



The Community Investment team at Business in the Community aims to develop and promote effective community investment and help companies measure and benchmark the impact of their activity on the company and community.

Cares, a Business in the Community initiative is a vehicle for employers to support their employees to get involved in the communities where they operate, addressing local community needs and supporting strategic business issues. Cares operates in 22 locations around the UK.

Engage is a global campaign that aims to increase the quality and extent of employee engagement in the development of healthy and sustainable communities. Leading the campaign is the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF), working in partnership with Business in the Community and a coalition of strategic NGOs.

This series of Manager's Briefings provides summaries and case studies for company managers on a series of community investment topics:

- The business case for employee community involvement
- Skills development in the community
- Time off policies
- Team challenges
- Fundraising & matched giving
- Awards & recognition
- Payroll giving

Also available:

- Making it Happen: a complete guide to employee community involvement
- Made to Measure: a guide to measuring and evaluating corporate community involvement (coming Spring 2003)

For web copies visit www.bitc.org.uk or ring Ella Ward at BITC on 0870 600 2482 for paper copies.

BUSINESS in the

COMMUNITY

time-off policies

manager's briefing

With thanks to series sponsor:

BARCLAYS

Community involvement is a matter of good business sense - by helping communities to be vibrant places to live and work in we help our customers, our employees, and the wider communities in which we operate. Barclays is one of the top five corporate contributors in the UK. Our global community investment totalled £31.1 million in 2001 supporting programmes addressing social inclusion, the arts, education, the environment and people with disabilities.

Barclays Community programme is about much more than just giving money though. Fundamental to its success is the support that we provide to our employees who give their time and skills to the communities in which they live and work. We are very proud of their efforts, and not a little humbled by them. In 2002, over 18,000 employees took part in Barclays supported community activities.

For more information visit www.barclays.co.uk/socialresponsibility

This Manager's Briefing was written in association with:



BUSINESS in the

COMMUNITY

Business in the Community is a unique movement in the UK of 700 member companies. Our purpose is to inspire, challenge, engage and support business in continually improving its positive impact on society.

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“ By supporting our employees in their community activity with business time, we are sending a powerful message about our commitment to them and their communities. Our business benefits from the skills they learn, the relationships they build, and the contribution they make to society. It’s an investment that brings rich rewards for all. ”

Valerie Scoular, Barclays Group Head of HR

“ Our greatest wealth lies in the talent, the character and idealism of the millions of people who make their communities work. The great British tradition of volunteering is now being revitalised as more and more people look for ways of giving something back, of being part of something that’s bigger than themselves. In every community there are people doing extraordinary things. What they have in common is not just dedication or inspiration or creativity or sheer hard work. It is that they give to others the thing that is most precious to all of us...time. ”

Rt. Hon Tony Blair, Prime Minister,
at the Active Communities convention in March 2000

Putting it in context

Responsible Business Practice

Is the management of a company’s impact on society and the environment so as to add value to the company and increase wider economic and social well-being now and over the longer term. This impact may be through operations, products or services and through interaction with key stakeholders such as employees, customers, investors, local communities, suppliers and others.

Corporate Community Investment

Is a practical set of programmes and processes which enable companies to bring the skills and time of their employees to areas of community need, along with other resources such as donated goods and services, matched giving and use of premises.

Employee Community Involvement

Is a major component of corporate community investment. It describes the ways in which employees can participate in community projects with their company’s support.

summary

This briefing provides companies with the necessary guidelines to set up a time-off policy for employee community involvement. It describes what a time-off policy is, the business benefits, and aims to answer commonly asked questions in the FAQ section. Top Tips on how to establish a policy are included along with a range of case studies demonstrating how companies have integrated such policies into their business practices.

what is a time-off policy?

A time-off policy allows employees paid time-off to volunteer in the community during regular working hours. Time-off policies encourage employees to volunteer for the first time or to increase and support their community involvement. Generally, time-off policies involve staff at all levels in the company and are an effective way of encouraging and recognising the contribution employees make to the community.

Time-off policies and time banks have become popular with both employers and employees. A time bank is created by the company and shows the amount of hours or days of employee time it is willing for staff to use over a designated period.

A total of 69 % of respondents, in a recent survey conducted by the National Centre for Volunteering, said they would be encouraged to volunteer if they were able to do so in working hours. Time off policies were considered the most popular form of support from employers. In the US a third of large U.S. companies now have a formal policy to pay workers or give them time-off for volunteer work.



who benefits from a time-off policy?

