

THE REWARDS OF TIME CREDITS

If you or someone you know is out of work, or retired, or simply not getting out much and feeling isolated, then volunteering can be a rewarding way of becoming socially involved in the local community. But sometimes people need a little bit of extra motivation to do this. (And sometimes someone who is already volunteering deserves something in return.) Which is where Westminster [Time Credits](#) come in.

Time Credits encourage and reward community volunteering by giving a Time Credit (a form of social currency) for every hour spent as a volunteer. You can earn a Time Credit in a wide variety of ways. For example, you could be a befriender, or a volunteer driver, or you could help maintain or improve the local environment. Or you could help with or run local activities such as exercise classes, arts appreciation, language learning, gardening or cooking. And these are only some of the eligible activities.

When you've earned some Time Credits, what next? People have spent Time Credits on social activities such as film nights, parties or bingo. They've exchanged them for gym use, theatre and museum visits, or sporting occasions. And they've used them to take language or IT classes. Again, these examples are only some of those on offer.

As Westminster Time Credit Member and Team Westminster Ambassador Julie Smith says: "It's rewarding to get Time Credits, it's really nice to get something back. It gives me that extra motivation to get involved. ... Being out of work is not very nice. Time Credits has given me that boost to say I am going to do this today; that little extra encouragement to get out and meet new people and try new things."

Not only do Time Credits benefit local organisations and community groups by increasing the number of volunteers, they help volunteers get more involved in the community beyond their actual volunteering, with all the benefits that go with it. Whether it's increased physical fitness gained by trips to the gym or swimming pool, the learning of new skills leading to increased confidence, needing to go to the doctor less often, or simply improved wellbeing, Time Credits help promote a virtuous circle.

MANY OPPORTUNITIES

Maybe you just want to learn something new, or perhaps you want to get a job or a new career. Time Credits can help you do both. City Lit, based in Covent Garden, is London's largest provider of daytime, evening and weekend courses for adults. And they accept Time Credits. You can find out about the more than 5,000 short courses on offer here. (Remember, One Time Credit gets you one hour of course time.)

And Open Age, who since 1993 have been promoting and enabling an active life anyone over 50, also take Time Credits.