



# How volunteering can benefit your team.

Bupa. Better for business

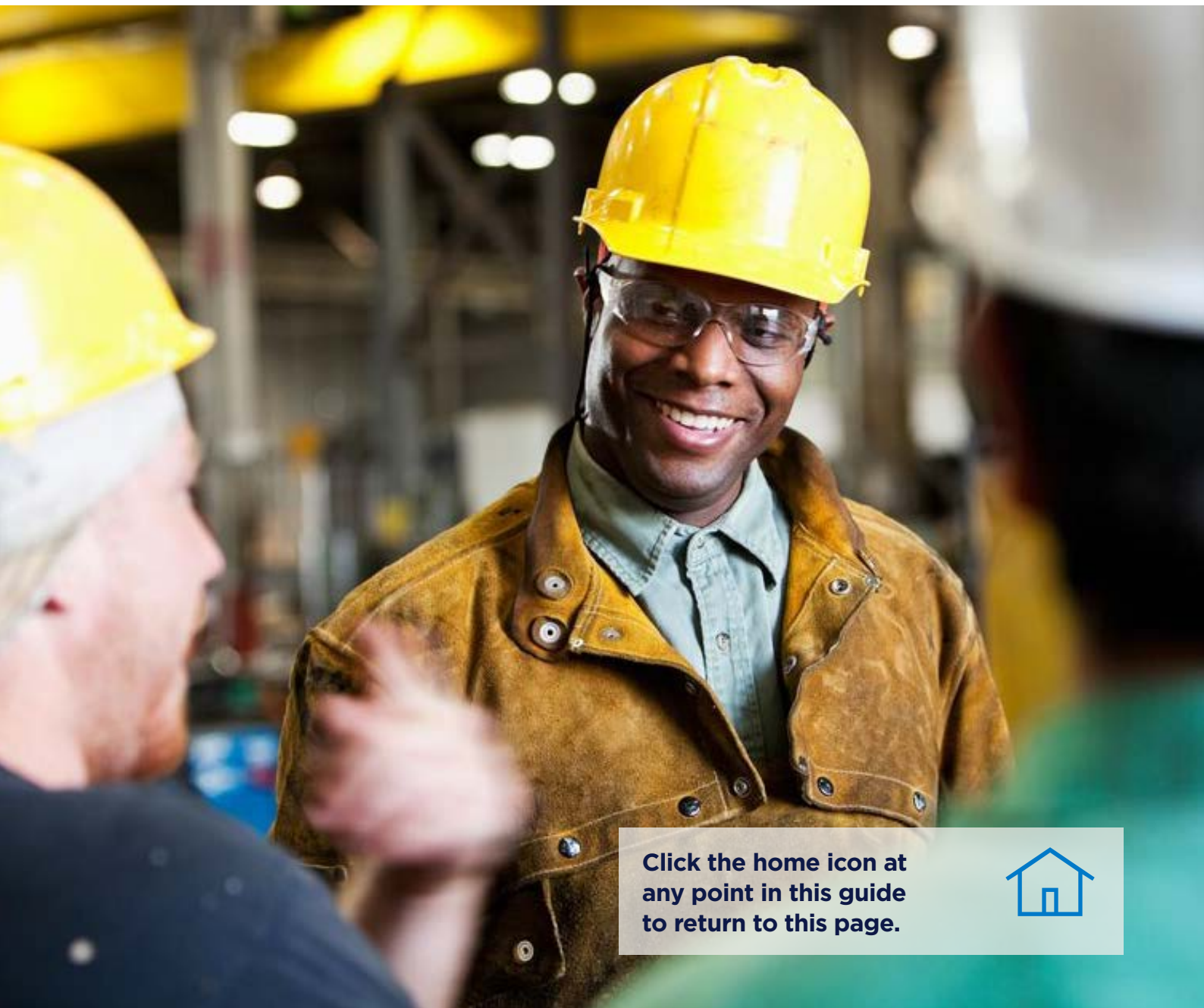
Workplace

Health and Wellbeing **Academy**

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# Introduction.

Here, we'll look at how volunteering could boost your team's engagement with work - and potentially their health and wellbeing too.



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## Giving back

Volunteering – the simple act of giving your time free of charge – is hugely beneficial to society. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) reports that there are more than 165,000 voluntary organisations in the UK, and that an estimated 9.2 million people volunteer at least once a month. The economic value of volunteering is approximately £20 billion.

Young employees in particular are likely to be interested in volunteering opportunities through work. A study\* of employees aged under 35 found that:

**75%**

agreed that giving back makes you happier.



