

# Investing in Volunteers and BITC CommunityMark



CommunityMark is used by organisations that have Employer Supported Volunteering schemes in place. There isn't a close match between Investing in Volunteers (liV) and CommunityMark, but Volunteering England's new quality standard, liV Employ, has much closer links. Detailed evidence is required to achieve the CommunityMark standard but the assessment process is a 'desk top' exercise. liV and liV Employ engage with organisations directly by enabling them to work over a period of months with a designated liV Assessor. This approach lets Employer Supported Volunteering organisations highlight good practice and have a challenging but positive experience that enhances their community involvement, providing long-term benefits for the organisation, its employees and the local community.

**FAQs about liV and CommunityMark** (go to page 11)

- Who is the standard suitable for?
- Who runs the standard?
- How much does it cost?
- What is the assessment process?

## How do liV Indicators compare to CommunityMark?

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 1</b></p> <p>There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process, which benefits volunteers and the organisation.</p>	<p><b>Business Excellence Section</b></p> <p>B3: How are your employees engaged, developed and thanked within your organisation's community programme?</p>	<p>You should have evidence of how your employees (volunteers) 'are encouraged to get involved in your community programme'. This means your organisation can articulate your reasons for involving volunteers. This should be part of your Community Programme or Business Plan. Also in your volunteering policy or Volunteering Handbook.</p>

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 2</b> The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.</p>	<p><b>Community Excellence Section</b> C1: What are the issues/needs of your community and how have you identified these?</p> <p><b>Business Excellence Section</b> B2: How do you use your organisation's resources for your community activity?</p>	<p>Part of this question in CommunityMark requires you to have an 'understanding of all the wider issues/needs you have identified within your local community.' This will help you to set objectives for your Volunteer Programme which should be regularly reviewed. This evidence will help you towards achieving part of liV Indicator 2.</p> <p>Part of the evidence required for this CommunityMark question links directly to 2.5 of liV indicator 2. This looks at what financial resources you have in place to cover the running of the volunteer programme. Also, that volunteers have the necessary resources and materials to do their work.</p>

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 3</b>  The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community, in accordance with the organisation’s stated aims, and operates procedures.</p>	<p><b>Community Excellence Section</b>  C1: What are the issues/needs of your community and how have you identified these?</p> <p><b>Community Excellence Section</b>  C3: What have been the benefits to your community partner(s) and the wider local community?</p> <p><b>Business Excellence Section</b>  B1: How do the leaders of the business develop, manage and communicate the community programme within the organisation?</p>	<p>When researching this CommunityMark question you should have gathered evidence that will help you to analyse the diversity of the local community compared to your volunteer team (employees).</p> <p>Using your ‘Community Partner Evaluation Survey’ you should have gathered evidence that will help you to analyse the diversity of the local community compared to your volunteer team (employees).</p> <p>Publicity such as newsletters, images and/or descriptions of your organisation should reflect the diversity of the local community.</p>

**Investing in Volunteers (liV)**

**CommunityMark**

**What evidence could you use to support liV?**

**liV Indicator 4**

The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, and which are of value to the volunteers and create an environment where they can develop.

**Business Excellence Section**

B3: How are your employees engaged, developed and thanked within your organisation's community programme?

Using your 'Employee Opinion Survey' you should have gathered evidence that will help to meet liV Indicator 4, particularly 4.4 which looks at how tasks are adapted to suit the needs and interests of individual volunteers.

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 5</b> The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.</p>	<p><b>No Criteria</b></p>	

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 6</b> The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.</p>	<p><b>No criteria</b></p>	

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 7</b> The organisation takes a considered approach to taking up references and official checks which is consistent and equitable for all volunteers, bearing in mind the nature of the work.</p>	<p><b>No criteria</b></p>	

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 8</b> Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel.</p>	<p><b>No criteria</b></p>	

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 9</b> Everybody in the organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.</p>	<p><b>Business Excellence Section</b> B2: How do you use your organisation's resources for your community activity?</p> <p><b>Business Excellence Section</b> B3: How are your employees engaged, developed and thanked within your organisation's community programme?</p>	<p>For your organisation to feed back on the information and learning from your community programme into your business planning process, you will need the views of your volunteers. This should be done in a systematic way through supervision and appraisal.</p> <p>How does your organisation thank employees (volunteers) for their contributions and involvement in community activities? Is appreciation communicated effectively to them, both formally and informally? Also, your 'Employee Opinion Survey' will help you to meet 9.4 of liV Indicator 9 which is about the continuous development of volunteers' skills.</p>

Investing in Volunteers (liV)	CommunityMark	What evidence could you use to support liV?
<p><b>liV Indicator 10</b> The organisation takes account of the varying support needs of volunteers.</p>	<p><b>No criteria</b></p>	

# FAQs about iV and CommunityMark

## What type of organisation or project is the standard suitable for?

### Investing in Volunteers

Suitable for any organisation that involves volunteers. Organisations should be involved in: recruiting, selecting, matching, supporting and retaining volunteers.

### CommunityMark

Suitable for organisations with:

- Less than 250 employees.
- A turnover of less than £34 million (50 million euros) or a balance sheet total of less than £29 million (43 million euros).
- Independent decision making at all levels.

The following types of organisations are eligible, as long as they meet the above criteria:

- for profit companies
- strategic business units of larger companies
- not for profit organisations
- charities
- social enterprises

## Is the standard organisation based or project based?

### Investing in Volunteers

The standard covers the whole organisation. It can be achieved by parts of an organisation so long as they can be seen to be discreet and self managed parts of the whole.

