

## **Volunteering Statement**

I began volunteering at the FWT centre whilst I was studying at university. I chose to volunteer at the Foleshill Women's Training Centre because it is a warm and friendly organisation which enables women to learn new skills whilst also building their confidence and enabling them to achieve their goals in life. This has really interested me to become a volunteer.

When I first started volunteering at the FWT centre, I was slightly nervous, not knowing what to expect. However, the staff members were extremely polite and helpful to work with and I felt warmly welcomed into the organisation.

At first, I was responsible for organising and helping out with 'coffee mornings', where women would come along to take part in an activity whilst also enjoying some coffee and making some new friends. After the session I would also give the women a leaflet which promoted the next coffee morning as well as a positive message to take back with them to keep them feeling and thinking positively for the rest of the day. I really enjoyed carrying out these sessions and it has not only helped me to improve on my communication skills but also gave me the opportunity to meet different kinds of people from different cultures and backgrounds. I was also encouraged to use my initiative by thinking of different activities that women could take part in each week, and was able to organise a plan for each session.

I have also been helping out with the women's swimming sessions run by FWT at the Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre which are held every Wednesday. Here I take a weekly register of all the women who attend and also promote the FWT centre activities. This has been a wonderful experience and has benefitted me in many ways. I have built up the confidence to talk about FWT and its services to different women. There have been a few challenges I have had to face but I have been able to overcome these barriers by remaining professional.

On occasions I have also volunteered for FWT by attending citywide events where I have promoted the centre and activities to women. For example, I attended the Positive Images Multicultural Festival in June 2012. FWT was one stall amongst many giving out advice and information about services in Coventry. The event was very worthwhile to be a part of as it was an event that everyone could be a part of.

Finally, I have been helping out with teaching IT classes at Foleshill Library on Tuesday morning. This has involved assisting a group of individuals to use a computer effectively (sometimes for the first time). Whilst this was quite challenging to begin with, I believe that this has been the most enjoyable part of volunteering at the centre, as I enjoy helping individuals to learn new skills. One of the key challenges I had to face was their being a lot of individuals who needed help at the same time. I enjoyed taking this challenge and was able to divide my time equally to each individual so that everyone was given the help they needed. My volunteer co-ordinator as well as other staff members has been extremely helpful to me, and I am very grateful and happy that I have received their support and guidance whilst volunteering at FWT.

Overall, I am getting a lot from volunteering at FWT, meeting new people, improving my communication skills, assisting individuals and learning new things every day. I have also learnt how

well I am able to connect and relate to people from different cultures and backgrounds and different life experiences.

These skills will be beneficial for my future as I intend to go into either teaching or a support worker role and both of these careers require good listening and communication skills. I have also found out that 'giving' to others gives me as much, if not more, satisfaction than receiving. It has been a great privilege to volunteer at the FWT centre and I hope to keep offering my help and support within the different areas of the organisation.