Be the difference

ANNUAL REVIEW

2016/17

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

sse Ireland

Be the difference

Through our **Be the difference** programme, every employee has the opportunity to take a day out of their usual working life to support a charity or community group of their choice.

From crushing boxes to crunching numbers, we're here to help!

If you know of a charity or community project that could use our help, or have any feedback on our programme, please let us know by emailing **Btd.Ireland@sse.com**

Be the difference by volunteering
Colleagues can use one paid working day each year to volunteer for a charity or community group of their choice with the added benefit of up to four additional donated days.

Be the difference by fundraising
Colleagues, individually or in teams, can apply for up to €200/£150 matched funding to support their fundraising activities.

SSE Ireland Awards

CSR Award Winner
2017 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Chamber Business Awards

Volunteering Commendation
2017 Chambers Ireland Corporate Social Responsibility Awards

Right Place to Work Award Winner
2016 Irish News Workplace and Employment Awards

What a difference a year makes

Welcome to our third **Be the difference** annual review looking back on our best volunteering and employee fundraising year to date. Around 85% of our employees across the island of Ireland volunteered last year, making it a record-breaking year for the programme at SSE Ireland.

Stephen Wheeler,
SSE Ireland Managing Director

Why do we do what we do? Quite simply, because we believe in putting people and communities at the heart of our business. **Be the difference** works so well because it allows our employees to support any cause that matters to them, and determine how they want to give back to the communities where they live and work.

I'm so proud of the incredible work of everyone in SSE Ireland who volunteers and fundraises through the **Be the difference** programme, as well as in their own time. The work they do continues to make a real difference for those who need it – with a whopping 5,828 hours volunteered last year to help 49 charities, it's clear that the programme really matters to our employees.

This year we've been making improvements too, from investing in a new online database system to make the sign up process easier, to our new strategic partnership with Make-A-Wish Ireland and an increased focus on skills-based volunteering. These changes continue to help the programme go from strength to strength.

Everyone can play a role in their community and should have the chance to participate. I am proud of what the programme has accomplished and that it is one of the practices which has led to SSE Ireland being certified for the first time by Business in the Community Ireland to the Business Working Responsibly Mark, the 'gold standard' for Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability in Ireland.

To all our volunteers, fundraisers, charity partners and champions, I want to take this opportunity to thank you all. Without you, our **Be the difference** programme wouldn't be possible, let alone the huge success it is.

Your generosity, time and support are what enable us to really make a difference beyond our day-to-day business. I hope you enjoy reading the stories within this report, and that they provide some volunteering inspiration for next year!

BUSINESS WORKING RESPONSIBLY
Collective Mark

Our year in numbers
A record-breaking year for volunteering

Through our volunteering activities, SSE donated over €130,000 in working hours to 49 charities during 2016/17.

Be the difference
in numbers

777
volunteering days completed
(2015/16 - **490**)

89
charity events supported
(2015/16 - **81**)

€8,449
match funding granted
(2015/16 - **€4,621**)

85%
participation rate
(2015/16 - **55%**)

5,828
working hours donated
(2015/16 - **3,675**)

A powerful partnership with

MAKE·A·WISH®
Ireland

455 days volunteered

€75,000 raised

5 wishes granted

Picture: Amy meets Robbie Keane

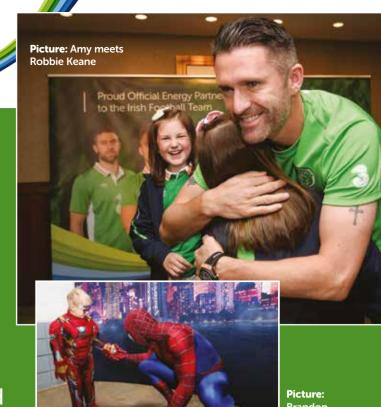Picture: Brandon meeting his superhero Spiderman

At SSE, we're committed to doing the right thing and making a difference. That's why in 2016, we launched our official partnership with Make-A-Wish Ireland to help create magical experiences for children and young people fighting life-threatening illnesses.

In the first year of our partnership, SSE Ireland contributed over €75,000 to this extraordinary charity through a range of marketing campaigns, employee volunteering and 'wish granting'. Our partnership with Make-A-Wish was also the main driver behind our record-breaking year for employee volunteering, with SSE employees volunteering a total of 455 working days to Make-A-Wish – that's almost 60% of all days donated. From packing boxes for Wish Day to shaking buckets on match day, SSE employees really were the difference in 2016/17.

A total of 150 employees took part in the SSE Airtricity Dublin Marathon and Race Series, cheered on by many more of their colleagues. With €1 donated for every kilometre completed, plus raffles, bucket collection and other fundraising activities, their efforts raised more than €18,000. This year's SSE Cyder Cup, the annual golf competition between our Dublin and Belfast offices, raised a further €1,000.

And what about all those wishes granted last year? Five special wishes came through during 2016/17 thanks to SSE employee fundraising efforts. Who can forget Amy meeting her hero Robbie Keane in Cork, or Bobby taking a penalty at half time at the Aviva against Darren Randolph? Ben was treated as a VIP and watched Frozen from the Corporate Box at The SSE Arena, Belfast, while Eva got a backstage pass to meet the cast of Cats.

