



# Corporate Volunteering Strategy 2018-23

*Shaping the future of volunteering*

# Introduction

This strategy runs from 2018-23 and outlines the City of London Corporation's (City Corporation) approach to volunteering. It positions volunteering as an asset that is both supportive of and supported by the outcomes in our Corporate Plan 2018-23. We want individuals and communities to flourish as a result of the positive volunteering culture and practices embedded within the organisation.

We currently deliver a wide range of volunteering activities and opportunities for different groups and purposes. We:

- Support **staff** to undertake volunteering in London through the Employee Volunteering Programme.
- Provide volunteering opportunities for **our residents, students in our academies and schools, individuals, community groups and businesses** in the Square Mile, London and beyond as part of our service delivery and through our commissioned services.

Whilst there is no statutory or universally accepted definition of volunteering, we define and recognise volunteering as “**the giving of unpaid time to something that aims to benefit the environment or people other than, or in addition to, close relatives**”. By this definition, there is a vast amount of volunteering activity taking place across the organisation. Between 2016 and 2017, our volunteers gave over 60,000 hours of their time to support our open spaces and 150 volunteer governors offered their time to support our schools and academies to provide world class education to more than 8,700 pupils across five London boroughs. Volunteers also gave their time to support our libraries, cultural and heritage attractions and local communities.

Our volunteers, however, give more than just their unpaid time. They offer us their perspective, objectivity and a wide-range of pre-existing

skills and experience. Through our volunteers we can support harder to reach communities; develop the skills of others; engage stakeholders in consultation, decision-making and co-design of services; and materially and sustainably improve environments. Our elected and co-opted Members exemplify these benefits through their valued contributions to the City Corporation.

Recognising the value of volunteering and the potential to do more, in 2015, the Department of Community and Children's Services commissioned an independent review entitled 'Community Volunteering Review for the City of London'. The review, published in January 2016, described all volunteering taking place across the City Corporation at the time and highlighted opportunities to benefit from sharing good volunteering practices across the organisation and to reduce duplication of effort in relation to all stages of working with volunteers, namely their recruitment, training and management.

In response, a Volunteering Working Group (VWG) was set up in 2016 to develop a corporate and strategic approach to volunteering. The strategy set out herein is based on the commissioned report, an appreciative enquiry with internal stakeholders and consultation sessions with staff, existing volunteers, residents and representatives from the charitable and community sector.

This strategy shifts the focus away from a traditionally departmental or divisional led approach and towards a holistic and corporately-coordinated approach to volunteering. This approach will support the achievement of the strategy's vision in which the City of London Corporation has a positive volunteering culture, with clear and consistent practices, which support volunteers and their beneficiaries to flourish in the Square Mile, London and beyond.

# Shaping the future of volunteering

**Vision: The City of London Corporation has a positive volunteering culture, with clear and consistent practices, which support volunteers and their beneficiaries to flourish in the Square Mile, London and beyond.**

To fulfil the vision, this strategy sets out three outcomes it will seek to achieve:

## **Outcome 1 – Volunteers benefit from meaningful volunteering opportunities.**

### **Measures of success**

- Volunteering supports personal development.
- Volunteering helps people improve their skills and networks.
- Volunteering improves people's health and wellbeing.

## **Outcome 2 – Volunteers are valued.**

### **Measures of success**

- Volunteers feel supported by good volunteering practices.
- Volunteers feel they are treated with respect and their contribution is recognised.
- Volunteers feel they have good access to opportunities.

## **Outcome 3 – Organisations and their stakeholders benefit from more and better volunteering.**

### **Measures of success**

- Volunteering hours increase.
- Volunteering impact increases.
- Beneficiaries recognise the benefits of engaging with volunteers.

**Links to our Corporate Plan 2018-23:** This strategy will support the aims set out in the Corporate Plan by contributing to a flourishing society, supporting a thriving economy and shaping outstanding environments. The above outcomes specifically support Corporate Plan outcomes 3, 4 and 5. However, volunteers could be involved in activities that support any of the 12 Corporate Plan outcomes.

