, rounded conclusions with which my readers can fully engage. My position at BEN is constantly changing due to the nature of our work, and my appetite for change and growth perpetuates my belief in voluntary work as a whole, and the non-cause-specific aims of BEN in particular that care for an industry rather than a single problem. With team work as a top priority, my organisational skills have been sharpened by the need to interact with different departments, volunteers and BEN residents or dependents on a daily basis. Whilst I am able to take full control of my current projects and organise, plan and deliver to the highest standard, I also have complete trust in my National Volunteer Co-ordinator, and we often work together in one fluid motion. Communication is everything, and there is no room for hesitation or delay when the very people we help are only two corridors away!"

Application: Contact Community Action to request role descriptions as required, and to be put in contact with BEN to make an application for a volunteer role. All volunteers must be [registered](#) as Community Action volunteers.



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