SSE employees made a real difference last year and are looking forward to 2017/18 when we can make an even bigger impact and make more wishes come true!

"Make-A-Wish Ireland grants the wishes of children aged 3-17 years living with life-threatening illnesses. These wishes often come at difficult times in the lives of these children and their families. A wish is an incredible respite from the everyday normality they have become used to, that normality often has little to do with what we would recognise from our own daily family lives. It is thanks to SSE Airtricity and SSE colleagues that Make-A-Wish Ireland has been able to grant wishes to brave children right across Ireland. Make-A-Wish receives no government funding; it is for this reason that SSE has made such an extraordinary impact on the lives of so many. The support SSE has given in terms of wishes and donations has been extraordinary. SSE has worked in partnership with Make-A-Wish Ireland to make memories that will last many lifetimes and we are incredibly grateful to you. Thank you!"

Gareth Crowe, Corporate Manager, Make-A-Wish Ireland

Picture: Callum, meeting some of the Irish Team

4

Case studies: maximising volunteer impact

Increasing our focus on skills-based volunteering

Recycling our resources

SSE's IT Department, led by Sean Gallagher, IT Manager, used their ten volunteering days to refurbish and install over 100 laptops and servers previously owned by SSE as well as giving coding classes to primary school students. The costs of refurbishment, which included installing new hard drives, was covered by a donation from SSE. The team installed the equipment at new homes in Allen National School, Co. Kildare, Oatlands and Ballinteer Community School, both in Co. Dublin, and St. Peter's Primary School, Bray, Co. Wicklow. The team hopes that this will inspire and enable a new generation of IT experts to take advantage of the digital revolution!
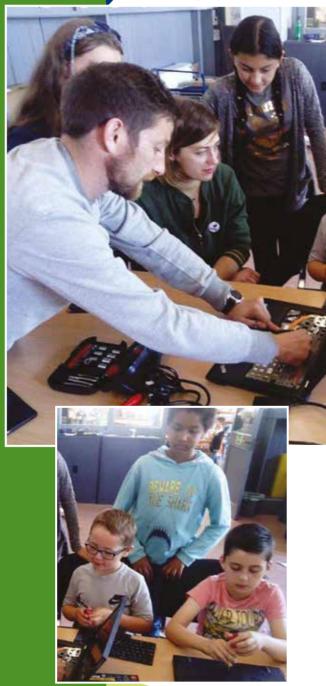
Engineering skills

The Engineers Ireland science, technology and engineering programme (STEPS) encourages primary and post-primary students to explore the world of STEM while also promoting engineering as a career choice. STEPS works in strategic partnership with Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) on Smart Futures, a collaborative government-industry-education programme promoting STEM careers to post-primary students in Ireland. Seamus Lynch, SSE Renewables, volunteers for STEPS Engineers Week each year. This is a week-long festival of nationwide events celebrating the world of engineering in Ireland for students between 12-15 years of age. It highlights engineering achievements, delivers hands-on engineering activities and demonstrates the role of engineering in the local community. Well done Seamus!

Understanding vulnerable customers

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) campaigns on behalf of people with dementia and their carers to improve the lives of all those affected by this illness. Last Christmas, ten SSE employees from across the business used their **Be the difference** day bucket shaking on Grafton Street, Dublin and raised over €5,500 with a further €650 raised during Pancake Tuesday. In 2017/18, we aim to offer high quality training based on best practice in dementia care awareness, providing employees with common skills and knowledge in dementia which can be used both at work or at home. By helping our employees to learn about dementia and volunteering for this charity, it creates awareness both from a personal and a customer focused perspective which is in line with SSE's objective of being a 'Responsible Service Provider'.

Picture: SSE colleagues teaching coding to primary school children

Engaging employees in mental health

Suicide or Survive (SOS) is an Irish charity focussed on breaking down the stigma associated with mental health issues and ensuring that those affected have access to quality recovery services that are right for the individual.

They are working to build a society where people embrace their mental health wellness and where those with difficulties are treated with dignity and respect, and experience a service that offers them hope, a safe place and a positive future. SOS is leading the way through active collaboration which they believe will drive positive social change and SSE has elected to be a part of this positive movement through fundraising and training. During 2016/17 over 100 managers across the business attended a training course on 'Mental Health Workplaces'. The course covered good practices in preventing and managing workplace stress together with a checklist for key risk areas together with a wellness recovery action planning tool.

During 2016/17 the SSE Ireland Facilities Team held their annual bake sale in aid of SOS. Together with matched funding they raised over €1,400 for this worthy cause.

Picture: SOS bake sale

over €1,400 raised

Racing ahead for charity

Over 14 employees volunteered last year to set up and operate the annual Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) Race Day at Leopardstown Race Course, just next door to SSE's Dublin office.

This is the third consecutive year that SSE employees have volunteered at this annual race event which has raised an incredible €193,000 to date. According to Helen McVeigh, Irish Hospice Foundation Volunteering Co-ordinator, "This support has made a huge impact for the adults, children and families who rely on nurses for the Night Care programme, which provides end-of-life care in the home."

