

What did you do during Covid-19?

As a former Director of Careers and Employability I am encouraging young people to think ahead and plan for the question all employers will be asking in the future **“What did you during COVID -19?”** Interviews are always challenging but those who can talk about and evidence volunteering are going to stand out and make a very positive impression.

Volunteering has always been a great thing to do for young people but now even more so for 2 main reasons. Firstly, it's going to be harder than ever to find traditional work experience and internships with new social distancing rules. Sadly, offering this isn't going to be a priority for most organisations, especially those linked to face to face contact with patients in hospitals and residents in care homes. Secondly, if you can find a way of gaining meaningful volunteering experience that benefits the most vulnerable in the community without compromising social distancing regulations, infection control, this will be a great way to evidence initiative, innovation, skills and experiences that can be added to your CV.

We all know why Volunteering is good for us and these reasons haven't changed:

- Having the opportunity to learn new skills and competencies
- Paper qualifications aren't enough, however good your grades. Increasingly, it's important to evidence that you can **apply** and use what school/college/university has taught you.
- Making contacts and connections to build your network is important. This does not need to be the most senior person in an organisation. Outstanding feedback from respected frontline employees can be just as valuable.
- Gives you an opportunity to try out different industries and sectors
- Searching for a job can be depressing and volunteering at the same time helps you feel positive.

Now more than ever the above reasons are still important but...

- Volunteering is even more important as young people have more leisure time, especially as many holidays/gap year plans will be put on hold.
- Now is the time to think creatively and be entrepreneurial
- It's going to be hard to find traditional student jobs in hotels, restaurants etc, these were good ways of evidencing skills.
- Volunteering is a great way to fill in gaps in education or employment and will show you have the required soft skills to succeed in the work place.

Some tips for advice during Volunteering

- Treat it like a job, be eager to get stuck in to help the organisation grow,
- Be positive and demonstrate you're committed, this will help you impress others
- Show you really want to make a difference, ask for feedback and don't be afraid to come up with new ideas.
- Reflect on what you're learning and what you've achieved, keep a log,
- Think about whether you can take on any leadership roles
- Think positively, well done for volunteering and you will gain from doing it!

If you would like more information on how to make a difference and actively volunteer with Kissing it Better please look at www.kissingitbetter.co.uk

We have ideas to support volunteering for DofE and healthcare/medical applications.

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