



Guidance for Business: Getting started with a Volunteering Policy



**Louth
Volunteer Centre**

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Lú

volunteerlouth.ie

Introduction

More and more businesses in Ireland are recognising the value of encouraging staff to give back through volunteering. Whether it's supporting local charities, mentoring, or taking part in community clean-ups, having a volunteering policy in place ensures consistency, clarity, and fairness across your organisation. While fundraising is often done in businesses for local charity, it is distinct from volunteering, and meaningful volunteering should address an identified need in the community.

This document outlines the key benefits of putting a volunteering policy in place, and the main considerations to keep in mind when doing so.

Benefits of a Volunteering Policy

1. Better Staff Engagement and Wellbeing

Staff feel more positive about their work when they know their employer supports causes they care about.

Volunteering opportunities can improve job satisfaction and help with retention. It shows employees they're working for a business that values more than just the bottom line.

2. Stronger Team Spirit

Group volunteering activities are a great way to build teamwork and morale. They allow staff from different departments to work together in a relaxed, meaningful way.

3. Enhanced Reputation

Customers and clients increasingly expect businesses to demonstrate social responsibility. A volunteering policy contributes to a positive public image and can be a valuable part of your CSR or ESG strategy.

4. Opportunities for Learning and Development

Staff often develop new skills when volunteering—such as leadership, communication, or event planning. It can be a great way for junior team members to take on more responsibility in a safe setting.

5. Stronger Links with the Local Community

Builds goodwill and partnerships with local voluntary and community organisations. Shows your business is an active, committed part of the community.

6. Attracting the Right Talent

A strong volunteering culture appeals to people who are purpose-driven and socially aware. Younger employees, in particular, often look for employers who support community involvement.



Key Considerations When Developing a Volunteering Policy



1. Make Sure It Reflects Your Values

- Volunteering should tie in with your wider business values and community goals, set clear measurable goals to determine the impact of your volunteer programme.
- Consider the causes your staff care about and what matters in your local area.

2. Types of Volunteering

- Decide what kind of volunteering you'll support: one-off team events, individual volunteering days, or skills-based volunteering.
- Some organisations also allow for remote volunteering or out-of-hours options.

3. Time Off for Volunteering

- Will staff be given paid time off to volunteer? If so, how many days per year?
- Outline the process for requesting and approving this time.

4. Who's Eligible?

- Clarify whether the policy applies to full-time, part-time, contract, or probationary staff.
- Make sure all staff have equal opportunity to take part, regardless of their role.

5. Health, Safety and Insurance

- Address any health and safety responsibilities for volunteering activities.
- Check what your insurance covers and what's expected from the organisations you partner with.

6. Working with Charities and Community Groups

- Develop active partnerships with community groups, being mindful of their capacity and needs also.
- Consider letting staff nominate causes or set up a small group to help guide decisions.

7. Measuring Impact

- Track how many hours are volunteered, who's taking part, and what difference it's making.
- Share updates with staff and stakeholders—it helps keep momentum going.

8. Communication

- Involve key internal and external stakeholders in the development of the policy.
- Promote the policy clearly within your organisation.
- Share stories and photos from volunteering activities to keep interest high and show the impact.

9. Resource Allocation

- Set a budget for volunteering activities, including covering costs for supplies, training, transport, or making donations to partner organisations, which is important for sustainability and partnership respect



Template policies, staff request forms, guidance for managers and impact assessment forms are available upon request.

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