

**For your team's wellbeing.**



# Volunteering: how can it help your team?

Here, we'll look at how volunteering could boost your team's engagement with work – and potentially their health and wellbeing too.



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# Giving back

Volunteering – the simple act of giving your time free of charge – is hugely beneficial to society. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) reports that there are more than 166,000 voluntary organisations in the UK, and that an estimated 11.9 million people volunteer at least once a month. The economic value of volunteering is approximately £17.1 billion.

Younger employees in particular are likely to be interested in volunteering opportunities through work. A study (Pharoah et al) of employees aged under 35 found that:

**75%**

agreed that giving back makes you happier.

**62%**

agreed that supporting charities could help them develop work-related skills.

**53%**

wanted to volunteer more than they currently do.

**42%**

said that having opportunities to volunteer through work is important to them.

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## Volunteering for health

As well as motivating your team, volunteering opportunities may also boost their wellbeing. A number of studies have explored a potential link between volunteering and health. It's a difficult area to research, and studies often rely on people's accounts of their experiences rather than scientific data. Also, 'volunteering' is a fairly loose term, so it's hard to compare the results of different studies.

Nonetheless, the research we do have seems to show that volunteering has a positive effect on mental health in terms of managing depression, and enhancing life satisfaction and wellbeing. There is also some evidence it can have benefits for physical health too.

Juliet Hodges, Senior Adviser in the Behavioural Insights Team at Bupa, says: "Though the strength of the studies is mixed, the effects of volunteering are overwhelmingly positive. It has even been suggested that the impact on mental and physical health are so positive that volunteering should be included in public health policy and interventions."

Overall, this paints a picture of volunteering as something that can be valuable for the volunteer, as well as for the people who benefit from their help.

# Creating opportunities

## Creating opportunities

Only six per cent of employees participate in voluntary activities arranged through their work, according to the NCVO - so there's room for companies to encourage volunteering more. You might think about doing this by:

- matching employees' skills and experiences with an appropriate charity
- providing employees with more information about the needs of the local community around the workplace
- presenting volunteering opportunities that will help employees to develop skills they can use at work
- incorporating volunteering into workplace goals or development plans; you could create formal schemes such as annual volunteer days, or volunteer awards

It may be possible to work collaboratively with local community groups or charities to achieve these steps. Why not reach out to local organisations and see what you can accomplish together?



## Find out more

These following websites and tools can help you find opportunities in your local area.

- Volunteer Centre Finder: [www.ncvo.org.uk](http://www.ncvo.org.uk)
- Do-it: [www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org)
- VolunteerMatch: [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

Organisations such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Volunteering Matters can help you find out more about volunteering in general.

[www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering) and [www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk](http://www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk)

### Sources

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