



Derby Homes Volunteering Strategy 2018-2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

We think most people would agree that volunteering is a good thing. Volunteering is part of the very fabric of our society – people coming together to help each other or to support a particular cause.

Volunteering is mutually beneficial and therefore equally important for the people that take part as it is for reciprocates. Getting involved in volunteering benefits different people in different ways. For some, it's the opportunity to learn new skills, build confidence and move closer to the jobs market. For others it's a route to improved health and wellbeing or the simple pleasure and satisfaction gained from helping others and giving something back to the community.

We have a long track record of working closely with our customers. We have worked to develop and establish volunteering roles within our organisation. Volunteers are integral to the governance of our organisation, sitting both on our Main and Operational Boards. Volunteers also make up our tenant scrutiny panel, Customer Voice, which scrutinises the way we deliver services and listens to tenant feedback. We encourage staff within the organisation to volunteer their time to support wider community projects. We have a dedicated group of staff that, each year, gives up their time to carry out renovation works as part of our ongoing support to the Skegness Children's Home and support the Normanton Project.

Within the wider role of our Customer Engagement and Community Development team, we help coordinate and promote volunteering opportunities within charities across the organisation and also facilitate fundraising for Derby Homes' Charity of the Year.

Each year Derby Homes recognises the importance of volunteering by holding a Volunteer Celebration event, as a thank you to all those participating in voluntary activities.

Derby Homes is committed to supporting volunteering in Derby, and through supporting Community Action Derby, Derby Homes can realize its aims. Community Action Derby has recently received the National Volunteer Quality Award in recognition of their strategic development, volunteering good practice development, developing volunteering opportunities and promoting the voice of volunteering. Through working in partnership with Community Action Derby, Derby will strengthen its volunteering offer.

This strategy outlines how we will support and build upon our existing volunteer framework, offering a range of opportunities, so that people can take part in a variety of opportunities to suit them, whilst encouraging others to get involved.

2. PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING

No matter what type of volunteering people undertake or how frequently they volunteer, this strategy sets out four fundamental principles that we think are key to its success:

Choice: Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Any encouragement to become involved in volunteering should not result in any form of coercion or compulsion. Freedom to volunteer implies freedom not to become involved.

Diversity: Volunteers bring varying qualities and experience to Derby Homes. Diversity is recognised, respected and valued and volunteering will be open to all participants. It is recognised that social exclusion barriers can be overcome by skills, experience, confidence, education and contacts gained whilst helping others. Ensuring a diverse volunteering base also makes our services more accessible and relevant to our diverse communities.

Mutual Benefit: Volunteering should be a reciprocal, mutual relationship. Although a person is not paid for their efforts, they should feel a sense of worthwhile and achievement. Volunteers gain useful skills, experience and contacts, sociability and fun, and are included in the organisation and the wider community. Volunteers should be complementary to and not a replacement for paid staff.

Recognition: Recognising the value of volunteers to the organisation and wider community is fundamental to a fair relationship. Celebrating their achievements and development only encourages and strengthens relationships between the organisation and the volunteers. Knowing that they are appreciated and valued is paramount.

3. WHY DO WE NEED A DERBY HOMES VOLUNTEER STRATEGY?

For our organisation to have great volunteering opportunities and great volunteers, we need to have clear direction, aims and objectives. This strategy confirms our commitment to strengthening our commitment to volunteering.

4. OUR VISION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Our vision is that by 2021, Derby Homes will be an organisation where there is a strong and sustainable volunteering culture, both internally and externally.

To realise this vision, we have observed three key aims that will drive our continuous improvement programme:

- *To support every individual to pursue the opportunity to volunteer and contribute, either within Derby Homes recognised volunteering opportunities or through signposting to wider volunteering opportunities through Community Action Derby.*
- *To make volunteering more recognised, visible and valued in the organisation and aim to create an Employer Supported Volunteer Scheme (ESVS)*
- *To ensure volunteers receive a quality volunteering experience and benefit from their volunteering activity.*

To deliver against these aims we will:

- Encourage and enable residents to utilise their skills within Derby Homes through volunteering roles e.g. our tenant panel 'Customer Voice', Operational and Main Board.
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided for volunteers (e.g. induction, mentoring & on-going training) internally through our governance structure and externally through an accredited brokerage, Community Action Derby.
- Encourage and enable individuals across the county to utilise their professional skills in volunteering roles (e.g. sitting on our Main Board as an Independent Member)
- Continue to support and facilitate employee's charitable work, capturing the amount of fundraising raised and time donated each year.
- Encourage and enable staff to utilise their skills in volunteering through developing and implementing an Employer Supported Volunteer Scheme (ESVS). The scheme is to enable our staff to increase their contributions to social action in the City through volunteering (within a specified maximum time allocation) within working hours. It will identify the support available and how this can be accessed. The details of time allocations and support in place will be specified annually, taking into consideration the business needs and will not be expected to exceed 1 working day a year per person.
- Volunteering will be embraced by all managers and embedded into staff inductions, one to ones and reviewed at staff meetings.
- Develop our relationship with Community Action Derby, strengthening quality volunteering quality opportunities outside of Derby Homes through a co-ordinating Volunteer Centre.
- Work with partners such as Derby City Council and Community Action Derby to provide targeted support to enable the engagement of groups into volunteering opportunities. This, for example, could be targeted towards vulnerable or disadvantaged groups to try and tackle worklessness or those not in employment, education or training.
- Ensure that all volunteers have the opportunity to develop greater skills, and are exposed to positive experiences, assisting them to be work ready. This will be captured through feedback from Community Action Derby of their volunteer experience.
- Encourage personal development, such as self-confidence, communication and interpersonal skills, improved mental health, physical well-being and sense of pride, belonging and achievement

- Using our ClearView customer engagement system and Community Action Derby data, capture and evidence the social and monetary value of volunteering to the individual, community and economy.
- Utilise existing links with community groups to promote positive images of volunteering, capturing the breadth of opportunities and publicising through social media and other avenues, such as local press Derby Homes News publications.
- Recognise and celebrate volunteers in the community
- Provide support and training to Derby Homes staff who will be working with volunteers
- Support the Community Action Derby Volunteer Networking Group to promote best practice of involving volunteers.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

We will track our progress and communicate the positive impact of volunteers through timely reports to our tenant led Operational Board.