Time-off policies bring benefits to company and employees. They:

- Increase employee commitment to the company
- Reinforce business objectives, with a key focus on skills development
- Allow companies and employees to participate in time specific activities – for instance literacy programmes with primary school children between the hours of 9am – 3pm
- Offer volunteering opportunities to all employees, including those who may otherwise be excluded due to personal commitments Recent research for national volunteering charity TimeBank shows that UK companies increasingly rate employee volunteering. The survey of over 200 top businesses showed that:
 - 94% think volunteering adds to the skills of their workforce
 - 58% say voluntary work can be more valuable than experience gained in paid employment
 - 25% offer paid time-off to employee volunteers
 - 15% allow sabbaticals for volunteering projects

A recent survey showed that over half (53%) of Business in the Community members operate a time-off policy and 71% recognise community involvement as a way to develop staff. (ECI+ survey, 2000).

Companies who reported the value of their community contribution through the Per Cent Club Index showed employee time worth £38.6 million was given to the community in 2001-2002 by 158 companies.

During 2001-2002, approximately 20,000 new volunteers have signed up and volunteered through Business in the Community's Cares programme. This brings the total to 34,927 employee volunteers that have volunteered through Cares in a 12 month period.

setting up a time-off policy for employee community involvement

Your questions answered...

Management believes that if we introduce a time-off policy all our employees will disappear at the same time, and business objectives will become secondary, how can we convince them otherwise?

- A time-off policy can clarify the often ad-hoc and informal time-off given at the discretion of individual managers, with little or no assessment of benefits or company knowledge.
- Employers offering time-off for community involvement say it does not lead to lower productivity, or a need to hire more staff, or that all employees suddenly disappear two hours early on a Friday afternoon 'to volunteer'.
- The perceived negatives are outweighed by the positives – staff motivation, boosted morale, commitment to the company and sustainable involvement.

What should our time-off policy look like?

A company policy on time-off should:

- Cover the purpose and objectives of the scheme
- Be clear on how it is aligned with wider community investment programmes
- Establish who is responsible centrally
- Set objectives for evaluation and targets for the number of employees to be involved
- Set clear guidelines on time-off allowed and how this is signed off (whether it is at the discretion of the line manager)
- Make provision for resources to support such a scheme including communication and recognition

If we offer a time-off policy how many employees can we expect to take-it up?

- Employers with well-supported and integrated programmes would regard an uptake of around 20% as high.
- As with any new initiative, initial take-up will be slow, but through effective internal communications, word of mouth and line management encouragement the numbers will grow steadily.
- Recent findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey (Active Communities) found that 7% of the sample population has volunteered in the last 12 months. Of those whose employers had schemes for volunteering 21% participated.

How much direction and encouragement is required from senior management?

- Time-off policies that are supported from the top and aligned to strategic business objectives are more likely to be supported by line managers with responsibility for staff.
- Aligning community involvement to training and development, and appraisal processes will encourage managers to realise that employees can benefit in many ways from such activity.

Who should be responsible for sanctioning time-off?

- Most policies state time off is at the discretion of the line manager.
- Clear communication of the policy is essential
- Middle management needs to understand the objectives for the policy, and how they can expect employees to benefit from their community involvement.

case studies

Barclays

Barclay's *Volunteer 2day Scheme* was introduced in June 2002 and supersedes the previous Hour for Hour time matching scheme. The scheme gives each employee a minimum two days of business time per calendar year to take part in community activities.

Voluntary work with almost any charity qualifies for the scheme, and employees are supported in a host of different activities from mentoring homeless people or developing the reading skills of schoolchildren, to creating sensory gardens in hospices or redecorating rooms in hostels.

To qualify for the scheme activities have to take place during the normal working day. The needs of the business do come first though, and the decision on when the time can be taken rests with the line manager.

Time granted is recorded on a specialist computer program 'Gifts' by the Barclays regional Community Teams. In this way Barclays can measure the levels of involvement e.g. by region or business area, the types of activity being undertaken, and the charities and community groups supported.

Volunteer 2day is a huge commitment to Barclay's employees and their communities. In 2002, over 18,000 employees took part in Barclays supported community activities. It's an investment that brings rich rewards in the skills learned, the relationships built, and the contributions made to society.

For further information contact:
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Barclays Community Affairs
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How should the programme be run?

