
Volunteering Days Guidance

Volunteering days

1. As part of our corporate social responsibility programme staff are able to apply for up to three normal working days off with pay (pro-rata) per annum to take part in unpaid approved charitable/community activities which are not already covered by our existing support for public duties (days are counted as half or whole, rather than hours and minutes). The period used to calculate Volunteering days is the Financial Year. Please note that these days are separate from any corporately organised volunteering activities that SFC may organise (in the past these have included: canal clean-ups, paired reading etc.). There can be a positive impact on individual wellbeing though volunteering and helping others – why not try it?
2. Requests for individual volunteering days need to be made through line managers to HR with evidence to support the request (typically this will be an e-mail from the event organiser stating what the member of staff is doing and the date(s) involved). The granting of leave is discretionary – and each application will be considered on its own merits. Line managers and staff must ensure that involvement in these activities does not cause any conflict of interest and does not impact upon the Council’s operational activity. Time off with pay will only be granted for scheduled work days and not weekends or weekdays that are not routinely worked with SFC. Human Resources are responsible for ensuring consistency in the application of volunteering days and will update Cascade and Imperago (flexi) for approved time that is taken off.

Examples of qualifying activities and events

3. Team Challenges - one-off practical tasks completed by a group of employees usually on one day e.g. decorating a social centre, clearing a riverbank, renovating a garden.
4. Skills Projects for voluntary or community groups - one-off short or longer assignments where staff use their business skills (e.g. writing a business plan or marketing strategy, reviewing HR procedures or setting up a database) or provide physical support to help with the work of the charity or community organisation e.g. planting trees, clearing weeds, painting etc.
5. Board Membership - serving on the management body of a voluntary organisation or school, for example which typically meets monthly or bi-monthly.
6. Regular Volunteering – a regular role undertaken around workplace commitments e.g. mentoring, befriending, advice giving, reading in schools, conservation work etc.
7. Volunteering at a charity depot /hub to assist with sorting out toys, clothes etc .

Support for public duties/service

8. The Council already supports staff to undertake public duties with special leave (these have included Children's Panel membership, Employment Tribunal membership, Prison visitors and Reserve Forces Service). Staff may request time off for specific commitments (and this may be granted with or without pay) and we have always looked on these sympathetically having regard to the work requirements of the Council and the principle of fairness.
9. Should you have any queries about any of the above please contact Human Resources in the first instance?

Document history

This guidance does not form part of SFC's terms and conditions of employment.

Owner: Human Resources

Version number	Changes	Date approved
1.1	Updated to reflect current practice on Volunteering days	01/10/2024 Ratified by PPWG/JNCF