**CP Outcome 3 –** People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.

**CP Outcome 4 –** Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

**CP Outcome 5 –** Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.

**Related strategies and activities:** Philanthropy Strategy, Responsible Business Strategy, Bridging Divides Strategy, Social Mobility Strategy, Education Strategy, Employee Volunteering Programme and the City of London Corporation's #iwill pledge.

A number of departments also reference volunteering activities in their own departmental business plans/strategies and divisional team plans.

This strategy sets out our approach to volunteering and outlines the ambitious outcomes we seek to achieve over a five-year period, for the benefit of stakeholders in the Square Mile, London and beyond. It also provides an overview of the types of activities we will champion, however detailed action plans and activities will be finalised and agreed when implementing the strategy. These will build upon the successes and learning from the volunteering activities and practices currently in place across the organisation, best practice and innovation taking place elsewhere, and through trying new things and exploring new opportunities in order to achieve our vision.

## Outcome 1 – Volunteers benefit from meaningful volunteering opportunities.

It is important that we source, promote and provide volunteering opportunities that are impactful and meaningful. Volunteering can have many positive impacts for the volunteer, such as offering access to new opportunities to acquire skills and experience and supporting their own wellbeing (a list of impacts be found at Appendix 1). However, there is currently limited internal assessment of the benefits our volunteers receive as a result of their activities. The volunteering data that has been collected relates mainly to volunteer numbers and hours, and has traditionally been held at a departmental level, making it difficult to support and track volunteer progression and report on impact. For volunteers to benefit fully from meaningful opportunities, it is essential that we embed good volunteering practices throughout the organisation and introduce a common or standard 'minimum offer' for volunteers. It is also important that we work with our volunteers to identify their needs, match opportunities to their motivations and co-produce our volunteer practices with. Going forward, good practice will be shared across the whole organisation to communicate the rich learning that is available, avoid duplication of effort and ensure consistency. We commit to embedding practices that are:

- **Collaborative:** We share best practice across departments.
- **Representative:** We represent the views of volunteers, of staff across departments who support volunteering and of the organisations/commissioned services we partner with to provide volunteering.
- **Diligent and transparent:** We deliver our duty of care towards and via volunteers and the beneficiaries they support.
- **Data driven:** We commit to reporting and making evidence-based decisions, based on learning about what works.
- **Accessible:** We ensure our volunteering information and opportunities are available and accessible in a range of formats and locations.

### We will:

- a. Review the volunteering practices of external organisations we work with, as needed, in order to share learning and ensure alignment.
- b. Define key departmental and divisional roles needed to support volunteers and develop volunteer practices.
- c. Develop, share and regularly review volunteering policies, procedures and practices across and within departments, including, but not limited to: safeguarding, health and safety, insurance and data protection policies.
- d. Establish an informal network of volunteers, staff and representatives from partner organisations/services with whom to co-produce policies, procedures and practices with.
- e. Deliver excellent volunteering experiences for volunteers by asking potential volunteers what they want and sourcing and promoting high-quality volunteering opportunities in a consistent and accessible way.
- f. Propose and approve a new Employee Volunteering Programme for City Corporation staff.
- g. Gather data of volunteer numbers, hours and demographics and measure the impacts of volunteering activity on our volunteers.

## Outcome 2 – Volunteers feel valued.

With such a diverse and multi-faceted volunteering offer, our challenge is to foster a shared and consistent organisational awareness of the distinctive purpose and value of volunteering, which builds on existing examples of best practice. It is important that we have a consistent volunteering culture across the organisation where volunteers are valued, their contribution is recognised and where the potential for volunteering to enhance the way that we design and deliver services is widely understood. A positive organisational volunteering culture will also enable us to conduct our duties towards volunteers, and via them, in a consistent and principled way. This will demonstrate our commitment to volunteers that we value their contributions and provide confidence to the departments and divisions that are involving volunteers within their activity.

