**Employee Volunteering Template Policy**

1. **Introduction**

1.1 Chambers supports the Employee Volunteering Scheme, which is designed to support and to encourage staff to get involved with not-for-profit organisations and charities which have a formal connection with Chambers.

1.2 As well as the chance to expand and share your skills and experience, it’s a great way of playing a more active role in society. It can broaden outlook and appreciation of diverse communities, and create a greater awareness of the needs of the community. Volunteering can enhance working relationships, create wider connections and enhance possibilities of future joint working practices. It can improve job satisfaction, morale and personal development, and simply be a means of giving, to create a more robust and resilient society.

1.3 The not-for-profit organisation(s) with which Chambers has formal connection(s) are <*insert organisations and an outline of their core activities*>

# 1.4 This scheme allows employees to take up to one day or equivalent (pro-rata) paid time off to volunteer. It’s a great way to develop new skills and support something that’s worthwhile.

# Aim of the scheme

# 2.1 The Employee Volunteering Scheme aims to increase volunteering opportunities for employees by:

* releasing employees from normal duties for up to one day per year (pro-rata) to undertake volunteering activities,
* broadening volunteering boundaries,
* encouraging volunteering to be used for development.

# Why volunteer?

 3.1 For volunteers, it can:

* bring a great sense of personal achievement and self-worth by contributing to the community,
* give a broader outlook and appreciation of diverse communities,
* give others the benefit of experience and skills,
* help to develop new skills and experiences,
* improve employability – providing valuable experience and demonstrating a ‘can do’ attitude,
* be fun, social and enhance health and wellbeing.

3.2 For communities, it can:

* help voluntary organisations to deliver services and improve communities,
* build a more robust and resilient society.

3.3 For Chambers, it can:

* improve employee job satisfaction, morale, commitment and performance,
* enhance its reputation and profile,
* help it to attract and retain high-performing employees,
* encourage individual and team development,
* help team building through group volunteering,
* strengthen relationships with the local community,
* help to demonstrate its commitment and support to employees by encouraging them to play a more active role in society.
1. **Time allowance and eligibility criteria**

4.1 All employees are allowed **one day pro-rata per calendar year** paid time off to volunteer, provided that:

* it is agreed with <*indicate who should approve it*> at least two weeks in advance of the volunteering activity taking place so that cover arrangements can be made, if necessary. As with annual leave, the needs of Chambers must be taken into account and you must obtain agreement to volunteering leave before making any commitments to a voluntary organisation
* it does not involve a visible financial cost to ‘back-fill’ staff cover,
* time taken to volunteer will not disrupt or adversely affect individual activity.

4.2 You can use your volunteering time flexibly, one full day or broken down into hours to fit the needs of the activity and the voluntary organisation. You will need to discuss this with <*name or title*> to make sure that this fits both yours and Chambers’ needs.

### 4.3 Allowance for part-time employees: part-time staff may also of course apply for volunteering and the allowance is calculated pro rata to your working hours, in the same way as annual leave is calculated.

4.4 **Carrying over volunteering days:** volunteering days cannot be carried over from one year to the next.

4.5 **Disclosure Barring Service (eDBS) Checks:** certain activities that involve working with young people or other vulnerable groups may require you to have a Disclose Barring check (formerly Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)). The organisation will indicate if this is necessary.

4.6 **Public duties:** duties associated with school governance, duties as a magistrate, election candidacy, support at polling stations, trade union activities and employee advocacy are **not** covered by this scheme.

4.7 **Subsistence and travel expenses:** Chambers will cover reasonable travel expenses for team and individual development linked to volunteering, so long as this is incurred in a cost-effective way (such as advance rail tickets). Otherwise volunteering expenses should be claimed through the organisation with which you are volunteering. Employees involved in volunteering activities may be permitted access, within reason, to use of Chambers telephones, fax machines, photocopying, Email, notice boards and meeting rooms. However, arrangements should be made by prior agreement with <*name or title*> to ensure there is no conflict with the operation of Chambers.

# 5. How to volunteer

5.1 If you would like to volunteer, please let <*name or title*> know who will forward your name to the <*organisation name*>. They will be in touch with you directly, when they have a volunteer activity they would like you to be involved in.

5.2 Where at all possible, <*name or title*> is expected to support volunteering activities and demonstrate flexibility for cover arrangements. <*Name or title*> will consider:

* the possible impact of volunteering time on Chambers activities,
* opportunities for individual development, which benefit your current role or career progression and which cannot be met by training courses.

### 5.3 Appeals: if <*name or title*> does not approve your proposed volunteering activity, you have the right to appeal to <*name of committee, e.g. management committee*>. <*Name or title* > will need to evidence the reasons for their decision.

### 5.4 Liability: Chambers will not be liable for damages or injuries that occur while you are volunteering for other organisations. You must ensure that you are adequately covered by your chosen voluntary organisation.

## 6. Volunteering activities

6.1 **Types of volunteering:** volunteering can be a short one-off activity or a regular ongoing commitment. There are other not-for-profit organisations and charities to which Chambers can provide volunteer support. Examples are:

* mentoring children and vulnerable people,
* reading and listening activities at school,
* outdoor activities, e.g. countryside conservation or land clearance,
* electronic/remote support: research, websites, translation,
* organising sports activities or events,
* PTA officer/member,
* team building events.

6.2 Volunteering on behalf of any political groups will not be supported.

6.3 **Scope of volunteering:** you can volunteer to do almost any activity that they can offer and it need not be connected in any way with your work for Chambers. Many people use volunteering as a way of trying something completely new.

### 6.4 Geographical volunteering boundaries: the volunteering activity must be within <*define the area, e.g. London*>.

6.5 **Training requirements (including health and safety) to perform** **volunteering activities:** for whomever you choose to volunteer, they are responsible for providing any induction or other training to allow you to perform your volunteering role and remain safe. If you are involved in community transport volunteering using your own car, you will need to check that your own motor policy is suitable.

### 6.6 Clothing and equipment: if the volunteering activity requires specialist clothing or equipment, this will need to be provided by the organisation or by the volunteer. They will provide details of what is required.

# 7. Our volunteering principles:

# 7.1 When volunteering, you agree to:

* respect the privacy, property and confidentiality of others,
* report any problems you experience to <*name or title*> and the organisation,
* aim to fulfil the commitment you have made and inform your named contact in the organisation if you are unable to attend,
* act in a professional way, recognising that you are representing Chambers while carrying out the volunteering activities.

7.2 Your contract of employment continues to apply when volunteering and contains provisions that encourage the highest standards of integrity and personal conduct on the part of all employees.

7.3 The organisation is registered with a Volunteer Centre for quality assurance and health & safety purposes.