

Volunteering Support Scheme Policy

Accessibility

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Equality Statement

Vita Health Group aims to develop and implement policies and procedures that equitably meet the diverse needs of our service users, colleagues, and the wider population. We acknowledge and value difference and are committed to anti-discriminatory practices considering the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

VHG conducts equality impact assessments on all organisational policies and services, ensuring consideration of protected groups' differing needs. VHG aims to create a safe and inclusive environment for all and therefore this document has been assessed to ensure that it does not discriminate. Should you wish to see a copy of the relevant Equality Impact Assessment please contact governance@vhg.co.uk.

Document Control

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1. Introduction

Vita Health Group (VHG) recognises the importance of volunteering, due to its potential positive impact on both its colleagues and the wider community.

Volunteering enables individuals or groups, to give up their time to undertake activities that provide a benefit to others. This can also contribute to the volunteer's own wellbeing and sense of purpose, while also amplifying the organisations social impact and reinforcing its sustainability objectives.

VHG will endeavour to support colleagues to make their own volunteering commitments, by providing access to paid leave for colleagues to engage in suitable activities via a Volunteering Support Scheme (VSS).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employed colleagues working within VHG.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define VHG's policy on supporting colleague volunteering opportunities. The policy aims to inform colleagues of volunteering leave entitlements and the process for accessing the VSS.

4. Key Definitions

4.1 Volunteering

Volunteering is when an individual gives up their time to do something of benefit to others, excluding friends or relatives.

Volunteering is unpaid and can be formally or informally arranged. It may be arranged via organisations or directly with communities.

Volunteering should always be a free choice made by the individual giving up their time and will not be influenced by VHG.

4.2 Suitable Activities

Suitable activities are those which meet the volunteering definition and do not represent a conflict of interest.



4.3 Conflict of Interest

Any activity that is not aligned with VHG's values would be considered a conflict of interest. This might include but not be limited to an activity that by association would bring the VHG into disrepute or cause reputational harm.

5. Duties and Responsibilities

5.1 Executive Management Team (EMT)

The EMT have overall accountability for ensuring that all VHG policies comply with all legal, statutory, and good practice guidance requirements.

5.2 Governance & Quality Team

Governance Team is responsible for ratification of any new versions of this policy.

5.3 Volunteering Policy Working Group (VPWG) & Sustainability Working Group (SWG)

The VPWG and SWG have responsibility for the development and review of the Policy, its implementation and subsequent evaluation of its roll out and impact.

5.4 Human Resources (HR)

HR are responsible for being familiar with the policy and supporting elements of the process they are accountable for.

5.5 Line Manager

Line Managers are responsible for being familiar with the policy, the process in relation to the management of volunteering applications and the management of the operational impact of colleague absences due to volunteering leave.

Managers are expected to be supportive of colleague volunteering requests and administer the VSS Policy in a manner consistent with VHG values.

5.6 Colleagues

Colleagues will be responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the VSS Policy and application process.

Colleagues should discuss applications for volunteering support with their line-managers well in advance of the event and to use the policy in a manner consistent with VHG values.



6. The Volunteering Support Scheme

6.1 Time Allowance

VHG will provide a volunteering allowance of up to 1 day paid leave (pro-rated) on an annual basis for each colleague to undertake suitable activities of their choice.

This allowance will run from January to December each year.

Colleagues are not able to move any remaining allowance into future years.

The allowance cannot be used simultaneously with any other form of leave.

Allowed time should ideally be taken as a ½ or full day, however all reasonable requests for allocating time will be considered if they are a minimum of 30min slots.

The time allowance does not cover travel time.

Volunteering Activities

Colleagues can undertake any activity of their choosing if it meets the definition of volunteering and does not represent a conflict of interest. See definitions.

Requests, Approvals, and Refusals.

Requests to undertake volunteering and access the VSS must be made in good time and in line with the VSS policy and process.

Requests to undertake volunteering will not be unreasonably refused but time off is subject to it not being detrimental to service continuity or meeting SLAs.

Attendance

Sickness or other absences during a volunteering day should be reported in usual way, in line with local policies and procedures.

