



# TOOLKIT 2

a project of  
**VOLUNTARY IMPACT**  
BUCKS

## Make a Difference Day

*With thanks to  
Guinness Midsummer Housing.*

### What is it?

Make a Difference (MAD) days are an initiative developed by CSV (Community Service Volunteers) to highlight the amazing impact you can all make by giving the simple gift of time, skills or muscle power.

A Make a Difference day is an opportunity for us all to take part in a one-day project to give something back to our local community, as well as possibly learn some new skills or take part in something we would normally not get the opportunity to do. It gives colleagues who are mainly office based an opportunity to get out and see other areas of work and have a direct impact in improving the local community.

### Why take part?

FOR EXAMPLE:

- To meet strategic objectives:
  - Excellence in customer service – by building positive relationships.

- A community to be proud of – by enhancing local schemes and areas.
- A great place to work – the opportunity to do something different, develop new skills and get to know colleagues better.
- To encourage staff to work together/team building.
- Opportunity for staff to work with local communities, suppliers and local businesses.
- To focus on sustainability.
- Positive promotion of the company.
- Gives individuals the chance to try a new role, such as team leadership.

### What's going to happen next?

- You need to be clear who is going to be in the team.
- The team need to meet to discuss how to start the project.

Everyone in the team should research some possible projects prior to the team meeting or have a think about the type of projects they would like to take part in. The overall project manager may have a list of projects from which you could select one if you would prefer to do so.

## How to get started

### How to start

- Do some research into possible projects in the area or ask Volunteer Workout and visit the site to gather information and examples:-
  - Transform wasteland into a play area/sensory garden.
  - Re-vamp the gardens of a hospital, school or care home.
  - Organise a recycling collection.
  - Decorate a homeless shelter, community centre, classroom or care home.
  - Paint a mural to brighten up a hospital, nursery or school.
  - Organise some entertainment at a local day centre.
  - Teach a skill or put on a workshop for a local community group.
  - Fill boxes of useful items for a homeless shelter or women's refuge.
- Arrange a team meeting.

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## Continued

### Suggested agenda items for your first meeting

- Designating roles e.g. Project Manager, Budget Manager, First Aider, Team Well-being Officer (organising lunch & tea/coffee), Donations Co-ordinator, PR Manager, Health and Safety, Project Administrator etc.
- Choose your project.
- Put together plan of how to find out more about the project – visit the site as quickly as possible.
- Find out about skills which are already in the team.
- Create an action plan and project plan.
- Agree future meeting dates.
- Agree agenda items for next meeting.

- It might be helpful if each team prepares a short presentation on their project and its achievements. Think about the creative different ways in which you could do this (PowerPoint, DVD, newsletter etc).
- Ensure that all the loose ends are tied up – your budget balances, any equipment borrowed has been returned, arrangements are in place to finish any parts of the project that weren't completed on the day.
- Revisit the project after 3 months and ask again what difference the project has made to the local community. Again, these will make great testimonials and take some more pictures! Ensure that all this evidence is collated and passed on to the overall Project Manager for your MAD day.

## After the day is over

- It is important to write and say thank you to anyone who has helped or contributed to the project. This should include anyone at your project location, anyone who gave donations, and any additional volunteers. At the same time ask them for their feedback and any testimonials they may be able to give you to help you evaluate your project.
- Hold a de-brief meeting for the whole team within two weeks of the project. Discuss what went well, what you could have improved and what you would do differently if you were to do it again. Be honest and constructive. Look at the whole process – from deciding on the project to tidying up at the end of the day.

## Volunteering in the future

If you have been inspired by your involvement in this Make a Difference project there are many opportunities, nationwide, for volunteering.

If you can spare as little as 2 hours a month there will be a volunteer placement to suit you.

Contact your local Volunteer Centre or register an interest on [www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org)

Whether you want to improve your CV with new skills, meet new people or just feel good about yourself, a volunteer opportunity could change your life for the better.

## Why volunteer?

### Build your confidence

Many volunteers encounter a variety of new challenges when they begin giving time in their communities. Sharing new experiences with new people, they can learn new skills that can give them confidence to face challenges in other areas of their lives.

### Introduce you to new friends

There's no better place to meet like minded individuals than through volunteering for a campaign or cause you believe in. Working together to bring about a change is a great way to bond with others and become part of a community that can stay in touch long after your work is done. Plus, you could meet people from a diverse range of backgrounds – people you may never come across in your daily life.

### Create more fun in your life

Many volunteers are surprised at how much fun it can be to help others. Not every volunteer experience is the same, but by finding an opportunity that matches your interests, you have a good chance of having fun while giving time.

