



Derby Homes Volunteering Strategy 2015 – 2018

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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 important too for the people that take part in it. Getting involved in volunteering offers different things to different people: 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, and for many it's the simple pleasure and satisfaction gained from helping others or 'putting something back'.

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 make up our Tenant Panel which scrutinizes the way we deliver services; volunteers also actively support our Junior Wardens scheme out in the community.

We encourage staff within the organisation to volunteer their time to support wider community projects. Projects such as working with young people in our Junior Warden Scheme, or participating in renovation works as part of our ongoing support to the Skegness Children's Home.

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This strategy aims to set out how we will support and build upon our existing volunteer framework, offering a wider 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. Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what their background, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender or disability. It is recognised that social exclusion barriers can be overcome

by skills, experience, confidence 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. We have developed an associated action plan that evidences the areas we need to build on, and will ensure that actions are delivered to this aim.

4. OUR VISION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Our vision is that by 2018, Derby Homes is a place where there is a strong and sustainable volunteering culture, both internally and externally.

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

- *To provide every individual, no matter what their background, with the opportunity to volunteer and contribute within Derby Homes*
- *To make volunteering more recognised, visible and valued in the organisation.*
- *To ensure we deliver a quality volunteering experience and benefit from volunteering activity*
- *To ensure an effective support service, where individuals are able to undertake quality volunteering opportunities.*

To deliver against this aims we will:

- Use a variety of promotional methods and create a volunteering 'brand' to ensure that there is clear and accessible information on what volunteering is, what opportunities are available and how to get involved

- Ensure a variety of interesting and exciting opportunities are available and individuals are matched to the most suitable role (dependent on their interest, location and need)
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided for volunteers (e.g. induction, mentoring & on-going training)
- 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)
- Work with partners and Derby City Council to provide targeted support to enable the engagement of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups into volunteering opportunities
- Ensure that all volunteers have the opportunity to develop greater skills, and are exposed to positive experiences, assisting them to be work ready
- Encourage personal development, such as self-confidence, improved mental health, physical well-being and sense of pride, belonging and achievement
- Promote opportunities to volunteer within linked organisations (e.g. Derby City Council and Partners such as YMCA, Sinfon Community Centre, DACP, BrambleBrook Community Centre, etc.)
- Using our ClearView customer engagement IT system, capture and evidence the 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 the press and Derby Homes News publications
- Recognise and celebrate volunteers in the community
- Improve the capacity of staff within Derby Homes to involve volunteers in their service delivery areas
- Provide, support and training to Derby Homes staff who will be working with volunteers
- Create a Volunteer Networking Group to promote best practice of involving volunteers for Derby Homes

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

We will track our progress through timely reports to our Operational Board and, in time, our Volunteer Network Group.