# VOLUNTEER

# CASE STUDY

## KIRSTY BURNS

Stricklandgate House

*The centre for voluntary organisations in South Lakeland*

# KIRSTY BURNS

## RECEPTION VOLUNTEER STRICKLANDGATE HOUSE

### KIRSTY'S VOLUNTEER ROLE

The historic Stricklandgate House is a centre for voluntary organisations in the South Lakes area.  Kirsty is part of a team of volunteers who give a few hours of their time each week to offer a friendly first point of contact for those visiting or contacting the various charities and voluntary organisations based there.

*To do something that would  actually get me out of the house was important I felt I was becoming a bit of a hermit because of my health.*
*Being front of house it was perfect for me, to be able to chat to people again and just to smile again and if the people coming  to access services need a bit of support I'll try and be empathetic and kind.*

Kirsty has been volunteering as a receptionist at Stricklandgate House in Kendal since October 2025. Kirsty had previously worked as a PA and legal secretary.. being in a sociable role dealing with people was something Kirsty really missed.

*After my first session I went to pick my son up from the gym after school and I had this massive smile on my face, and he said: gosh mum you've only been there once and you're like back to being mum again, I said: oh well, I'm not quite the same mum. I'm probably a different one and he said: well you're mum 2.0, you're just so happy, and you just look different. For my son to say that was everything I needed really.*

**From the very first session of volunteering Kirsty experienced an improvement in her wellbeing. Her 13 year old son noticed this straight away.**

**Before volunteering Kirsty had been feeling very isolated due to living with a long term health condition which had forced her to give up work two years ago. With the support of a social prescriber, based at her GP practice, Kirsty was encouraged to look at finding a volunteering role which could fit around her health condition and help break her isolation.**

*Volunteering has had a massive positive impact on me, I feel human again, it has given me a purpose again and it has got me back on track in life. I know it sounds really quite massive to say that but it really really has.*

**Kirsty would definitely recommend volunteering to others**

*Just give it a go, try and find something that you're passionate about or if you don't know just try somewhere and just walk through the door and at least offer some time, people are always welcoming and it really does change your life, it changed mine*

**Being able to volunteer successfully for a few hours each week has also allowed Kirsty to test what she can manage within the limits of her health condition. Kirsty now feels confident to move forward, with the support of the health team at the job centre, to look for paid work which will be manageable for her.**

**WE ASKED KIRSTY WHAT THREE WORDS WOULD DESCRIBE HER VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE SHE SAID:**

***PURPOSE, ENJOYMENT & HAPPY***