



EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING GUIDE

Employee volunteering is when staff donate time and skills during work hours to tackle social issues. This is an effective and powerful way for businesses to invest in their people and communities. Businesses should engage in a strategic, impact-led approach which directly supports their purpose beyond profit and key material issues – the social and environmental issues the business exists to overcome.

Doing so creates a number of key benefits:

- businesses generate the greatest impact when volunteering programmes align with issues that matter the most to its stakeholders and the future of the business.
- a range of employee volunteering initiatives can result in increased employee engagement, job satisfaction and retention, and provide learning and development opportunities.
- volunteering done right will support your responsible business strategy.

Business in the Community (BITC) has created this guide to help you develop and elevate your volunteering programmes. It also provides some useful guidance on actions your business needs to take and avoid when creating a volunteering programme.

Actions to take

1. Map your stakeholders

It is crucial to define your community and understand who should be involved in your volunteering programme. Take time to map extensively, thinking about diverse perspectives and how your operations affect your stakeholders. This exercise will help identify who you should be engaging with.

2. Review your volunteering policy

Understand how aware and engaged your employees are of your current policy, whether you have a senior sponsor accountable for its success, and if it is linked to your business purpose and material issues. Additionally, assess your volunteering policy's expectations and whether it is linked to other policies such as safeguarding or learning and development policies.

3. Engage your existing partners

If you have existing community partnerships, work with them to co-create your volunteering programme. Be needs-led by asking them what they need and how best your business can use its employees to support.

4. Be bold in defining your desired impact





Most volunteering programmes only measure or define inputs (e.g., resources put in; employee hours) and outputs (e.g., number of beneficiaries reached). Impact is the long-term change you want your volunteering programme to create.

Things to avoid

1. Synonymising employee engagement with impact

Both are important to a successful volunteering programme, but these are not the same thing. It is common to see businesses speak only of the employee engagement elements of volunteering i.e., how many staff were involved or what they did. This must be coupled with the strategic and methodological 'why' this volunteering programme existed in the first place – the business drivers and the societal or environmental problem you are looking to overcome.

2. Overloading community partners

It is crucial to recognise your community partners' focus is their beneficiaries or the cause they exist to overcome. They may not have an abundance of resources so engage with them in a clear and mutually agreed way. It is not the job of the community partner to provide team building activities for businesses.

Where to go next

BITC has over 40 years of experience helping businesses mobilise employees to support their local communities.

- Contact BITC's [Community team](#) for current volunteering opportunities
- Contact BITC's [Advisory services](#) to consider your long-term approach to volunteering.

Let's activate and inspire our employees and the wider business community today!

