

Skills-based volunteering: a  
**Win / Win / Win**

**Executive  
summary**



**LLOYDS BANK  
FOUNDATION**  
England & Wales



# Executive summary

As a charitable foundation our focus is to strengthen small and local charities addressing some of society's most complex issues such as homelessness, domestic abuse and addiction. These frontline charities play a critical role within our communities, building trusting, long lasting relationships with people helping them to rebuild their lives, and find safety, fulfilment and happiness. We support small and local charities through funding and providing organisational development support which includes skills based volunteering from Lloyds Banking Group employees.

## Definition



**Skills based volunteering** is a form of volunteering where people use professional skills such as HR, marketing, or finance on a voluntary basis to help a nonprofit organisation. This can take the shape of one off tasks or projects or ongoing longer term support.

Lloyds Bank Foundation delivers a range of skills based volunteering programmes for the charities it supports accommodating different preferences, opportunities, and commitments. These include individual and group sessions where volunteers and charities can work through challenges together, short or longer term one to one support where volunteers provide mentoring, coaching, becoming trustees and sharing other professional skills.

## The win, win, win of skills based volunteering

Over ten years of delivering skills based volunteering programmes, we've seen the value they add to all those involved. We want to share our learning from a decade of delivering skilled volunteering programmes so that other organisations can take up skilled volunteering – be it volunteers, employers or charities. Building on this experience we've also conducted one to one interviews, surveys and focus groups with volunteers and charities participating in skills based volunteering and captured the findings in this report. From our research we've identified three distinct wins to skilled volunteering:

### Win for the charity

*“If we were to convert it to how much we would have paid for that information, I don't think we'll be able to afford it. And it has been a very great experience for me, personally, because I see things differently”*

Charity

- ✓ **Gaining knowledge**, skills and experience for free that can often be hard to access elsewhere or unaffordable for a small charity. Particularly valuable when volunteers bring contextual knowledge from other sectors.
- ✓ **Opening up networks** by connecting with others or building new networks outside of the direct volunteering relationship. These could be other volunteers, useful contacts or businesses, all of whom could add further benefits to charities.
- ✓ **Unlocking new opportunities** for longer term commitment or ongoing volunteering by making it possible for volunteers to engage in one off or short term volunteering first. Similarly, being able to reach a wider pool of volunteers through remote opportunities.
- ✓ **Building confidence and resilience** in charity staff as well as the assurance to approach other businesses and find, tailor and develop other partnership opportunities.
- ✓ Skills based volunteering helps to strengthen a charity's **operations, systems and processes** which in turn puts charities in a stronger position to keep showing up and supporting people facing complex issues.



- ✔ With the charity sector facing higher demands for support but greater pressures on its resources, the **additional and specific value** that skilled volunteers can offer is even more needed, particularly when funds raised are focused on frontline services, yet strong systems and processes aid their effectiveness and efficiency.

## Win for the volunteer

*[[ [Volunteering] gave me experience and exposure to new skills and to build my network. It also added value to my CV when applying for new roles. It made me appreciate that some of the skills I had which I probably took for granted were appreciated and utilised on a wider basis than in banking.*

Volunteer

- ✔ The volunteers themselves **gain new skills** or deepen, test and embed existing ones, thus developing professionally and building their CV.
- ✔ Volunteers' **confidence grew** through helping another organisation in a different environment and context.
- ✔ Volunteering contributed to a **greater sense of fulfilment** by supporting a cause or community they care about or have a personal connection to whether through lived experience, family connection, or location. Volunteering also enhanced pride in a place of work that was facilitating and enabling such opportunities.
- ✔ Volunteers were able to **connect with others** in their organisation with whom they previously had no contact with, growing their professional networks.
- ✔ Volunteering enabled people to gain a **better understanding of societal issues** as well as how small charities operate, their strengths and the challenges they face.



## Win for the business

*/// Proud, hugely proud [about the business' volunteering initiatives]. I have supported other [charities] and then had the matched giving and the volunteering hours as well. And when you hear other organisations don't do that, it just makes me even more proud of what we do*

Volunteer

- ✓ Skilled volunteering programmes contribute to **staff learning and development** directly impacting the strength and wellbeing of a workforce, and building staff connections and relationships.
- ✓ The social value added through volunteering programmes has a direct positive impact on a **business's reputation**.
- ✓ Enabling volunteers to gain a better understanding of societal issues can lead to **greater support for customers** who may themselves face the same issues.
- ✓ Stronger **employee engagement** due to an alignment in values, personal fulfilment and pride felt by staff volunteers.



Lorella Medici, CEO, Arty Folks a mental health charity in Coventry



## Recommendations

Through this research and a decade of delivering skilled volunteering programmes and 2,800 volunteering opportunities, we've captured six key lessons as to what we believe best enables everyone involved to gain from skills based volunteering.

- 1. Choice and variety matter** for volunteers and charities. Whether it's one off or ongoing volunteering, individual or group initiatives or the option of remote and online volunteering opportunities, variety enables more volunteers to engage. Skills based volunteering can often generate this wider range of opportunities more than traditional physical volunteering which is typically on a specific day and in a fixed location.
- 2. Seeking out partnerships with small charities** can maximise the impact for the charity and volunteer. Smaller teams and income streams mean volunteers can have a much greater impact, often strengthening their own skills by applying them in more challenging contexts.
- 3. Volunteers from businesses may need support in translating their skills** to a different sector. This can be achieved through information sharing, onboarding and connecting this as part of staff learning and development opportunities – this helps both parties realise that they have more to offer and gain than they perhaps initially thought.
- 4. Support for volunteering should come from leadership and be embedded in an organisation's culture.** This takes the form of **role modelling from senior leaders**, line managers and peers as well as an organisational wide commitment.
- 5. Investing in the partnership** can generate longer-term relationships, with many volunteering partnerships extending beyond the initial activity. This can be achieved by understanding motivations, setting expectations, matching commitments and giving both parties time to define the relationship and opportunities.
- 6. Identifying charity needs** and where volunteers can have the biggest impact is important. This includes businesses identifying the skills their employees have and co-creating volunteering programmes that allow staff to use and refine these skills.

