Employer-supported volunteering co-design workshop plan

For employers and volunteer-involving organisations

Bringing together employee volunteers, employer representatives and volunteer-involving organisation staff for a co-design workshop can help shape bespoke volunteering experiences, new volunteering formats and shared partnership priorities. Below is a draft workshop plan for an ESV co-design workshop.

This resource has been created as part of **Scotland's Employer-Supported Volunteering Framework**.

Key workshop information

Purpose: To bring together employer, volunteer-involving organisation (VIO) and employees to collaboratively design a volunteering day that is engaging, feasible and mutually beneficial.

Duration: 2 hours (in-person or online)

Participants:

- Employer representative
- VIO representative
- External facilitator (optional – can be co-facilitated by employer and VIO)
- Employee volunteers

Outcomes: By the end of the session, participants will:

- Understand the employer's ESV programme and how they can use their ESV days.
- Learn about the VIO's mission, community impact and volunteering opportunities.
- Explore what makes a great volunteering experience.
- Co-design one or more realistic volunteering day concepts that align with shared goals, available resources and constraints (time, budget, capacity).
- Agree next steps for refining and delivering the chosen idea.

Outputs: By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Created concepts for ESV team volunteering days.
- Chosen an ESV team volunteering day to pilot.
- Given insights into what motivates and matters to them.

Workshop overview

When	What	Why	Materials
0:00 – 0:15	• Welcome and introductions	• Set tone, build rapport and explain goals of session	• PPT slides • Name badges • Pens
0:15 – 0:25	• Overview of employer's ESV programme	• Provide context of how employees can volunteer, as well as expectations and support available	• PPT slides
0:25 – 0:35	• Introduction to VIO partner	• Share info about the VIO's mission and volunteer programme and needs	• PPT slides • Short interactive activity?
0:35 – 0:55	• Group discussion: W hat makes a great volunteering experience?	• Build empathy and common understanding	• Miro board, Mentimet er or flipcharts
0:55 – 1:05	• Break	• Offer a screen and/or comfort break	• Tea / coffee?
1:05 – 1:40	• Co-design exercise: create a volunteering day	• Collaboratively design volunteering options	• PPT slides • Design your own ESV day template
1:40 – 1:55	• Reflection and idea refinement	• Review, test and prioritise feasible options	• Miro board, Mentimet er or flipcharts and sticky notes
1:55 – 2:00	• Next steps	• Confirm next steps and timelines	• PPT slides

Detailed session plan

Welcome and introductions (15 mins) - facilitator leads or employer and VIO co-lead

- Brief introduction to purpose of workshop
- Quick round of introductions: name, role and how you feel today
- Outline the agenda and what will be achieved today
- Emphasise principles of co-design: equality of voice, creativity, respect and curiosity

Overview of employer's ESV programme (10 mins) - employer leads

- Commitment to ESV and how it fits within their values
- Overview of current ESV programme:
    - Approach: signposting, individual opportunities, team days, etc
    - How to get involved: sign-up platforms, manager approval, internal champions, etc
    - Support available: time off, funding, logistics, etc
    - Examples of past volunteering days, including reflections on what worked and what could be improved

Introduction to VIO partner (10 mins) – VIO leads

- Mission and key focus areas of the organisation
- Overview of their volunteer programme, e.g. regular roles, skills-based volunteering, one-off events
- What makes volunteering meaningful for the organisation
- The realities / challenges of hosting groups
- Typical constraints (supervision capacity, materials, space, safeguarding, insurance, etc)
- Possible volunteer activities

Group discussion (20 mins)

- In pairs, discuss:
    - What makes a great volunteering experience?
    - What would encourage you to participate?
    - What may prevent you or hold you back from participating?
    - Anything in particular you want to do or see whilst there?
- Pairs share highlights back to group; facilitator captures thoughts via Mentimeter, Miro or flipchart

Break (10 mins)

Co-design exercise: create a volunteering day (35 mins)

- In small groups (3-5 people, including 1 VIO rep per group, if possible):
    - Brainstorm: generate ideas for possible activities (10 mins)
        - How might our team's skills or energy be most useful?
        - What's something new that we want to try together?
        - What could make the day inclusive for all employees?
    - Reality check: introduce real-world constraints and parameters (10 mins)
        - Time
        - Budget
        - Capacity
        - Safety and supervision requirements
        - Accessibility considerations
    - Design your own ESV day: fill out a simple template (15 mins)
        - Name / theme of volunteering day
        - Objective / impact (for volunteers and community)
        - Tasks or activities
        - Resources and budget needs
        - Risks and barriers

Reflection and idea refinement (15 mins)

- Groups present their draft ideas informally (2-3 minutes per group)
- Participants given time to walk around (if in-person) or scroll through ideas (if online), leave comments and reactions on:
    - Feasibility
    - Impact
    - Fun / engagement
- Facilitator brings the group to a vote via Mentimeter if a top idea isn't evident; notes any emerging patterns

Next steps (5 mins)

- Facilitator confirms chosen draft ESV plan with group, with the caveat that organisations may need sign-off from higher-ups / other constraints may arise.
- Facilitator, employer and VIO will go away and reflect and plan for the follow-on ESV day.
- Employer will communicate final details of volunteer day to staff.
- Participants fill out feedback forms.

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**