We will:

- a. Develop an organisational volunteering charter, which all Chief Officers sign and commit to, that states clearly our understanding of the purpose and value of volunteering.
- b. Agree a set of expectations and objectives for the use of volunteers throughout the City Corporation.
- c. Provide training to City Corporation staff to build their capacity and skills for working with and supporting volunteers.
- d. Help departments/divisions to recognise how volunteering activities are supportive of and encouraged by outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2018-23 and other corporate or departmental strategies and plans.
- e. Recognise the contribution of employee volunteering through our 'Celebrating our People Awards'.
- f. Explore options for a centrally located database for holding and sharing data related to our volunteers in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

To support the achievement of this outcome, a list of specific contributions to our Corporate Plan 2018-23 can be found at Appendix 1 and an example Volunteering Charter is shown at Appendix 2.

## Outcome 3 – Organisations and their stakeholders benefit from more and better volunteering.

Volunteering creates a clear double benefit for the volunteer and its beneficiaries, be that another individual, community, organisation (including the City Corporation) or cause. As an organisation, we benefit from the perspective, objectivity, skills and experience of our volunteers. Promoting and supporting volunteering opportunities also increases our social value offer to the Square Mile, London and beyond and demonstrates our commitment to being a socially responsible business. By involving volunteers in our service delivery, we can help to create positive impacts for the people and communities we serve. We will also use this strategy to generate and tell stories of impact and demonstrate how beneficial volunteering can be, in order to encourage others to promote and support volunteering.

We will:

- a. Promote volunteering opportunities and benefits to drive more and better volunteering.
- b. Raise awareness of the Employee Volunteering Programme and encourage more staff to volunteer.
- c. Gather data on the resources committed by the City Corporation to provide and support volunteering and measure the impacts of volunteering activity on the organisation and, where possible and proportionate, on our stakeholders.
- d. Share corporate case studies, statistics and insights that demonstrate the achievements and benefits of our volunteers.
- e. Share volunteering good practices across our spheres of influence and demonstrate the benefits of engaging with volunteers.
- f. Promote the value and best practice of volunteering through our Philanthropy Strategy which advocates for greater levels of giving of time and skills.

A list of the impacts of volunteering on different stakeholders can be found at Appendix 2.

# Implementation and measures of success

Through the process of developing the strategy, it has been clear that good practice and the potential for networks to support each other already exists. The actions put forward in the strategy will now act as a framework to build upon over the next five years.

This strategy will guide and inform our volunteering culture, practices and impact over the next five years. The VWG will act as a cross-departmental group overseeing the strategy's implementation. Initially this will involve developing detailed action plans, assigning departmental leads and supporting with the recruitment of a Corporate Volunteering Manager who will chair the VWG.

## **By the end of 2018/19 we will seek out best practice by:**

- Recruiting a new Corporate Volunteering Manager.
- Proposing and approving a new Employee Volunteering Programme (EVP).
- Establishing a network of volunteers and volunteer managers.
- Approving an organisation-wide Volunteering Charter, which is signed by all Chief Officers.
- Identifying and agreeing departmental leads.
- Identifying where external partners or commissioned providers could support the strategy.

## **By the end of 2019/20 we will consolidate our own practices by:**

- Developing methods to ensure consistency and best practice in volunteering.
- Implementing the revised EVP.
- Developing a monitoring framework and tested outcome and impact measures in line with Corporate Plan measures.
- Assessing online/physical opportunities for promoting and signposting volunteering information and opportunities.
- Sharing case studies that demonstrate the achievements and benefits of our volunteers.

## **By the end of 2020/21 we will develop our monitoring framework by:**

- Identifying a secure online location for holding and sharing data related to volunteering.

## **By the end of 2021-22 we will start to see the impact grow by:**

- Delivering another year of impact reporting on the outcomes outlined in this strategy.

## **By the end of 2022-23 we will have achieved significant progress towards our vision by:**

- Successfully embedding an organisational approach to volunteering which supports volunteers and their beneficiaries to flourish.