### CommunityMark

The standard covers the whole organisation.

## Who runs the standard?

### Investing in Volunteers

The standard is run by the national Volunteering Development Agencies in England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland. Volunteering England manages the standard in England. The UK Volunteering Forum is the standards Awarding Body.

### CommunityMark

The standard is run by Business in the Community (BITC).

## Who to contact to apply for the standard

### **Investing in Volunteers**

Contact Volunteering England

Tel: 020 7520 8982

[www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk](http://www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk)

On the home page you'll also find links for contacts in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

### **CommunityMark**

Contact: Clare Southwell

National CommunityMark Manager,

Business in the Community,

137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ

Direct Line: 020 7566 8788

Mobile: 07730 898063

Email: [clare.southwell@bitc.org.uk](mailto:clare.southwell@bitc.org.uk)

[www.communitymark.org.uk](http://www.communitymark.org.uk)

## How do organisations access the standard?

### **Investing in Volunteers**

All information is supplied on-line with a password protected section for fully registered organisations. Forms and documents are downloadable word documents. A best practice library with downloadable resources is also available.

### **CommunityMark**

All information is supplied on-line with a password protected section for fully registered organisations. Forms and documents are downloadable Word documents.

## How much does the standard cost?

### Investing in Volunteers

Depends on the size and complexity of your organisation. Prices start at £1000 + VAT for an organisation that has a turnover of less than £1 million per year. The fee includes:

- Subscription to the Investing in Volunteers monthly e-newsletter
- Access to the password protected pages of the website which contains a step-by-step guide, model documents and Best Practice library
- Introductory workshop with your assigned Assessor
- Feedback on self assessment of your organisation against the standard
- An assessment visit – interviews with volunteers, staff and senior managers
- A full written report suggesting areas for further development and highlighting areas of excellent practice
- The UK recognised Investing in Volunteers standard, including plaques and certificates, valid for three years.

### CommunityMark

No cost.

## How much of the standard is accessible for free?

### Investing in Volunteers

The full standard and practices can be downloaded from the home page without payment being made. The best practice library and documents to support an organisation through to achieving the standard are all within password protected pages.

### CommunityMark

The full standard and practices can be downloaded from the website's home page.

## What is the assessment process?

### Investing in Volunteers

1. A Self-Assessment is done by the organisation at an early stage. This is sent to an allocated assessor so that organisations are certain they are hitting the standards prior to their final assessment. Only a small number of written documents are requested and submitted by organisations.

2. Final assessment is undertaken through site visits, the length of which will depend on the size of the organisation and range of volunteering roles. Assessors will usually spend at least a day on site using the 10 iV Indicators as the assessment guide.

### CommunityMark

CommunityMark is a self-scoring assessment. This score is then reviewed and changed if necessary by your assessor. There are 5 steps:

- Step 1  
Organisation completes its CommunityMark Self-Assessment Submission.
- Step 2  
Organisation sends 2 copies of its submission to the National CommunityMark Manager for assessment by the National Assessment Panel.
- Step 3  
The submission is assessed within 4 weeks of being received by the National CommunityMark Manager and you will be informed of the result immediately.
- Step 4  
Written feedback from the assessors will be sent to you 2 weeks after the assessment i.e. 6 weeks after submitting.
- Step 5  
You will be able to use the CommunityMark branding/logo immediately once you have achieved CommunityMark and receive your award.

## What support is available during the assessment process?

### **Investing in Volunteers**

The registration fee covers: advice and guidance from a local Volunteer Centre Partner; a workshop with an allocated assessor and all assessment (visits and report); and access to the password protected area of the Investing in Volunteers website. These web-pages include things like a tool-kit and tips from other volunteer managers who have achieved the standard. Additional consultancy support and training can also be bought from Volunteering England.

### **CommunityMark**

You are allocated a CommunityMark Advisor who will guide you through the process.

## How long will it take to achieve the standard?

### **Investing in Volunteers**

This will vary from organisation to organisation, but normally the process will be completed within 12 months. Organisations that achieve the standard receive a plaque and certificate on completion and membership of the Achievers Club network.

### **CommunityMark**

Your submission is assessed within 4 weeks of being received by the National CommunityMark Manager and you will be informed of the result immediately. Written feedback from the assessors will be sent to you 2 weeks after the assessment, i.e. 6 weeks after submitting.

## What if an organisation does not achieve the standard?

### **Investing in Volunteers**

Organisations can Achieve, Not Achieve or Achieve with Conditions. All organisations receive detailed feedback from their assessor. Organisations that achieve the standard with conditions are set a time within which to complete specific actions agreed with their assessor and are not entered into the quality assurance process until they are complete.

### **CommunityMark**

Each question is scored from 0 to 4 points, with 4 being the best score. If you have given your organisation 0 under any question, you should not submit for assessment. There MUST be a score (1 or above) for each question. If the assessors give you 0 under any question, you will be given the opportunity to provide further evidence for immediate re-assessment.

There is a maximum score of 48 points in total (9 questions at 4 points each, with the total score doubled for the 3 Community Excellence Questions to give them equal weighting to the 6 Business Excellence questions). The minimum number of overall points needed to achieve CommunityMark is 32 points (approx 65% of the overall points).

## Once the standard is achieved, is it time limited?

### **Investing in Volunteers**

Organisations must re-accredit every 3 years. Re-accreditation fees are the same as original registration as the assessment process requires the same amount of an assessor's time.

### **CommunityMark**

Organisations must re-accredit every 3 years.