

Goals

The Crown Estate encourages employees to undertake volunteering activities and actively promotes volunteering opportunities through our volunteering programme.

The programme supports our business strategy and objectives and seeks to add value through the positive impact which results from volunteering. Participation in voluntary activities creates mutual benefit for employees, our business and community.

Volunteering offers additional routes for employees' personal and professional development and enables us to share our skills and know-how to help create better communities where we live and work.

Definition of volunteering

The Crown Estate elects to supply information about our volunteering programme to Business in the Community (BITC) and London Benchmark Group (LBG), the leading international standard for measuring community investment. We have also elected to observe their definitions of volunteering.

BITC defines companies involved in 'volunteering' as "companies that address social issues in communities by volunteering their employees' skills and time during business hours".

LBG defines volunteering as: "Time off during the working week for employees to pursue their own personal community activities, or employee involvement organised by a company as part of its strategic community investment."

Recognised volunteering activities

The Crown Estate encourages employees to undertake activities in liaison with community organisations or charities, recognising as legitimate volunteering opportunities those activities that address social or environmental issues. These may, or may not, be specifically related to the business activities of The Crown Estate.

Due to the provisions of the Crown Estate Act 1961, the definition of recognised volunteering activities is restricted to offering our time, skills and know-how. Activities recognised as part of our volunteering programme are entirely at the discretion of The Crown Estate and the Act under which we operate.

The Crown Estate cannot provide funding for volunteering activities.

The Crown Estate is not able to undertake or support activities or provide resources, either funds, employee time or in-kind, for fundraising. Employees who wish to undertake fundraising activities may do so as personal activity, outwith their employment and their volunteering hours.

The Crown Estate cannot support political or lobbying activities. Employees wishing to undertake these activities may do so in their own time, independent of their employment with The Crown Estate and their volunteering hours.

Any time spent undertaking voluntary activities outside of our volunteering policy cannot be taken as part of an employee's volunteering time and will not be counted as part of our Total Contribution.

Time allotted for volunteering

Full time employees of The Crown Estate are eligible for a maximum of 2 days paid leave for volunteering each financial year. This is the equivalent of 16 hours; 1 working day is 8 hours, 7.5 hours plus a 30 minute lunch break. Volunteering can be done by the hour or as an 8 hour day. Volunteering hours cannot be 'carried' into the following financial year.

Volunteering activities must take place during normal working hours. Volunteering outside of normal working hours will only be recognised as part of the volunteering programme and our Total Contribution where the opportunities are promoted by our corporate programme.

If an employee's volunteering time is only possible out of regular working hours, whether part of recognised and/or promoted opportunities or personal community activities, time off in lieu is not provided. The goals of volunteering are personal and professional growth and community benefit through skills and time sharing, not absence from work.

However, it is up to the discretion of line managers and heads of departments to allow the arrangement of flexible working hours if required to facilitate the volunteering activity. This would not constitute any change to terms and conditions of employment.

Expenses

The Crown Estate will reimburse expenses for reasonable travel and subsistence during normal working hours only. Expenses for volunteering are considered as regular business expenses and must comply with the Business Expense Policy and the Green Travel Code.

Consent

Employees must, in all cases, achieve line manager consent prior to participation in volunteering activities. Employees must also have their line manager's approval for reimbursement of expenses in advance of participation in the volunteering activity.

Recording data

The Crown Estate reports annual volunteering data in our Integrated Annual Report and in our Total Contribution reporting. We also share data with BITC and LBG to allow benchmarking of our performance. Therefore, a record needs to be kept of how many people volunteer, how many hours and equivalent days are spent volunteering, what opportunities are chosen and the impact our volunteering programme has on our employees, our business and community.

Prior to volunteering, if an employ wishes to participate in opportunities promoted through the volunteering programme, they must alert the volunteering team by sending an email to volunteering@thecrownestate.co.uk. Details of the opportunity and information required to participate will then be shared. It is also useful in terms of data gathering if the team is alerted to intended use of volunteering hours for volunteering activities not promoted by the programme.

After volunteering, either on promoted activities or personal community activities, employees must complete a feedback survey. If the opportunity is ongoing, e.g. mentoring, the survey should only be completed once for that particular activity at the end of the financial year.

Completing the feedback survey serves to log volunteering hours and collect information for our Total Contribution, for measurement and reporting of the impact of the volunteering programme and for improvement of the programme.

Some parts of the business may also require employees to log their volunteering hours on MyView – employees are advised to confirm with their line managers.

Insurance

The Crown Estate will ensure that employees undertaking recognised and/or promoted volunteering activities a part of our volunteering programme are either directly or indirectly covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury, professional and public liability insurance.

Where employees undertake personal voluntary work not promoted by The Crown Estate volunteering programme, the responsibility lies with the employee to confirm or arrange appropriate insurance coverage requirements.

Other Support

The Crown Estate will endeavour to provide any further support that can be given to volunteers within the advice of our volunteering policy. Where practical, this will include in-kind contributions, such as providing facilities, office space, telephones, computers and stationery to assist in undertaking our employees' volunteering activity.

General

This policy does not form part of your terms and conditions of employment and may be amended or withdrawn at any time.

Date issued:	01 June 2016
Agreed with:	HR, Finance, Legal (review for clarity, no change in policy)
Version control:	Version 3.0
Related policies:	Business Expense Policy and the Green Travel Code
Date last reviewed:	26 June 2015
Agreed with:	Management Board, May 2015
Original:	30 September 2010
Agreed with:	Management Board, September 2010
Cycle for future review:	31 March 2016 or earlier if policy or legal changes are required
Name of author:	Sydney Brogan Version 3.0; Ruth Kemp/Sydney Brogan Version 2.0
Further information:	Volunteering page on i-site