This winning formula outlining the six key recommendations that enable charities, volunteers and businesses to benefit from skills based volunteering and the value each group gains is summarised in the diagram below:

## Win / Win / Win

### Charity wins

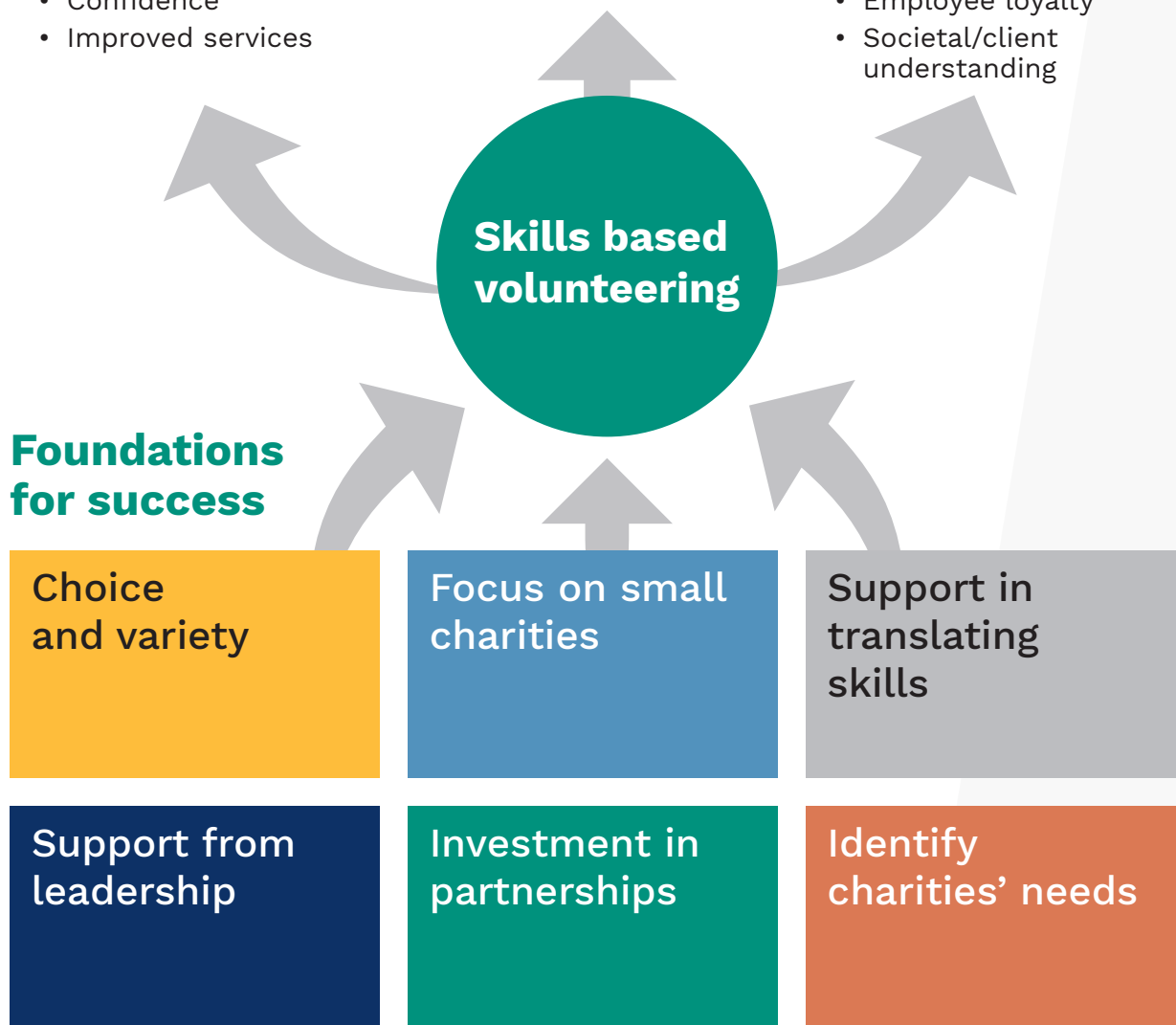
- Affordable skills
- Professional networks
- Confidence
- Improved services

### Volunteer wins

- New and refined skills
- Confidence
- Fulfilment and connection
- Professional networks

### Business wins

- Staff development
- Business reputation
- Employee loyalty
- Societal/client understanding





**//** *In my role as a trustee I am able to play a part in shaping the development of Ella's and supporting their leadership team. Along with the other trustees, I can be a sounding board for any ideas they may have and help drive the organisation forward.*

Charlotte Davis



Charlotte Davis, Manager at Lloyds Banking Group and Trustee of Ella's, a charity working with survivors of modern slavery and sexual exploitation



[lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk](https://lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk)  
[enquiries@lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk)

Society Building  
8 All Saints Street  
London N1 9RL

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No. 327114

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England and Wales Company No. 1971242

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