**62%**

agreed that supporting charities could help them develop work-related skills.



**53%**

wanted to volunteer more than they currently do.



**42%**

said that having opportunities to volunteer through work is important to them.



\*Pharoah et al



## Volunteering for health

As well as motivating your team, volunteering opportunities may also boost their wellbeing. A number of studies have explored a potential link between volunteering and health. It's a difficult area to research, and studies often rely on people's accounts of their experiences rather than scientific data. Also, 'volunteering' is a fairly loose term, so it's hard to compare the results of different studies.

Nonetheless, the research we do have seems to show that volunteering has a positive effect on mental health in terms of managing depression, and enhancing life satisfaction and wellbeing. There is also some evidence it can have benefits for physical health too.



Juliet Hodges, Senior Behavioural Insights Adviser at Bupa says:

**Though the strength of the studies is mixed, the effects of volunteering are overwhelmingly positive. It has even been suggested that the impact on mental and physical health are so positive that volunteering should be included in public health policy and interventions.**

Overall, this paints a picture of volunteering as something that can be valuable for the volunteer, as well as for the people who benefit from their help.



**Volunteering has a positive effect on mental health**



## Creating opportunities

Only 1 in 10 employees participate in voluntary activities arranged through their work, according to the NCVO – so there's room for companies to encourage volunteering more.

You might think about doing this by:



Matching employees' skills and experiences with an appropriate charity



Presenting volunteering opportunities that will help employees to develop skills they can use at work



Providing employees with more information about the needs of the local community around the workplace



Incorporating volunteering into workplace goals or development plans; you could create formal schemes such as annual volunteer days, or volunteer awards

It may be possible to work collaboratively with local community groups or charities to achieve these steps. Why not reach out to local organisations and see what you can accomplish together?

**10%**  
of employees participate in voluntary activities arranged through their work.

Time well spent: employer-supported volunteering. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, published June 2019.

# Resources.

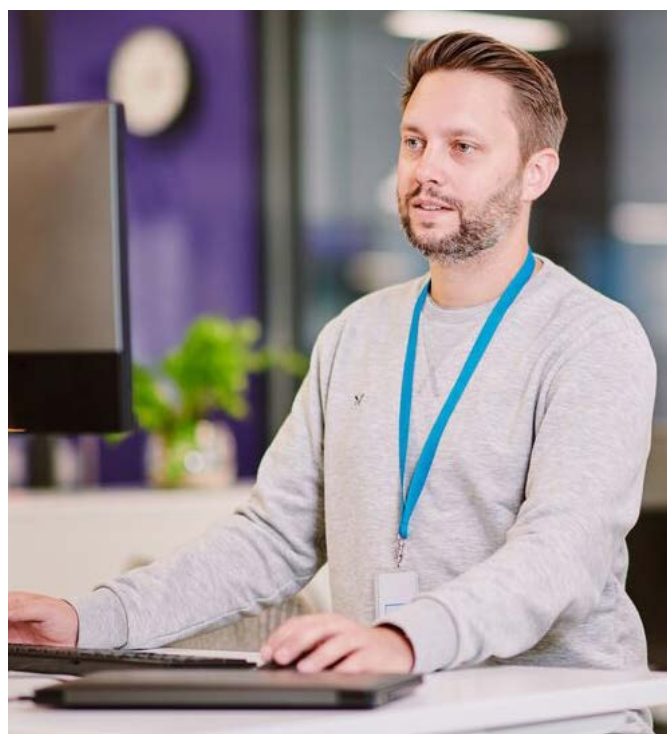
These following websites and tools can help you find opportunities in your local area.

- [Volunteer Centre Finder](#)
- [Do-it](#)
- [VolunteerMatch](#)

Organisations such as the [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) and [Volunteering Matters](#) can help you find out more about volunteering in general.

## Sources

1. UK Civil Society Almanac 2022. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations. ncvo.org.uk, published 18 October 2022.
2. Pharoah C, Walker C. More to give: London Millennials Working Towards A Better World, 2015.
3. Jenkinson C, Dickens A, Jones K et al. Is volunteering a public health intervention? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the health and survival of volunteers. BMC Public Health 2013; 13:773.
4. Yeung JWK, Zhang Z, Kim TY. Volunteering and health benefits in general adults: cumulative effects and forms. BMC Public Health 2018;18:8. doi:10.1186/s12889-017-4561-8.
5. Time well spent: employer-supported volunteering. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations. ncvo.org.uk, published 3 June 2019.
6. Employer-supported volunteering. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. cipd.co.uk, published 23 August 2022.



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