- Central co-ordination is required.
- Responsibility for the programme must be in someone's job description, ideally someone who will enthusiastically 'champion' the project.
- Systems for collecting data and evaluating the skills benefit are essential if the company is to be able to demonstrate programme effectiveness and impact, and take up.

How should we communicate the policy?

- Start with the keenest people and let them spread the word. When people hear about what they could do and the difference they can make, they may revise their attitude to volunteering.
- Consider inviting speakers from the voluntary sector who can inspire interest and action
- Ongoing marketing to employees and their line managers is crucial. Provide staff with regular updates and publicity on the programme, and let them know how many employees have taken up the opportunity to get involved.
- Many companies run awards and recognition schemes, from opportunities to apply for small grants, matched funding schemes, 'Employee Volunteer of the Year' Awards, through to other high profile in-company events.

In a survey conducted by Capital One's Corporate Communications Department, respondents were asked where they heard about the company's community activities. Responses showed that after e-mail, most respondents had heard about community activities through their manager. (See table below)

Table 1: How employees hear about company community activities

In-house Magazine	E-mail	Manager	Grapevine	Notice Boards
310	395	394	235	187

What are the messages we should communicate?

- Voluntary work should be freely undertaken.
- The message from the employer needs to be "we support you in what you want to do", not "we think you should be doing this".
- Provide managers with regular data showing how employees and communities are benefiting from their involvement.

Should we offer a matched time-off policy?

- Some employers will offer two hours of work time a month if an employee matches this with up to two hours of their own time. This encourages those who wish to volunteer by offering additional time to get involved, and sends a positive message to those already volunteering. (See table below for companies who offer matched time off schemes).

Should our time-off policy be aligned to our community investment objectives?

- Many time-off policies are aligned to the company's community investment objectives. This provides an integrated and easily understood approach.
- For example, an employer focusing on education may offer a time-off policy to encourage support for company led programmes with local schools i.e. mentoring and primary school reading partners.
- Programmes such as this can offer the company and volunteers opportunity to measure the impact and success of their engagement, and can encourage longer-term commitment. In turn this can encourage the development of effective partnerships, and provide opportunity for impact assessment.

If we set up an employee community involvement policy in employees' own time would we still get a positive response?

- If employees are encouraged to volunteer in their own time and at weekends many employees may be excluded owing to personal commitments and work constraints.
- A high profile launch for a volunteering programme supporting community involvement in employees' own time may be received with cynicism, and not get the numbers you envisaged.

How will offering a time-off policy affect those who already volunteer?

- A policy can support those who already volunteer by allowing them some company time to do this.
- It can be seen as a real endorsement for supporting what they do, as well as encouraging others to benefit in the same way.

How much time-off should we give?

- That is entirely up to the company how much time should be given. It is critical to establish what is likely to work best for the organisation and its employees.
- A flexible approach to interpreting time-off and what constitutes "volunteering" is advisable, as there will always be exceptional circumstances.

The table below summarises the hours of paid time-off offered to employees by a number of key employers for guidance.

Table 2: Time-off policies of some major employers

Company	Time-off policy	Matched ¹	Annual time-off given ²
Barclays (Volunteer 2day scheme)	Minimum of 2 days per year	NO	Minimum 14 hours per year
Zurich Financial Services	Up to five days per year matched.	YES	40 hours per employee.
Financial Services Authority	20 hours per year	NO	20 hours per employee
Family Assurance Friendly Society	4 days per year	NO	32 hours per employee
Unum Provident	2 days per year	NO	16 hours per employee
UBS Warburg	2 days per year	NO	16 hours per employee
Anglian Water Group (AWG)	5 hours matched (up to a max. of 30 hours).	YES	30 hours per employee
Treasury Solicitor's Department	1 day per year	NO	8 hours per employee
Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	1 day per year	NO	8 hours per employee
Kent County Council	2 days per year	NO	16 hours per employee
LE Group	2 days per year	NO	16 hours per employee

¹ Some companies offer time off in working hours only if matched by employees' own time.
² Assumes 8 hours per working day.

For further information on setting up Employee Community Involvement Programmes (including getting started and steps to success) please see Making it Happen (A complete guide to employee community involvement) published by Business in the Community.

case studies

Financial Services Authority (FSA)

The FSA's policy was driven by its recent merger, and took into account existing time-off policies, and the drive to build a new culture within the FSA. The programme was sold to senior management in these terms, research undertaken and a policy produced before a pilot scheme was launched to staff.

