

**A Guide to making use of pro-bono support in Islington**

1. **Introduction**

This is the first edition of our guide to making use of pro bono support. We intend to add sources of pro bono help that are available in Islington, as we become aware of new sources of help.

Obtaining funds is becoming increasingly difficult for many local voluntary organisation and alternative ways of getting things done, that do not involve a financial transaction, are becoming more important. This can involve people or organisations giving time, skills and knowledge. Common terms used are pro bono help, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and employee volunteering.

Pro bono help is work that would usually be charged for that is done for free or at a reduced cost for the public good. There is [information about using pro-bono help](http://www.vai.org.uk/services/support-for-groups/using-and-finding-pro-bono-help/) on the Voluntary Action Islington web site. This was produced for one of our briefings.

1. **Getting started – some points to consider**

With an increasing number of organisations offering pro bono help it is important to be clear about what you require and how this relates to your organisation’s strategy and service delivery. Ensure that you have a clear brief and expectations about quality and standards of service delivery. Do not simply take what is offered. Be clear what you are asking for and why. Make sure there is a common understanding of the help to be provided.

Remember that there will be benefits for the organisations and individuals providing pro bono help and ensure that these are clear and agreed. Undertaking pro bono work can help build the CV of an individual and the reputation of an organisation. It can provide more varied work and introduce organisations and individuals to new networks, issues, and ways of working.

1. **Developing and sustaining the relationship**

Remember to communicate the success and impact of pro bono help received. Establish regular dialogue and a structure for managing the relationship so that problems can be resolved and support adapted to meeting changing needs. Learn more about the organisation or individual providing help – there may be other changes and developments that can be initiated and supported through the relationship. Remember to communicate your appreciation.

1. **Finding sources of pro-bono help**

There are several ways for organisations to find out about and develop pro bono help. Local businesses, professionals and other voluntary organisations may be able to assist. Trustees, staff and existing volunteers may well have contacts that can assist with meeting your organisation’s needs for professional and technical help and support.

**Voluntary Action Islington** organise regular pro bono advice sessions with partners from the voluntary, statutory and private sectors. Full details can be found in our Events Calendar or by subscribing to our email news group. Pro bono advice is currently provided through: the BIG Alliance; a volunteer from a national charity reviewing funding applications; NatWest Bank advising on trading; and a local employment coach. We have also brokered pro bono coaching to local voluntary sector leaders, provided by a professional local business coach. We encourage stronger links between universities and the local voluntary sector – for example a research project undertaken on a pro bono basis. Voluntary Action Islington and Creative Islington recently organised an event to encourage local social action and creative organisations to share expertise.

[**Businesses in Islington Giving (The BIG Alliance)**](http://www.elba-1.org.uk/what-we-do/the-big-alliance)provide links to larger local businesses offering various forms of pro bono help.

In London, and nationally, there are a range of organisations assisting voluntary organisations to access technical and professional expertise:

[Business in the Community – Pro Help](http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/prohelp) – Access to a network of professional firms committed to making a difference in their community

[Charity Property Help](http://www.rics.org/uk/about-rics/what-we-do/corporate-responsibility/charity-property-help/) – a service from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyor’s providing pro-bono property advice to charities

[Cranfield Trust](http://www.cranfieldtrust.org/) – provide pro bono business expertise to charities and free HR advice and information to charities registered with their HRNet.

[Charity IT Association](http://www.charityitassociation.org.uk/about.php) –an entry point for charities to engage with the pro-bono and low-bono IT partners

[ICAEWvolunteers.com](http://www.icaewvolunteers.com/?utm_source=evolveemail&utm_medium=copylink&utm_content=2015&utm_campaign=NCVOevolve) - provide finance volunteers. They currently have over 2,000 volunteers looking for opportunities and over 1,000 organisations posting roles on the site.

[IT4Communities](http://www.it4communities.org.uk/it4c/home/index.jsp;jsessionid=332708DD30BE20FE15C20150EDA0EE44) - help charities and community organisations to find volunteers to help with IT

[Law Works](https://www.lawworks.org.uk/legal-advice-not-profits) - brokers legal advice for voluntary organisations

[Media Trust](http://www.mediatrust.org/) - connects charities and voluntary organisations with the media

[The National Pro Bono Centre](http://www.nationalprobonocentre.org.uk/) – brokers pro bono legal advice

[Operational Research Society](http://www.theorsociety.com/Pages/Probono/Probono.aspx)- provides pro bono operational research advice to help charities make more effective decisions

[Pimp My Cause](http://www.pimpmycause.org/) – for access to volunteers in the marketing community

[Reach](https://reachskills.org.uk/charities-non-profits) - provide skilled volunteers for charities