



Case study: Sandra Maame Esi Asare

My journey as a volunteer with the International Community Organizations of Sunderland (ICOS) began during my initial months of relocating to Sunderland. As a newcomer to the community and eager to make a positive impact, I joined International Community Organizations of Sunderland (ICOS) with the intention of contributing to various initiatives aimed at supporting vulnerable populations. Over time, my involvement deepened, and I gained invaluable experiences and skills that have profoundly shaped my personal and professional growth.

#### Volunteering Activities

##### 1. Fresher's Week ICOS Representative

During Fresher's Week, I volunteered as an ICOS representative. This role involved engaging with new students, informing them about the organization's mission, and encouraging them to participate in our activities. It was an excellent opportunity to develop my communication skills and connect with a diverse group of individuals.

#### Environmental Workshop

Attending an environmental workshop was a pivotal experience. The workshop covered a range of topics, including sustainable practices and environmental conservation. This not only broadened my knowledge on critical environmental issues but also inspired me to integrate sustainability into my daily life and volunteer work.

#### Event Volunteering

Throughout the year, I volunteered at various ICOS events. These events were designed to foster community spirit and provide support to those in need of various support.

Volunteering at these events enhanced my organizational skills and taught me the importance of teamwork. It was fulfilling to see the positive impact our efforts had on the community.

#### Office Support and Client Advice

Currently, I volunteer in the ICOS office, providing support and advice to clients on energy challenges and assisting individuals with applications for funds to help with fuel debt. This role is particularly rewarding as it involves direct interaction with clients, understanding



their challenges, and offering tangible solutions. It has significantly improved my problem-solving skills and ability to work under pressure.

### **Personal and Professional Gains**

#### Enhanced Communication Skills

Each volunteering activity required effective communication, whether it was presenting information during Fresher's Week, coordinating with team members at events, or advising clients in the office. These experiences have honed my ability to convey information clearly and empathetically.

#### Knowledge and Awareness

The environmental workshop and my ongoing office support role have greatly expanded my knowledge on environmental issues and social support mechanisms. I am now more informed about the challenges faced by individuals with fuel debt and the various supports available to them.

#### Organizational and Teamwork Skills

Organizing events and working in the office environment have taught me valuable lessons in logistics, planning, and teamwork. Collaborating with a diverse group of volunteers and staff members has underscored the importance of cooperation and adaptability.

#### Empathy and Problem-Solving

Directly interacting with clients has fostered a deep sense of empathy and the ability to address complex issues effectively. Understanding clients' circumstances and helping them navigate their difficulties has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my volunteer work.

#### Conclusion

Volunteering with the International Community Organizations of Sunderland has been a transformative experience. It has provided me with a platform to contribute positively to the community while developing a wide range of skills. The knowledge, empathy, and sense of community I have gained are invaluable, and I am committed to continuing my efforts to support and empower those in need through ICOS. This journey has not only enriched my life but also reinforced my belief in the power of community and volunteerism.