



# HELEN

## MAKES THE GAME

### HELEN TOMLINSON

B award umpire  
Mentors umpires trying to achieve C award  
Taxi service for daughter's coaching and playing commitments!  
Helps organize netball at the local school

### Tell us about your work as a volunteer...

My daughter started playing when she was 7 and I've been taking her here, there and everywhere ever since, she's now 16!

Actually we sometimes work on a rota basis with other members of the team to share lifts. My daughter is also a coach so I'm taking her all over!

I'm also a volunteer at the Accrington Blind Society – I work in the book shop that raises funds for blind people.

I help out at the local school with their netball. I coach them after school and look after the team, take them to fixtures and umpire.

Along with this, I volunteer at my local church. We have a pram service for pre-school children – I really love it, on Wednesday afternoons we teach them before they go on to school.

Bringing it back to netball, I'm a B award umpire in local and regional leagues.

At the moment I'm helping a few trainees to get their C award, and I'm passing my experience on to them.

### How long have you been volunteering?

I've been volunteering for at least 10 years now!

### Why did you start volunteering and why do you continue to?

From my netball volunteering it was purely because I just love the sport and love watching my daughter play!

Everything else with netball has been a knock on affect from there.

My Blind Society volunteering came from me actually just chatting to a blind man and he really inspired me to help in other ways.

Everything else I've just fallen into really!

### How has volunteering benefitted you?

I get a sense that I've done a good thing!

With the school children, it's great to see them progress and I have also recommended they go to local clubs – it's a nice feeling to give them the start they need and in turn grow the sport.

It's just brilliant to see how far the team have come and how far they've progressed, it's brilliant seeing them get so much better.

At the U14 national championships – the parents got a big applause and the coach said it wouldn't have been possible without us.

The coach is always sending texts to say we're really appreciated – I think that's so lovely!



## How has volunteering helped you in your professional career?

I'm retired now but I was a Dental Nurse.

I did a little bit of volunteering when I was still working and it really takes the stress out of the day and helped me calm down!

## What would you say to someone thinking about volunteering for a role in netball?

Go for it!

Definitely – the feeling that you get from seeing the passion these girls get is amazing.

It's the best feeling ever, it's the feeling that you're doing something good for someone else.

The way you feel when you see that what you're doing is helping someone else is unbelievably fulfilling.

I've met a whole bunch of friends and my daughter has formed friendships through it and that wouldn't have been possible without me taking her every day.

## Tell us about your best volunteering experience...

It was at the 2014 National Finals when we took the girls to Sheffield and Ribble Valley Netball Club became U14 National Champions!

I thought my heart was going to burst – it was amazing!