Expenses

VHG will not be liable for any additional cost's colleagues incur whilst undertaking volunteering activities. This includes but is not limited to travel costs, security checks or training.

Health & Safety

Volunteers are expected to carry out the volunteering activity in accordance with any specific safety instruction that they will have received from the volunteering organiser.

This will include an expectation to dress suitably for the weather conditions, to utilise any safety equipment provided and follow all instructions. Volunteers should always ensure their own safety.



It is to be understood that the volunteering may require a moderate level of fitness and maybe physically testing therefore there could be a chance of injury.

Volunteers are to consider any medical condition which might have the effect of making it more likely that they may be involved in an incident which could result in injury to themselves or others.

Volunteers are to acknowledge that they are responsible for their own safety (and the safety of their possessions) when carrying out the volunteering.

In the unlikely event of an accident, or loss or damage to personal effects, VHG will not be liable for any direct or indirect loss, damage or injury arising from or in connection with the volunteering and all and any claims against the Company are waived in this respect.

Suitability Checks

Certain volunteer activities may require contact with vulnerable individuals, whether adults or children. In these cases, volunteering organisations may require volunteers have appropriate checks in place e.g., DBS. It is the responsibility of the volunteering organisation and colleague to identify if these checks are needed, arrange them, and settle any associated costs independent of VHG.

Conflicts of Interest

Colleagues and line managers are expected to consider potential conflicts of interest in volunteering activity choices. Colleagues are free to choose their own activities, however, are expected to commit to activities that are in line with VHG values.

Any activities that would be deemed to not be aligned with company values would not be supported via the VSS.

Feedback Questionnaire

On completing a volunteering activity, you will be expected to complete a short questionnaire which will be emailed to you. This will include questions about your experience and its impact, alongside a request to provide evidence of the volunteering activity which may be used to promote the scheme such as a photo, certificate or letter of thanks.

7. Eligibility

Employed colleagues are eligible to access the VSS once they have completed their probationary period.

This includes anyone who might be considered a “leaver”, if the volunteering activity and associated follow up documentation is completed 10 working days prior to their final working day. Applications made without adequate notice will be declined.

Those working in the organisation on a self-employed or contractor basis are not eligible to access the VSS, as this scheme would be considered an employee benefit.



8. Procedure and / or Process

Step 1

Volunteering application e-form [found on intranet HR pages – see appendix 1] completed in full by individual and submitted to line manager – Prior discussion with line manager encouraged

Step 2

Line manager to:

- Authorise – application form completed in full, allowance remaining, volunteering activity in line with policy, time off has a manageable impact on service (inc. adequate notice provided)
- Or Reject – incomplete application, activities not in line with volunteering policy – i.e., would not constitute volunteering, time off would have unreasonable impact on service
- Rejection does not preclude applicant from future (re)application
- Line manager to add any supporting information received to individuals People Log file

