

Employee

Supported Volunteering (ESV) not only benefits the employees who volunteer and the organisation they volunteer for, it also benefits the employer.

If you are an employer why should you support your staff to volunteer?

Your employees will develop skills, leadership, boost morale and your reputation will be enhanced within local communities. Encouraging employees to volunteer can be good for the individual, the community and business.

Employee community involvement generates morale, motivation, commitment and performance.

Employee volunteering is recognised within the civil service and local authorities as playing a very positive role. Employee volunteering can help improve the way government works by enabling civil servants to engage with and understand the needs of the public better and improve the

“We have thoroughly enjoyed our time volunteering at the Secret Blind Garden. We have taken pleasure in seeing this garden transform in to a beautiful place to visit for the community. The whole team have had a new motivational boost and friendships have been formed. A happy team is a happy work place.” Gary Walters - Network Rail

Organisations and companies that have employee volunteering programmes have found that:

- employees are proud to work for them
- employees gain new skills and motivation
- reputation is enhanced
- partners want to work with them
- investors want to invest in them

Employee volunteering can also bring:

- greater understanding and respect between co-workers
- realisation of personal capability
- creative approaches to problem-solving.

“Now that the administrator has worked side by side with the team manager she feels much more confident in approaching him at work”.

Civil servant (Department of Business, Innovation & Skills) volunteer.

“Volunteering was a fantastically motivational experience which enhanced a team spirit at work”.
Civil servant (Department of Business, Innovation & Skills) volunteer.

Why work with employee volunteers if you're a volunteer - Involving organisation?

Because you will have teams of people willing to carry out major tasks and individual employee volunteers may be able to bring high-level skills and experience to help your organisation develop.



Set up your own Employee Supported Volunteering

This step-by-step guide is for employers who wish to set up an employee volunteering programme without using a broker. The guide is also a useful checklist for community groups and charities who wish to contact employers directly.

1. Allow enough time!

- Allow enough time to think everything through and do any research.
- You may require agreement within your organisation or company before you can go ahead. This may also take time.

Community groups and charities cannot always respond immediately – many are very overstretched, so any volunteering is best planned at least a couple of months in advance. Contact Havering Volunteer Centre and we can guide and support you

volunteering@haveringvc.org.uk

2. What do you want to get out of your employee volunteering programme?

- **To improve staff skills and leadership?** Longer term skills-based volunteering will work best, where volunteering is tailored to an individual employee's specific skills and is developmental (for example being a trustee for a charity).

Improved team working and staff morale?

A team project or one-off team challenge day will work best. Team projects involve longer planning and organisation (for example planning and delivering a major fundraising activity for an organisation). One-off team challenges take place within one day (for example painting a room or tidying up a community garden).

Enhanced reputation?

Consider the ideals that are important to your organisation, including what ideals would be important to your customers or service users, and identify the types of organisations that further these ideals.

3. What can you offer?

- Identify what skills and experience your employees can offer to a charity or local group.
- Confirm how much time they will have available (time to do a one-off day or time to do more regular volunteering and if so how regular/how much time?)

4. What type of volunteering roles are you looking for?

Different volunteer roles develop different skills and experience. It can be helpful to think about what your employees or colleagues would most benefit from, or have most interest in, before identifying partner organisations.

5. Which community group or charity?

You can also look at HVCs Do-it.org link on our web site www.haveringvc.org.uk Make a short list of potential partners.

6. Making the match

Contact all of your short list to gauge levels of interest and to make the best match. The main question to have in your mind is: will this employee volunteering initiative benefit everyone involved?

Not all community groups and charities have a Volunteer Coordinator and even where there is a Coordinator, this person often works part time and will be pressed, so do not lose heart if they don't get back to you immediately. Persist! And remember: some groups and charities will be familiar with employee volunteering, others will not be, so you may need to explain what it is. HVC will assist you every step of the way to help you make your selection.

7. Making the arrangements

Once the match is made, clarify:

- Realistic timescales.
- Who will be responsible for any expenses arising from the volunteering, including who will supply any necessary equipment (e.g. tools/paint/plants) for team challenge events – very often the employer organisation takes on these costs.
- Who will take responsibility for health & safety and insurance of employees whilst they are volunteering.
- How often your staff will volunteer and for how long on each occasion.
- How will your employees' volunteering efforts be recorded (e.g. on a timesheet signed by the Volunteer Coordinator and handed to your HR department).

Keep in close communication with your volunteer-involving partner organisation before, during, and after the volunteering takes place. This ensures that everything runs smoothly and could pave the way for a valuable, long-lasting relationship between the two organisations

8. Celebrating the results

Documenting your employee volunteering programme will help you make sure you get what you set out to gain. You can do this through:

- Personal development plans for the staff who are volunteering to develop new skills
 - Photographs for record keeping and external publicity
 - Congratulatory notices within internal newsletters/intranet noticeboards to boost team morale!
- Volunteering England has further excellent advice and resources on employee volunteering - see their [website](#) for more information.