# Appendix 1 – Contributions and impacts

## Contributions to the Corporate Plan 2018-23

Whilst developing this strategy, the following specific contributions to the Corporate Plan 2018-23 were identified as:

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Outcome(s)</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
<b>Contribute to a flourishing society</b>	- Outcome 3	- Enabling people from all backgrounds and abilities to access to high-quality volunteering opportunities.
	- Outcome 4	- Encouraging social interaction and championing local needs.
<b>Support a thriving economy</b>	- Outcome 5	- Role-modelling responsible behaviours.
		- Advocating and facilitating meaningful and impactful volunteering opportunities.

Volunteers could be involved in activities that also support the achievement of Outcomes 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

## Impacts of volunteering

The following impacts were identified through a 'Needs and Impact' survey that was completed by 36 respondents and through a consultation event attended by 34 people. Respondents and attendees were made up of City Corporation staff, Members, resident volunteers, volunteers involved in service delivery, staff from our commissioned services and representatives from the charitable and community sector.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Impacts</b>
<b>Volunteer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing personal development e.g. confidence and self-esteem.</li> <li>- Improving transferable skills e.g. IT, public speaking and teamwork.</li> <li>- Increasing individual employment prospects.</li> <li>- Improving individual health and wellbeing.</li> </ul>
<b>Beneficiary (individual, community, organisation, cause)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing connections between people in our communities.</li> <li>- Increased connection with our heritage, natural, built and cultural environments.</li> <li>- Making a difference to our heritage, natural, built and cultural environments.</li> <li>- Enhancing our ability to reach out and serve the needs of the communities.</li> <li>- Reducing an individual's need for our services in the future.</li> <li>- Empowering individuals to hold a stake in decision-making and tackling disadvantage from within communities.</li> </ul>
<b>City of London Corporation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diversifying skills, experience and perspectives within our business.</li> <li>- Enhancing our ability to govern and make decisions on behalf of our stakeholders.</li> <li>- Increasing our social value offer to London and beyond.</li> <li>- Enhancing our reputation as a responsible business.</li> </ul>



## Appendix 2 – Example Volunteering Charter

Volunteering at the City of London Corporation is understood as the giving of unpaid time to something that aims to benefit the environment or people other than, or in addition to, close relatives. This includes ‘formal’ volunteering, defined as providing unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations and ‘informal’ volunteering, defined as providing unpaid help as an individual to people who are not a relative - we recognise both as equally valuable to achieving our aims.

We uphold that:

- all volunteering is undertaken by choice and all individuals should have the right to volunteer, according to their wishes.
- the involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff, and should not be used to displace staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service; and
- effective structures should be in place to support volunteers and the activities they undertake, and these should be fully considered and costed when services are planned.

We uphold an organisational responsibility to:

- Treat volunteers ethically, recognising throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits both the volunteer and the beneficiary.
- Recognise the contribution of all volunteers.
- Ensure that volunteer time is valued and used to the greatest impact, through roles that are of value to volunteers and those they serve.
- Ensure our volunteers and volunteering opportunities reflect the diversity of the local community.
- Embed consistent policies, procedures and practices, including fair and effective safeguarding and recruitment procedures.
- Support our volunteer managers and value the skills they bring back to the organisation.
- Commit appropriate resources to working with and supporting volunteers.
- Take a person-centred approach when establishing a developmental pathway for volunteers and ensure they receive appropriate levels of support.
- Encourage two-way communication between volunteers and the City Corporation/partner services.

## Appendix 3 – Roles in support of volunteering

Below, is a snapshot description of the main departmental/divisional roles in support of volunteering. During year one of the implementation of this strategy, departmental leads will be agreed and, as necessary, departmental roles may need to be developed further. Although some departments/divisions have been identified below, it is important that all departments are engaged with this strategy and liaise with the Corporate Volunteering Manager to ensure a consistent and corporate approach to volunteering is taken across the organisation.

