

### **Alex England, volunteer at Eastfield library**

“In year ten I did my work experience at the library for a week and came back to do the summer reading challenge. Then during term time I started running events like games night and a junior book group.

I've had a great experience volunteering. If you plan something and it all goes well it's an amazing feeling seeing everyone happy. The volunteers also tend to be friends with each other so you get good camaraderie. It's nice. You're always talking to people.

Staff at the library are really encouraging and helpful and I've definitely learned to deal with people a lot better. You learn about systems, how things work behind the scenes, customer service and problem solving. They're all things I can put on my CV. That's what employers are looking for.

I went to the library all the time when I was little and Eastfield is my childhood library. I grew up reading books there and I remember my parents taking me. It would be such a shame to see any library close when people could keep them open by lending a hand.”



### **John Craig, IT buddy at Crosshills library**

“I've been volunteering at Crosshills library as an IT buddy for about six months. I saw an advert online and went from there. The rest of the staff in the library are excellent. They're all really nice people and it's a very pleasant place to work.

Mostly I work as an IT buddy, showing people how to use their laptops or tablets, even their smart phones. It's quite varied. Some people want to learn basic computer skills, others just need a bit of help.

I'm retired now, but previously I worked for the department for work and pensions. Part of what I do as well as being an IT buddy is a work club for people who need help with their CV or anything like that.

It's like being an instructor. If someone comes in and they just don't understand something one of the things I'm good at is explaining it in different ways. It's great when you see the light come on in someone's eyes when they understand. It's absolutely wonderful. I spent 20 years in the army and some of that was as an instructor. That's where I got the bug for training people. I get a real buzz from it, helping people understand something.

I helped a guy in his 50s who had worked for the same company for 30 years. He's never had to look for a job before. He didn't even know what a CV was never mind how to write one. That was very challenging but it was also very rewarding. Especially when he ended up getting a job.

You get a great deal of satisfaction out of being able to help people. To pass on your knowledge and share it with other people is great. It's brilliant.”



### **Tricia Whitfield, home library service volunteer**

“I’ve been volunteering now for at least five years and my main job is choosing books for people who use the home library service.

When I started they already had volunteers to deliver the books but needed someone to help pick them. I talked with a member of the team and it sounded really interesting. I go in every Thursday, one week I’m choosing books then the next I’m discharging them back into the library.

When people join the home library service they fill in a little form with their preferences. We talk to them about what genres they prefer, who their favourite authors are. We get a feel for what they like and as time goes by you get to know people and their names become familiar. It can be quite a challenge but because we’ve got the whole county to pick from we always find something.

I’m retired now but before that I worked mainly in admin. I do have good computer skills so sometimes I help people if they get into a muddle with the machine that issues books.

I really do enjoy being part of the library. I’ve been a library user all my life and I like being involved. Whenever I’ve moved to a new area the library is one of the first places I’ve visited. To have something that you’ve known for such a long time and be able to get involved in that I find really very special.

I hope people give volunteering a go. You just don’t know until you try.”



### **Nathan Roberts, volunteer at Malton library**



“I’ve been volunteering at the library for three years now. I work there Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons as an IT buddy and also help out in the children’s library too. Sometimes I do the story sessions or help children with their homework.

I’m studying for a degree in IT and computing at university then I’m hoping to go into secondary teaching. For me it’s been really enjoyable helping people learn something new, but also having experience to put on my CV is a big plus.

I helped a guy who didn’t even know how to turn a computer on, but eventually with a bit of support he managed to find his way around it. He got better and better over time and now he’s so confident.

It’s a great atmosphere in the library and we have a really good laugh. I’ve met loads of people through volunteering and learned a lot of valuable life skills.”