The FSA allows all staff 20 hours paid leave for participation in community activities. 15% of staff are involved in the programme from all grades and divisions. Activities are mapped against the FSA competencies framework so that volunteers and their managers can see how they develop specific skills. The FSA has found it good practice to set objectives so managers understand why the policy is in place, and to explain the benefits to staff.

Feedback shows impact in terms of increased jobs attainment levels, increased confidence levels and much more. The FSA

has recently found that three-quarters of managers will be including volunteering work in development discussions this year and a half of managers agreed that their staff had demonstrably improved their skills as a result of volunteering.

"A great number of FSA staff play an active part in the local community through the programme. I know this continues to make a difference. The FSA sees these activities as providing invaluable development opportunities for its staff." Howard Davies, Chairman

For more information contact:
Clare Vanstone, Community Affairs Co-ordinator
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UnumProvident

Staff are entitled to two days paid volunteering each year. In 2001, 359 (48% of staff) volunteered, enabling 629 days of the company's effort and skills to be contributed to community organisations and charities.

The target for volunteering in 2002 is 750 days – to engage every employee in volunteering to achieve the maximum benefits to the company and the community.

Volunteering is very closely allied to the company's vision and values. The Chairman, executive board members and senior management team actively participate in volunteering projects. Staff are positively encouraged to take part and targets for volunteering are included in the balanced business scorecard owned by the leaders of each division.

"There is no doubt that volunteering exposes us more directly to society's needs and provides insights not available in the workplace."
Victoria Secretan, Director, UnumProvident

For more information contact:
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future trends

- There are many ways employees can volunteer without leaving the office – including e-volunteering and e-mentoring, providing pre-interview workshops and work-experience, training for local communities, and buddying schemes.
- Globalisation: employee volunteering is not just a UK phenomenon. Companies such as AT&T, Barclays, and Eastman Kodak have established global 'volunteer days' for their employees world-wide, giving employees paid time-off to participate in volunteer projects.

Barclays is expanding its Community Programme to the 60 countries in which it operates. Through its support of Community Service Volunteers 'Make A Difference Day', employee volunteering is being introduced to staff in Africa, the United States and Europe. By focusing on one day of action, and supported by time given, employees get a taste of volunteering which it is hoped will encourage them to continue.

case studies

Zurich Financial Services

Zurich allows all employees a minimum of one day a year to volunteer in the community in business time. Beyond this the company has guidelines for the time staff spend where they are involved in the running and management of Zurich Cares, the company's employee involvement programme – for example there are volunteers who assess and make decisions on grants, organise volunteer events etc. The time varies depending on the role but would be between 1-4 hours per week.

Zurich's approach is one of flexibility, encouraging a climate where managers

embrace the community programme and are encouraged to use opportunities to help deliver elements within their business plans relating to training, development and teambuilding.

Challenge is Zurich's annual major volunteer event where teams of employees are challenged to undertake one of practical projects in the community – some projects are undertaken completely in business time as legitimate team building exercises – and some are undertaken at weekends. Zurich's Skillshare programme matches requests from community groups for

specific help to individual members of staff with the relevant skills. In the main these tasks are undertaken in business time with managers recognising the benefit to the member of staff of using skills in a different environment and facing different issues and challenges.

For more information contact:
Pam Webb, Zurich Cares Programme Manager - UKISA Community Affairs
Tel: 01793 502450
Email: Pam.Webb@uk.zurich.com

case studies

Family Assurance Friendly Society Ltd

Family Assurance are a medium sized company of 250 employees. All employees are allowed 4 days off a year to support the community investment programme. Participation is seen by managers as an excellent opportunity to develop the skills and motivation of employees and is part of a performance management system. To gauge the success of the programme, a questionnaire is sent out annually to all employees and their feedback is used to enhance the programme.

Numerous benefits have been achieved. The profile of the

Society has grown significantly over the last six years and improvements have been seen in retaining and recruiting staff; training and development; and increased productivity and commitment.