Step 3

HR log as event in People Log

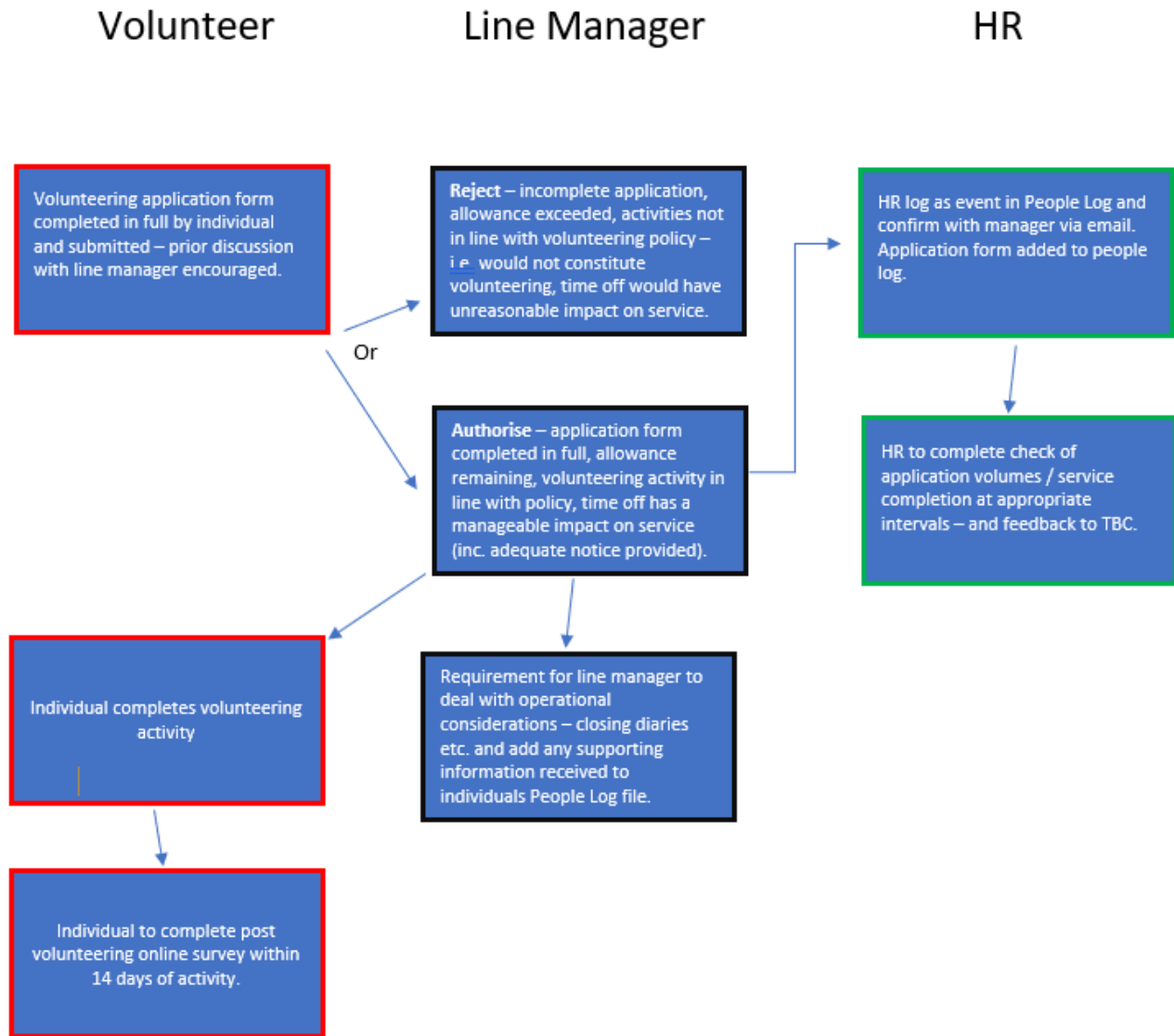
1. HR store application form in “Volunteering Folder” on HR drive
2. HR confirm booking with line manager – using template email that outlines
 - Booking complete
 - Requirement for line manager to deal with operational considerations – such as closing diaries.
 - Requirement for manager to share post volunteering survey [insert link] with individual- link provided

Step 4

Individual to complete volunteering activity and submit post volunteering online survey within 14 days

1. HR to complete check of application volumes / service completion at appropriate intervals – and feedback to TBC





9. Evaluation

On completion of the volunteering activity the colleague will be asked to submit a feedback survey within 14 days.

Failure to complete the survey may preclude colleagues from accessing the VSS later.

10. Mental Capacity

Mental capacity does not apply as this is a non-clinical policy.



11. Training

There are no specific training requirements associated with this policy/procedure.

If training is required to undertake the chosen volunteering activity this must be arranged by the volunteering organisation and colleague independent of VHG.

12. Opportunities

Volunteering opportunities can be identified via contacting charities, accessing volunteering data bases or by engaging with local community groups, some useful links are outlined below.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/volunteer>
- <https://doit.life/volunteer>
- <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer>
- <https://volunteermatters.org.uk/>

13. Implementation

There is a potential and expected additional financial impact resultant from the development and implementation of this policy. This has been considered and modelled in conjunction with the finance team.

All colleagues will be made aware of updates regarding the introduction and/or amendment to this policy through:

- All company communication (email or video update)
- Yammer announcement
- Service updates promoted by manager mail group communications

14. Monitoring and Audit

The Directors of the Company have overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is fair and meets the legislative requirements in force. They also reserve the right to amend or withdraw (where legally acceptable) at any time. Any query regarding this policy should be made to Human Resources. This policy is non-contractual and will be reviewed periodically.

