

EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Organisations interested in work-supported volunteering or who already have informal arrangements in place should consider introducing a formal Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) scheme in order to ensure consistency of approach and therefore equity to all employees, supported by a clear written policy. The following helps to make a good work-supported volunteering experience for those with an ESV scheme or wishing to improve an existing formal or informal scheme:

- Having a clear purpose of the ESV scheme that aligns to the Corporate Social Responsibility or other defined organisational goals, acknowledging different organisations may have different reasons for having an ESV scheme, for example a desire to raise their profile in the local community or support employees to develop specific new skills;
- Recording, monitoring and evaluating take-up and impact of schemes in order to measure the value and success against the stated goals;
- When designing a scheme, work with employees to understand what the most important factors to them would be (such as making a difference in the local community). Also, regularly review schemes to ensure they still meet the objectives and take account of any changing employee profile;
- Ensuring the ESV scheme is well promoted so that all employees know about the scheme, how much time is allowed, what the process is and how to find volunteering opportunities;
- A system should be in place that allows employees to easily find and access a wide range of different volunteering opportunities supporting matching between the individual and the opportunity;
- Employees should have some input into which voluntary organisation they can volunteer for. Where the organisation selects voluntary sector partners/charity partners it is important to undertake due diligence to ensure their values are aligned to the ESV schemes' objectives and they value the contribution of employee volunteers;
- Having a volunteer manager (or other nominated person) with dedicated time to manage the scheme, as well a responsibility for organising and increasing the number of volunteering opportunities -these opportunities should then be easily accessible via a database;
- Develop relationships and volunteering opportunities with voluntary sector partners/charity partners that can support employees to align the volunteering experience with their own personal and career development needs, utilising existing skills and/or developing new skills;
- Design ESV schemes that maximise flexibility of approach, including:
 - Clearly define the time allowed per year, supported by a system where individual employees can donate any unused entitlement back to a 'pool' for other employees to utilise instead. It is recommended that an hours-based allowance is preferable to a days-based allowance as a key way to enable a move away from 'just' undertaking one-off events towards more skills-based volunteering, giving flexibility in how employees use their time;
 - Allow employees to volunteer in their own communities, even if this is outside the locality of the employer;
- Proactively encourage utilisation of the ESV scheme allowance through one-to-one line management meetings, highlighting how different and transferable skills can be developed in volunteering roles;
- Consider if it is desirable to in some way recognise the employees input into work-supported volunteering:
 - Link to annual performance appraisal; and
 - Highlight these in annual organisation-wide reporting;
- Senior leadership should actively support schemes, leading by example to encourage more uptake of the ESV scheme by their staff.