For more information contact:
Tony Horton, Community Relations Manager
Tel: 01273 725272
Email: thorton@family.co.uk

top tips

- Survey existing volunteering activities and interests of staff. Use this to inform policy development
- Establish policy. Decide how it integrates with business strategy and if it is to be thematic (e.g. education) or free choice in terms of activity type.
- Set clear guidelines. These need to include if time is to be matched, who sanctions time-off, whether staff are free to volunteer for any community or voluntary group, or if there are any restrictions.
- Decide if financial help is to be provided. If so, how is this to be sourced and allocated
- Engage top management in launching and supporting the policy
- Encourage ownership of policy at middle management. Involve them in time-off decisions, link volunteering to both their own and their staff's development and appraisal.
- Market the scheme internally. Use the intranet, notice boards, email, house journals and briefing groups to share information and encourage participation.
- Celebrate success, publicise achievements and involve local media. Consider award schemes and events. Put case studies on the company's web-site.
- Survey staff involvement and reactions on a regular basis. Use these to improve the scheme.
- Measure impact.

case studies		
<p>UBS Warburg The company policy is set out for employees by the UBS Warburg Charity Committee as follows:</p> <p><i>"UBS Warburg encourages its employees to be actively involved in the community and to contribute time and skills to help the causes they care about. The community programme aims to enable staff to invest their time, energy and commitment in projects.</i></p>	<p><i>We consider it appropriate for permanent employees at UBS Warburg to devote up to a total of two days per annum of company time to employee volunteering. Employees are encouraged to participate in the programmes administered by the Community Affairs department. For recording purposes and to ensure employee time is donated to appropriate organisations, individuals wishing to volunteer must raise this with their line managers and obtain approval in advance before contacting the</i></p>	<p><i>Community Affairs department. In relation to time-off, line management is empowered to exercise discretion and flexibility around these guidelines, but clearly business priorities come first."</i></p> <p>For more information contact: Nick Wright, Executive Director, Corporate Responsibility & Community Affairs Email: Nick.Wright@ubsw.com</p>

case studies	
<p>Anglian Water Group (AWG) Over 400 employees have signed up for AWG's employee volunteering programme 'Give me Five'. The company matches every 5 hours spent by an employee on community activity, up to a maximum of 30 hours per employee.</p> <p>'Give me Five' was introduced as a tool for personal development with objectives being set in the employee's annual appraisal. The process for 'Give me Five' registration involves a joint discussion with the immediate line manager and the employee to identify how the community volunteering programme can enhance skills and competencies. These personal development targets are made explicit through the appraisal process and measured in the 6 monthly review.</p>	<p>A recent internal survey showed that 81% of 'Give Me Five' participants found the experience rewarding. 66% claimed volunteering improved communications skills and 57% felt it improved other interpersonal skills. 50 % claimed it enhanced morale and motivation supported by 43% feeling an increased feeling of company pride.</p> <p><i>"I believe 'Give me Five' gives every employee the opportunity to develop and gain new skills, while contributing to a worthwhile community activity of their choice. It is flexible enough to fit into most employees busy time schedules and a meaningful way to contribute to the local community".</i> Sean Kettle, Technician, Anglian Water Services</p>

Useful contacts and further information

www.bitc.org.uk Business in the Community's website includes information on employee community involvement, case studies from the Awards for Excellence and the Cares employee volunteering network.

Cares (a Business in the Community initiative) is a vehicle for employers to support their employees to volunteer in the communities where they operate, addressing local community needs and supporting strategic business issues. Cares provides training and advice for both corporate and voluntary sector partners. For more information on Cares, please email amanda.jones@bitc.org.uk or visit www.bitccares.org.uk.

www.iblf.org The International Business Leaders Forum in partnership with Business in the Community are running **Engage**, a three-year worldwide campaign to promote employee community involvement globally via an international communications campaign and through the sharing of company good practice.

www.communitymark.org.uk A BITC initiative for small and medium sized companies to reward and recognise their community involvement.

www.cecile.net CECILE is a network of organisations across Europe who can work with companies to develop their community involvement. The network is co-ordinated by Business in the Community and has partner organisations in every country in Western Europe.

www.do-it.org.uk A central online database of volunteer opportunities where people can search for vacancies relevant to their interests and location.

www.employeevolunteering.org.uk This website is administered by the National Centre for Volunteering, and funded by the Home Office Active Communities Unit to be a comprehensive resource on employee volunteering for companies and individuals.

www.navb.org.uk The website of the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux

www.timebank.org.uk TimeBank is a high profile national campaign to raise the awareness of the value of giving time and inspire a new generation of volunteers.

www.vde.org.uk The website of Volunteer Development England – supporting, promoting and developing volunteering through volunteer bureaux.

www.volunteering.org.uk The National Volunteering Centre is an organisation that works to promote excellence in volunteering in England.