15. Consultation

This policy was agreed in consultation with the VPWG, SWG, HR, Finance, Quality Review Group and EMT.

16. References

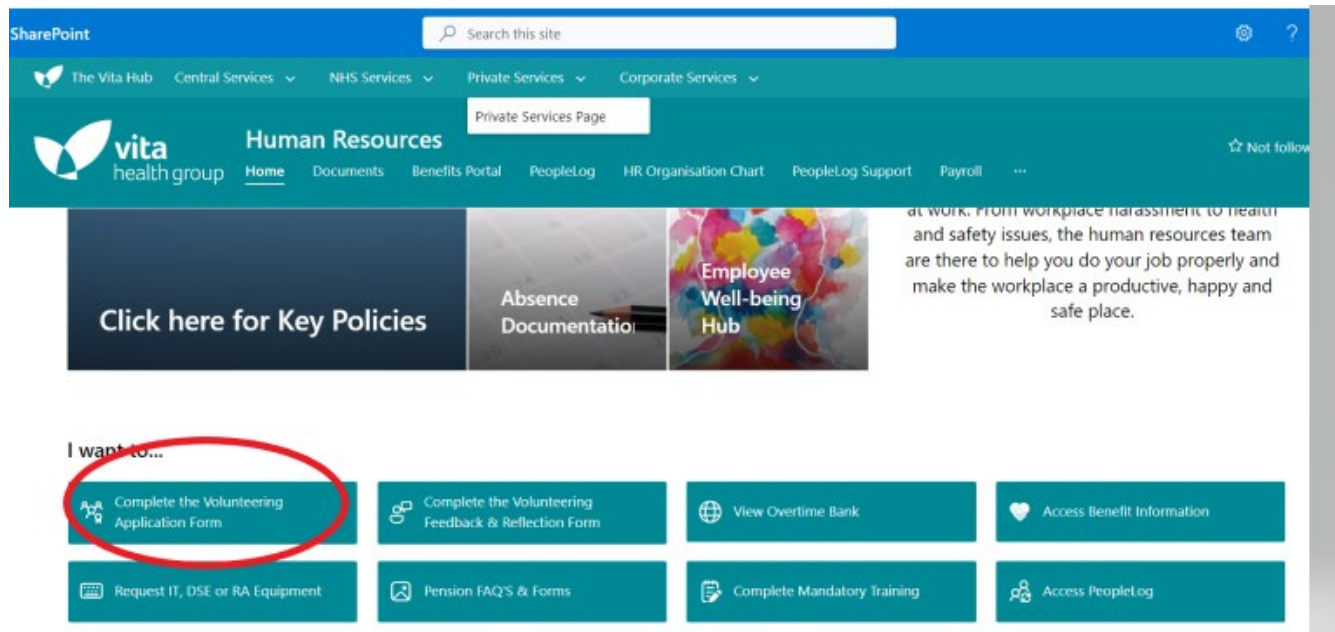
- <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/understanding-volunteering/what-is-volunteering/#/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/volunteer>



- <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/strategy/volunteering/employer-supported-factsheet#gref>

17. Appendices

Appendix 1 – VSS Application Form



See link to electronic form: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=5w-DPswPukGYDTHegM4M1OyQS_pnVqdFhRreHPvZDZtUMVZEQlpDR1hONVJQQk1LOFYwSFFBN1I4My4u

Appendix 2 - Volunteering Checklist

This checklist is to help with what to consider before performing volunteering activities.

