

Making the most of group volunteering opportunities

What are group volunteering opportunities?

Group volunteering opportunities are where an already established group of volunteers come together to give their time. Normally this is for a short period – from a couple of hours to a few days.

Groups of volunteers can be:

- Colleagues from a business or organisation who are using their ‘volunteering days’ – sometimes called employer supported or corporate volunteering.
- School or college students.
- Young people taking part in a scheme, programme or activity (e.g. Scouts, NCS The Challenge).
- People who attend a place of worship/practice a religion together.

Group volunteering opportunities tend to be focused around fun, enjoyable activities, as well as activities which have a clear goal.

What are the benefits of hosting group volunteering opportunities?

- You get a lot of people who can make a difference quickly.
- You can have access to skills you may not normally have access to.
- People who do not normally have time for volunteering are able to give time.
- A chance to sell your organisation: talk about your mission, fundraising and other volunteering opportunities.
- Good publicity for your organisation e.g social media or website content
- Sometimes in addition to the volunteering, organisations may pay a fee (most likely with private businesses doing employer supported volunteering).
- Good role models for young people.

Examples of good group volunteering activities

- Basic gardening
- Cleaning /organising
- Basic painting and decorating
- Craft activities (making things to sell or to be used)
- Skill sharing
- ‘Challenge days’ – tackling a thorny issue together, for example a group of coders looking to improve a website
- Litter picking
- CV advice and interview practice (great for corporate groups)
- Acting as a Dragons Den and listening and responding to ideas presented by young people
- English conversation sessions

Where group volunteers aren't suitable

Group volunteering can be a wonderful benefit to your organisation's volunteering programme. However, group volunteers are not suitable for every organisation and if you are approached about group volunteering you should feel confident to say no if you don't think it would work for you.

Situations where group volunteers might not be suitable:

- Decorating/repair/maintenance tasks that require specialised skills (it may be simpler to ask a painter/decorator who will do a good job for a charity rate rather than get 15 accountants to badly paint a wall for free).
- Organisations which work with very vulnerable people, or with people who dislike large crowds/lots of noise.
- Organisations where the work is sensitive or very political.
- Space constraints, not having enough room to host group volunteers.

If you have to say no to the organisation direct them towards [Volunteering Barnet](#) who can help them find something more appropriate.

Groups you might want to involve

Corporate group volunteering

Businesses and organisations want their employees to stay working with them and want the good publicity of helping charities. They are often keen to get involved with volunteering during the summer or ahead of Christmas.

Take care that the mission of your charity doesn't come into conflict with the business's product or service. For example, if they are a car company and you are an environmental charity there could be a risk of negative publicity. Do your research and feel free to say no if you don't think it would work.

Young people

Schemes like NCS The Challenge, Scouts & Guides, and other youth groups may well be interested in opportunities for group volunteering.

Consider getting in touch with local groups and offering them creative opportunities.

Religious groups

Religious groups may want to have a day of volunteering together. Consider reaching out to your local place of worship and ask them if they are interested in volunteering.

[Mitzvah Day](#) is a day for members of the Jewish Community to come together and volunteer. It is normally held in November.

Key tips for making sure it is a success

- Arrange a phone call/zoom meeting to briefly run through logistics.
- Make a plan for the day to share with everyone.
- Prepare a brief training document on key issues, including any tips on interacting with service users.
- If you have to say no, think about other ways that the organisation could support if possible. For example:

We really appreciate the offer for your team's time this summer. We're so grateful but unfortunately, we've looked into the logistics and it won't work for us as we are so busy we don't have room to give you the best experience. If you are still able to support us, we'd be very grateful if you could donate some of your products for our raffle.

- Make sure that you have a moment to 'sell' your other volunteering opportunities.
- Follow up with a nice email to say thank you, including photos and quotes which the organisation can use in their own publicity.

Interested? Next steps

- Think about the tasks your organisation needs support with which would be suitable for group volunteering.
- Find good dates for when you could host the volunteers.
- Consider posting a group opportunity on our website.
- Ask your current volunteers to share your group volunteering opportunity.
- If there is a local business or organisation consider approaching them and asking if they are interested in hearing about group volunteering days.
- Get in touch with the [Volunteering Barnet](https://www.volunteeringbarnet.org.uk) team who can provide support and advice. Email enquiry@volunteeringbarnet.org.uk with any questions.