

Chapter 17

Social and Community Commitment



Social welfare is at the core of DWP business but social responsibility and community involvement is willingly demonstrated by many staff in their own time and by attendance on official volunteering placements arranged through Community 5000.

Community 5000 is particularly rewarding if it has some direct link to the type of day job

people are involved in. Many placements and events were organised to ensure the experience was maximised in this way.

Government mandate

- Encourage staff to take an active role in volunteering in the community.

At a glance...

- Community 5000 (volunteering scheme) introduced across DWP.
- Public and Community Leave available for certain voluntary posts.
- Regular involvement with local and national charities.

Fun Day for Pensioners



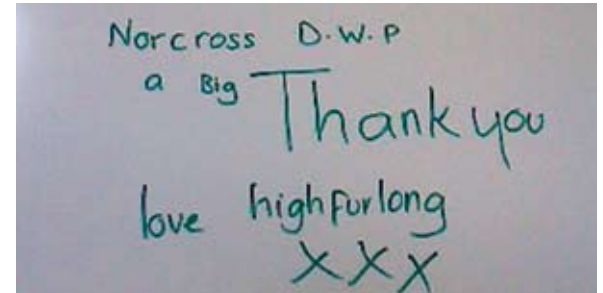
10 staff from Pensions Business Design Directorate, organised a fun day for pensioners at the Richmond Hill Community Centre,

Leeds. To supplement favourite activities like bingo and raffles, the team also provided potted plants to brighten residents homes. They raised the funds for these through various activities including dress down days, cake sales and securing donations from local businesses. One of the organisers captured the feelings of all participants – “This is a great scheme for people to get to know more about our customers and learn how to support them better.”

In touch with people

168 staff from the Shared Services area has taken the opportunity to work in Community 5000 placements. There is no doubt that this scheme is as much about education and skills development for staff of all grades, as it is about investing in the community and society, demonstrated by these participants comments:

- "...a sense of achievement that I was actually doing something to help and make a difference."
(Headway, Cardiff – supporting people with acquired brain injuries)
- "...gave me a chance to understand the struggles facing people trying to get into work and how hard they worked to achieve their goals."
(Aspire – supported work for vulnerable or marginalized people)
- "...helping and listening to them was not something they expected anyone from a government department to do."
(Swinton Care of the Elderly)
- "...it provides a reminder of the important place and part that the Department has in the community."



Practice what you preach

Developing and sharing skills about recycling, composting and biodiversity were only a few of the many benefits for the DWP sustainable development team, who worked for the day at Newlathes Junior School Wildlife Garden, Leeds. The garden is a valuable resource to the school and other community groups. Six team members sited bins for food waste, to the enthusiastic, if not unexpected chanting

of 'com-post-bins!' from excited children. They worked hard making pathways safe, clearing invasive species to let native plants thrive and cleaning out two stagnating ponds to help frog and newt colonies survive. The children and teaching staff were very interested to learn about what the team were doing and had intellectual chats over school lunch!

There are so many willing fund raisers in the Department that it is impossible to track their activity or the huge amount of money they raise each year both in and out of work. They demonstrate caring qualities that the Department is proud to acknowledge. Activities range from sedate cake sales and raffles, to extreme bungee jumps and beyond, supporting a myriad of good causes.

Children in Need

The Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance Helpline was transformed into a BBC call centre for Children in Need. The lines were manned by a mixture of DWP staff, their friends and family, in fancy dress. Amidst the party atmosphere 5368 phone calls were taken, raising a total of £158,330 – the centre’s highest ever figure.

George’s Triple Challenge



The Pensions Service feel great pride in George, from Motherwell Pension Centre. George undertook a “Triple Challenge” for charity, running a half-marathon, performing a sky dive and then as an added bonus shaved his head! In total he raised £800 through sponsorship for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Breast Talk UK



The ladies of Birmingham pension centre actively supported ‘Breast talk UK’ – a charity supplying bras to women of all ages, in this country and

overseas to improve breast health. In some countries a bra can cost more than a meal for a whole family so Birmingham’s ladies donated 298 bras and are delighted to have helped through their unusual approach to reusing and recycling.