Department/Division	Support volunteering by
<b>City Bridge Trust</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leading on the implementation of the volunteering strategy, including hosting and managing the Corporate Volunteering Manager.</li> <li>- Developing performance indicators for outcomes and impacts.</li> <li>- Managing the EVP, linking staff volunteering opportunities to City Bridge Trust grantees.</li> <li>- Supporting staff and volunteers with information about volunteering.</li> <li>- Creating links between volunteering and staff engagement, wellbeing and organisational development.</li> <li>- Promoting skills and experience gained by staff volunteering through the department.</li> <li>- Reviewing local/regional trends in relation to organisational volunteering.</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Strategy and Performance Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Defining the golden thread running through to business plans and different strategies/corporate strategies, and highlighting links to Volunteering Strategy where applicable.</li> <li>- Designing the volunteering strategy and supporting other departments to deliver it.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Community and Children's Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generating opportunities for residents, staff and children and young people to volunteer.</li> <li>- Improving approaches to engagement and consultation within the City.</li> <li>- Working regularly with resident and community groups.</li> <li>- Facilitating volunteering through commissioned services.</li> <li>- Encouraging students in City Corporation schools and academies to volunteer.</li> </ul>
<b>Open Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Running targeted learning projects and programmes for volunteers.</li> <li>- Providing volunteer opportunities across a variety of its sites.</li> <li>- Seeking to recruit volunteers who reflect the diversity of our local communities.</li> <li>- Recording and monitoring the impact of volunteering on their sites and celebrating volunteer successes.</li> <li>- Supporting the development of policies, procedures and guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>HR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporting the development of policies, procedures and guidance i.e. on volunteer recruitment, safeguarding, and health safety.</li> <li>- Encouraging staff to volunteer as part of their learning and development.</li> <li>- Integrating volunteering into Personal Development Plans (PDPs).</li> <li>- Enabling managers to support volunteering.</li> <li>- Supporting the Employee Volunteering Programme, allowing staff two paid days off a year to volunteer.</li> <li>- Recognising the value of volunteering through leading the Celebrating Our People awards.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4 – Glossary of terms related to volunteering

<b>Term</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Benefit in kind</b>	Giving of non-cash assets including employee volunteering, time, pro-bono expertise, and other assets such as venue space.
<b>Bridging Divides</b>	City Bridge Trust's five-year charitable funding strategy for 2018-23. It outlines a total assets approach, which outlines monetary and non-monetary assets that CBT can offer to organisations it will support, and this could include volunteering or in-kind support.
<b>Co-production</b>	Equal relationship between people who use services and the people responsible for services. They work together, from design to delivery, sharing strategic decision-making about policies as well as decisions about the best way to deliver services.
<b>Education</b>	The City Corporation's work in education recognises volunteering is a related mechanism to work experience enabling students to gain further insight into the organisation at the same time as developing skills.
<b>Employee Volunteering Programme</b>	Two paid days given by the City of London Corporation to enable volunteering by staff to a defined internal or external cause. As staff still receive pay for this, it could be considered a 'benefit in kind'. Principles in a volunteering charter would still apply to the programme and the link to volunteering is strengthened if the employee then goes on to undertake further volunteering.
<b>#iwill pledge</b>	The City Corporation's pledge to the national #iwill campaign which promotes social action among 10-20-year olds.
<b>Philanthropy Strategy</b>	The City Corporation's Philanthropy Strategy for 2018-23 outlining a strategic approach to philanthropy focused on reducing social inequality and increasing social mobility in London. It recognises volunteering, whether by City Corporation employees or our other stakeholders, as a form of philanthropy.
<b>Pro-bono</b>	Unpaid work undertaken by staff, utilising their professional skills, to benefit another organisation.
<b>Responsible Business Strategy</b>	The City Corporation's Responsible Business strategy for 2018-23, which outlines its commitment to creating positive impact and reducing its negative impact across all our activities and decisions. It recognises volunteering as a mechanism for role-modelling/delivering some of the actions in the strategy.
<b>Volunteering in support of City of London Corporation</b>	Provided by staff, residents and wider communities in support of services, activities and governance.
<b>Volunteering in support of other causes</b>	Provided by staff, residents and wider communities facilitated by the City of London Corporation and/or its commissioned services.