Case study: Team volunteering – Berwickshire Housing Association and Berwickshire Swap

Context

Team volunteering is a common form of employer-supported volunteering (ESV), where groups of employees take part in activities together for a day or short period. At **Berwickshire Housing Association**, employees supported **Berwickshire Swap** via team volunteering days.

Volunteering activity

In February 2025, Berwickshire Housing Association hosted an in-house sorting day at their offices, with staff able to participate for a half-day or full-day, during which Berwickshire Swap brought over items for sorting. Berwickshire Swap is a charity that aims to help families save money whilst creating a circular community by the reusing of children's clothes, toys and baby items at swap events and via emergency parcel referral service.

During these sessions, the team sorted:

- 17 large boxes into 35 bundles of seven days' worth of baby clothes
- 4 bags for recycling
- 2 boxes of unisex clothes for upcoming swap events
- A few special items for resale online, with proceeds returned to the charity

The event was so successful, it was repeated in May 2025. This time, members of the befriending service were also involved, creating opportunities for direct engagement with the people the organisation supports.

Impact

For employees

Employees reported satisfaction from supporting a local cause and enjoyed seeing tangible results from their contributions. Participating also offered opportunities to engage directly with service users and connect with colleagues in a shared activity.

For Berwickshire Housing Association

The Housing Association strengthened its community ties, supported employee engagement and demonstrated its commitment to employee wellbeing.

For Berwickshire Swap

The charity benefitted from employee enthusiasm and efforts, which led to the quick sorting of a large amount of donations that otherwise would have taken a long time.

Key learning

Key insights from the Berwickshire Housing Association's experience with managing ESV include:

- **Promote volunteering internally:** regular communications about ESV and inclusion of ESV in employee benefits packages encourages participation and supports recruitment.
- **Combine staff and service users:** involving service users can add a meaningful dimension to the ESV experience.
- **Be flexible with participation levels:** offering multiple ways to engage allows more staff to fit ESV around existing commitments and take part.

Knowledge Gateway

The Knowledge Gateway is created and led by **Volunteer Scotland**

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This is a regularly reviewed resource. If you have any suggested updates, please email Volunteer Scotland at **hello@volunteerscotland.org.uk**