



How volunteering can benefit your team: a manager's guide.

Practical advice, useful tips and expert insight to help everyone.

For your team's wellbeing.

June 2019.

Introduction.

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



Click the home icon at any point in this guide to return to this page.



[Giving back](#)

[Volunteering for health](#)

[Creating opportunities](#)



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* 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.



*Pharoah et al



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 Behavioural Insights Adviser 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.



Volunteering has a positive effect on mental health.



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?

6%

of employees participate in voluntary activities arranged through their work.

UK Civil Society Almanac 2018.
The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, published May 2018.

Resources.

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

- [Volunteer Centre Finder](#)
- [Do-it](#)
- [VolunteerMatch](#)

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

Sources

1. UK Civil Society Almanac 2019. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations. www.data.ncvo.org.uk, 2019
2. Pharoah C, Walker C. More to give: London Millennials Working Towards A Better World, 2015.
3. Jenkinson C, Dickens A, Jones K et al. Is volunteering a public health intervention? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the health and survival of volunteers. *BMC Public Health* 2013; 13:773.
4. Howlett S. Volunteering and mental health: a literature review. *Voluntary Action Journal* 2004; 6(2).
5. Volunteering and Health: What Impact Does It Really Have? Volunteering England, 2008.
6. Burr J, Han SH, Tavares J. Volunteering and Cardiovascular Disease Risk: Does Helping Others Get "Under the Skin?". *The Gerontologist* 2016; 56:5(937-947).



This information was published by Bupa's Health Content Team and is based on reputable sources of medical evidence. It has been reviewed by appropriate medical or clinical professionals. The information is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice nor is it intended to be for medical diagnosis or treatment. Published June 2019.

Bupa health insurance is provided by:

Bupa Insurance Limited. Registered in England and Wales No. 3956433. Bupa Insurance Limited is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

Arranged and administered by:

Bupa Insurance Services Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Registered in England and Wales No. 3829851.

Registered office: 1 Angel Court, London EC2R 7HJ

© Bupa 2021

**bupa.co.uk/
workplace-
wellbeing**