Consider the following when volunteering	Yes/No/N/A
a) Do you have the name and telephone number for your main contact within the organisation?	
b) Do you have a copy of the organisation's employer and/or public liability insurance?	
c) Note: Liability insurances help to pay compensation if an employee or a member of the public is injured.	
d) Do you have a copy of the organisations risk assessment?	
e) Note: A risk assessment ensures all risks associated with an activity or location have been considered and removed or reduced as much as possible to make the activity safer. You	



must comply with any requirements detailed on a Risk Assessment. If you need to complete a risk assessment in the absence of an organisations one and you require further support, there is risk assessment training available on The Knowledge.	
f) Do you have a copy of the organisations Safeguarding Policy?	
g) Note: Safeguarding vulnerable adults and young people is essential for the organisations we volunteer for. You must check with those organisations what their safeguarding policy is and comply with any requirements.	
h) Is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required and provided, such as suitable gloves, safety spectacles, footwear etc.?	
i) Does the organisation have trained First Aiders, an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and a First Aid Kit?	
j) Note: Ensure you have a fully charged mobile with you in case of a medical emergency.	
k) Do you have a copy of the organisations Emergency Evacuation Plan?	
l) Does the organization have welfare facilities, such as toilets, kitchen?	
m) Do you have the name and telephone number of the person you will report to on the day?	
n) Do you have all the information you need, including address, start time and any additional induction information?	
o) Note: Consider any further safety considerations due to the location and weather. Ensure you are wearing suitable clothing and shoes. Consider using suncream (if required) and taking water to stay hydrated.	

Appendix 3 – Guide to checking volunteering allowance (for managers)

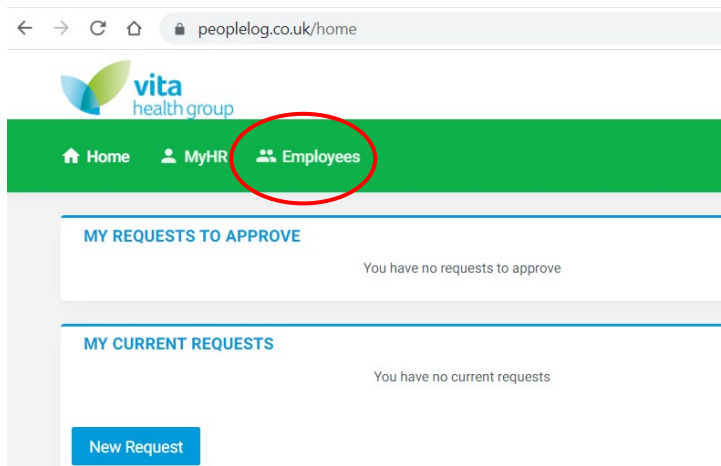
Step 1

- Log into People Log

Step 2

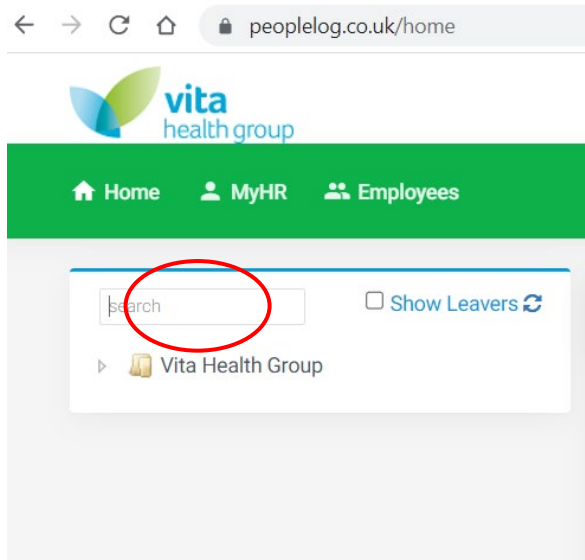
- Click on the “employees” tab at the top left of the home page.





Step 3

- Search for the relevant employee using the search function, then double click on the name.



Step 4

- Select the “absence” then “events” tabs and look for any recorded volunteering time.
- Illustrated below where the Test account has had their volunteering day booked in by HR for the 30th of December 2022.



MS T TEST(300000)

Summary

Personal

Contract

Absence

Pay

Development

Other

Documents

Events

Work Plan

Entitlement

Defaults

Medical

Vaccination

DETAILS

Start Date

30/12/2022

Full

End Date

30/12/2022

Full

Type

Volunteering

Lost Days

0

Lost Hours

0

HISTORY

Show 10 entries

Excel

Start Date	End Date	Lost Days	Type
30/12/2022	30/12/2022	0	Volunteering

18. End

