

Below Sophie Rainbird shines a spotlight on volunteering at the University of East Anglia today. A decade ago IVR has published an extensive report on [Student Volunteering](#), a [national Student Volunteering profile](#) and a [short history of Student Volunteering](#) which provide more context.

SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS' WEEK – AT UEA

by Sophie Rainbird



This week is Volunteers' Week (Monday 1 June - Sunday 7 June), and with UEA students, staff and alumni giving up their free time throughout lockdown, this blog is full to the brim with stories from the UEA community.

With over 2,600 students taking part in some kind of volunteering on or off campus last year, Career Central has had its part to play in matching up students with some of the best local and international volunteer opportunities and in this year alone have advertised over 800 roles.

Student volunteering efforts and opportunities have not come to a halt in the wake of COVID-19. In fact, some students like history undergraduate, Kristen Moore, have used this time to lend a helping hand in the community. Kirsten shared her experience as a call-taker for parenting and family support charity, Family Lives, saying:

"My volunteer plans for the summer were thrown slightly off course by the current COVID-19 outbreak. However, due to my career goals I knew I still needed to get some voluntary experience under my belt. The remote position gave me the training and exposure I needed from the comfort of my own

home! After my initial training period, day-to-day I will be responding to calls from the public. This can include anything from concerns over mental health difficulties to accounts of domestic abuse. Despite the variety, I have been trained in how to deal with all these difficult subjects.”

It's not just current students making a positive impact in their community. Further afield, two UEA graduates, Sikander Bizenjo and Banari Mengal, have set up the Balocistan Youth Against Corona Group to distribute food and support the poorest individuals in Pakistan. You can read more about their work in the first-hand account from Sikander on the [UEA Community Blog](#), where you'll find other great volunteer stories.

These recent stories of how the UEA community has been stepping up to the mark in the fight against COVID-19 accounts for only a fraction of the continued volunteering that happens on and off campus.

The 2019 Economic Impact Report highlighted the fact that over 3,000 UEA students volunteer in the local community each year, whether working a weekend shift in one of Norwich's many charity shops or lending a helping hand at the annual Norwich Science Festival. One highlight of the report is the fantastic ongoing work of UEA's Law Clinic, a collaborative venture between UEA's students and staff and external legal agencies working together to provide free legal advice and support to the public. Law students alone volunteer for a total of over 10,000 hours each year!