

Group Volunteering: Guidelines for Voluntary and Community Organisations

Connecting charities, volunteers and businesses



Group Volunteering – guidance notes

We are seeing an ongoing increase in requests from local businesses who want to organise group volunteering activities for their staff. Sometimes this is part of their Employer Supported Volunteering Programme, sometimes part of their wider Corporate Social Responsibility agenda, but sometimes it is just because a team of people have requested it.

This can be a great opportunity for you to receive valuable volunteer support and can also be a good way to start to build a relationship with the business. However working with large groups of volunteers can be a challenge so we have developed some tips and guidelines that we hope will help you make the most of the opportunities while avoiding any potential pitfalls.

Consider why the business wants to get involved.

If you can help a business to achieve their aims the event is more likely to be successful. They might want to:

- Develop the skills and competencies of their staff
- Improve employee morale and motivation
- Enhance the image of their business in the wider community
- Help them to improve links with the community

Consider why the individual employees might want to get involved.

Meeting the volunteers' motivations is more likely to help the business to improve morale and motivation. It may also mean that the person continues to volunteer or support your organisation after the group volunteering. Try and create roles that:

- Are fun and rewarding
- Will make a difference
- Use their existing skills and knowledge, although there are also some people who want to do something completely different to their day job
- Involve working creatively with others
- Give them an opportunity to develop new skills or improve existing ones

Do also bear in mind that some of them may have been encouraged to be part of the volunteering by a manager and may have no idea of what to expect or what they might want to get out of it

Develop an Action Plan

Ideally you will be able to share the action plan with the company and their employees. Your action plan should cover:

- The specific tasks you want the volunteers to complete
- The timeframes for anything that needs to be done in advance, and a timetable for the day
- What materials will be required, who will obtain them and who will pay for them
- Who will have overall responsibility on the day and which of your own team will be present
- A completed risk assessment and any risk management procedures that need to be implemented. Make sure that this includes any necessary insurance and if the volunteering will involve contact with children or vulnerable adults, that you follow all of your relevant policies.

On the Day

The success of your event will often reflect the amount of support that you offer to the group. At the minimum we would recommend:

- Welcoming the volunteers
- Introducing them to the organisation, covering health and safety, the layout of the building or other spaces, toilets, fire exits, kitchen facilities and use of equipment.
- Telling them about the work of your organisation and how their volunteering will impact and benefit that work
- Allocate a staff member or volunteer to support them throughout the day
- Check if they are happy for photographs to be taken.
- Ask if they, individually, would like to receive more information about how they can get involved with the organisation, for example by fundraising or further volunteering

At the end of the day – say thank you to them all

After the Event

Provide feedback – this could be photos, comments from staff and/or service users, feedback from individual volunteers. Ask if they would like to keep in contact and hear about anything else you might be doing – this can be a great way to build your relationship

Consider any potential publicity or public acknowledgement of their work and most importantly, say thank you again.