

News story: Thousands of volunteers aged over 50 recruited as organisations share £2.7m

More than 6,500 new over-50s volunteers will be recruited to support charities and organisations across the country, Minister for Sport and Civil Society Tracey Crouch has been announced today.

Thirteen projects have been awarded a share of £2.7 million from the Second Half Fund to help them tap into the time and talents of people aged 50 or over. The innovative projects will work alongside public services to trial new ways of working.

The fund, launched by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Nesta in September 2016, provides grants of up to £250,000 for projects supporting children and young people, parents and families, people to age well, and the creation of resourceful and resilient local places.

The new volunteers will be recruited into a variety of roles, including tutoring disadvantaged students, befriending elderly people at risk of loneliness and isolation and promoting reading to help increase wellbeing. This forms part of a series of work from the partners to explore how people can support the important work of our public services.

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

“These projects will benefit hugely from the wealth of talent and experience that older volunteers bring. By volunteering in later life, people can share their valuable skills, build new friendships and help transform lives within their community.”

Vicki Sellick, Director at Nesta, said:

“We know we have much to gain from the considerable talents of people as they enter the second half of their lives, given freely alongside public services. By supporting these innovative social action projects to grow we know they will transform lives, and make a significant impact on some of the biggest social challenges we face.”

The Second Half Fund grantees are:

- FareShare, £177,500: FareShare works with volunteers to distribute thousands of tonnes of food classified as waste by the food and drink industry to charities and community groups. Already helping to feed 500,000 people each week, by mobilising the time and talents of 1,053 over 50s they aim to support 800,000.

- Volunteering Matters, £225,000: Matches young care leavers with a 'grandmentor' – a volunteer aged 50+ – to support good mental and emotional health, positive relationships and independent living skills. They will replicate their model in five new local authorities, supporting 500 more young people during the lifetime of the Fund.
- Aesop Arts and Society, £246,919: Dance for Health uses dance techniques to help in fall prevention. The organisation will grow their programme from six to 35 locations across the country, with the support of over 583 volunteers aged 50+.
- Access Project, £83,500: Volunteers tutor disadvantaged students weekly to boost grades and improve access to top universities. The Access Project will expand their work through mobilising the time and talents of at least 150 new 50+ volunteers.
- BuddyHub, £115,000: A new tech-enabled befriending service aimed at older adults considered at high risk of loneliness and social isolation. The funding will help it grow in North London and mobilise 228 50+ 'Friendship Buddies'.
- St Joseph's Hospice Hackney, £233,844: Will replicate its Compassionate Neighbours programme, which encourages and equips volunteers to support vulnerable neighbours who are in the last years of life, to eight other hospices across London and the South East, mobilising 420 people aged 50+.
- Eden Project Ltd, £136,811: Will mobilise the time and talents of 150 volunteers aged 50+ to support grandparents and their grandchildren (aged 0-5) to explore and learn together – improving school readiness. Particular focus will be with local families where grandparents are taking on a significant caring role or need additional support.
- The Reader Organisation, £270,000: The Reader pioneers 'shared reading' as a way of improving wellbeing, reducing isolation and building community resilience and connectedness. The Fund will help it to make the transition from a staff-led to volunteer-led model by recruiting 474 new 50+ volunteers and establishing 213 new groups across the north west of England.
- Home Start – Greater Manchester, £284,970: HomeStart will grow its Baby Bond programme, which supports parents with mild or moderate mental health issues, from Tameside and Glossop to nine other areas of Manchester. 505 new 50+ volunteers will support at least 370 new families.

- Spice Time Credits 50+, £247,260: Will grow their Time Credits approach – which offers local rewards for volunteering – to adult social care and recruit isolated, low income and over 50s with poor health to volunteer. The model will be rolled out in Westminster, Kent and Greater Manchester, working with at least 1,000 new recruits aged 50+.
- Family Action, £249,900: Will launch a new virtual and telephone helpline and one-to-one befriending service, staffed by 350 50+ volunteers, which will aim to improve emotional and mental well-being of parents and children.
- Volunteer It Yourself, £201,000: 14-24 year old NEETS learn practical trade and building skills by committing to fix local youth clubs and other community buildings. Will recruit 500 over 50s to volunteer their time as mentors and help young people gain qualifications and access to employment and further training.
- St John Ambulance, £249,993: The First Aid Community Advocates initiative will raise awareness of the importance of first aid in target communities – such as carers, those in deprived areas, older and vulnerable groups, – and recruit and train 593 50+ volunteers.

Read [more information](#) about the fund and 13 grantees. Each of the organisations' progress will be documented and findings published in autumn 2018 on Nesta's website.