**Staff: time off to participate in volunteering activities**

It is proposed that staff working for Chambers are given up to 1 day’s paid time off a year for volunteering activities in the community.

Numerous studies over the past decade have concluded that people derive more happiness from experiences than from material things. When this experience involves giving back or helping others, the happiness quotient is upped even further, hence the well-documented “Helper’s High.”

As well as the chance to expand and share skills and experience, volunteering is great way of playing a more active role in society. It can broaden outlook and appreciation of diverse communities, creating a greater awareness of the needs of our community. As a consequence, employers are continuing to invest in the Community despite the challenging economy. However, the nature of their investment is changing with a reduction in cash donations, but an increase in donations of time through pro bono and employer-supported volunteering, as well as in-kind donations. This growth in employer-supported volunteering is the result of employers recognising the potential to develop their employees and business by sharing their skills and time with the community and targeting their support to be most effective.

Volunteering 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.

For Chambers, it can:

* improve employee job satisfaction, morale, commitment and performance, [[1]](#footnote-1)
* enhance its reputation and profile,
* help it to attract and retain high-performing employees,[[2]](#footnote-2)
* encourage individual and team development,
* strengthen relationships with voluntary, community and faith sectors, and
* help to demonstrate its commitment and support to employees as people, by encouraging them to play a more active role in society in a way which is meaningful to them.

Volunteering opportunities are listed on the website <https://do-it.org/>, and there are opportunities also advertised by the charities themselves (e.g. [www.makeawish.org.uk/wish-Visitors](http://www.makeawish.org.uk/wish-Visitors)).

Attached is a proposed policy providing guidelines and rules on the scheme.

This document, and the attached draft policy, are adapted from templates provided by the Chancery Bar Association, which actively promotes policies such as this.

1. Employee volunteering increases morale, commitment and performance, driving benefit straight to the bottom line. Employees actively engaged in community programmes are more satisfied in their work, with 85% saying their perception of their company had improved and 71% of employees citing volunteering programmes as key to improving personal well-being (YOUGOV 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. According to the Corporate Leadership Council employees who are most engaged with their employer perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organisation. A recent PwC study (2014) found that more than half of recent college graduates are seeking a company that has corporate social responsibility values that align with their own, and 56 percent would consider leaving a company that didn’t have the values they expected. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)