Picture: SSE volunteers receive briefing from IHF

Supporting children in our local community

'Mission Christmas' is one of the campaigns run by the charity Cash for Kids, helping raise funds for families and children in need.

For three days during December, SSE employees volunteered at the Mission Christmas Warehouse located at Belfast Docks. Volunteers assisted with the packing of gifts into sacks for distribution around Northern Ireland. Employees packed toys and gifts for thousands of children and young people who would otherwise have received very little or nothing on Christmas Day.

Picture: Some of our Belfast volunteers

Picture: Representatives from Moyvane Development Association, Kerry County Council, Tarbert Power Station staff and CE Scheme members

Enhancing
local biodiversity

SSE is involved in a business that really matters – providing the energy people need. Acting in a sustainable way is therefore embedded throughout all our different business operations. In 2017, SSE attended a biodiversity event run by Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI).

This was a great opportunity for like-minded businesses to exchange ideas and become more informed on practical initiatives that can be undertaken to integrate and support biodiversity. An informative session on pollinators was presented and followed by a walk in the Iveagh Gardens to demonstrate the benefits of providing nature in an urban area and show simple ways of how this can be achieved.

With that in mind, Tarbert Power Station employees have been ahead of the curve and have used their **Be the difference** days over the past three years to help the Moyvane Development Association (MDA) in the local area. During the year, employees helped the MDA and members of SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) a state run Further Education and Training (FET) programme together with and Rural Social Schemes (RSS) to plant over 1,200 native trees and 200 hedges in a one hectare plot. This project is a welcome addition to the existing nature trail and when matured it will be a wonderful facility to have in the village.

Using our assets for good

The sponsored 5K & 10K Tournafulla and Rathcahill Wind Farm Run in Co. Limerick takes place on these SSE wind farms each year in June, coinciding with Global Wind Day.

The annual run is organised by Seán Carter, SSE Wind Farm Operator, and last year fundraised for the charity 'Blood Bike Mid West' which Seán also volunteers for using his **Be the difference** days. The charity delivers lifesaving blood supplies across Ireland, completing on average 30 – 40 runs per weekend. Over 127 people took part in the 2016/17 run, raising over €1,000. Tea and cakes were donated and served to runners by the local parents of Templeglantine Primary School (which has received SSE community funding for a variety of energy efficiency refurbishments over the past few years), and a number of SSE Renewable Generation employees used their **Be the difference** days to help organise the event. The day was a real community effort and gave people the opportunity to experience a wind farm up close.

Picture: Tournafulla & Rathcahill Wind Farm 5K & 10K Run for Blood Bikes
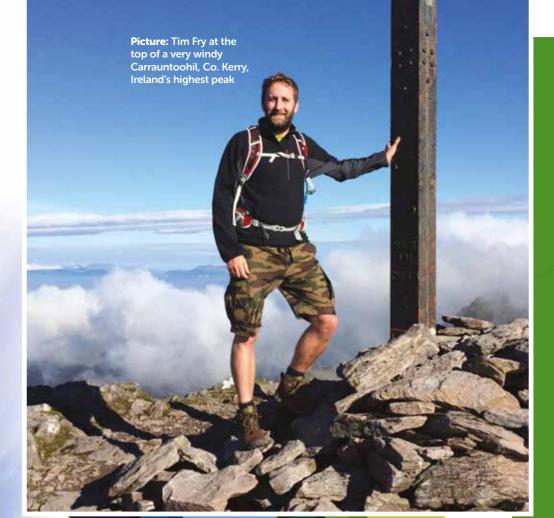
Finding extreme ways to fundraise

A sky dive for charity

ARC is a charity which offers a holistic approach to cancer that works in tandem with patients and their medical treatment at the ARC Cancer Support Centre near the Mater Hospital in Dublin.

It's a sanctuary for those affected by cancer, providing a safe space where the individual is cared for according to their needs. The supportive atmosphere and incredible warmth radiates from the instant a person walks through the door. Over the years the service has developed significantly and the range of supports offered has increased. Emma Donnelly (pictured), together with 17 colleagues in Dublin raised over €6,200 for ARC, including €2,100 of matched funding, last year by undertaking a skydiving challenge.

Picture: Emma Donnelly skydiving for charity

Picture: Tim Fry at the top of a very windy Carrauntoohil, Co. Kerry, Ireland's highest peak

Tim Fry Peak Challenge

Tim Fry,Campaigns and Activity Analysis Manager, SSE Airtricity took part in the 'Fields of Life 4 Peaks Challenge' which involved climbing the highest mountain in each of the four provinces of Ireland (Connacht, Leinster, Munster and Ulster) in less than 40 hours.

Tim, along with his team of ten friends from Dublin, set a target to raise enough funds to drill four boreholes and provide clean, safe drinking water to vulnerable communities in East Africa. In August, 2016 they completed the challenge with 10 minutes to spare. Tim alone raised €1,283 (including €300 SSE matched funding), with the group raising an amazing overall total of €18,962. Tim has since received a note from the charity confirming that the building of the second well has just been completed and will service nearly 4,000 people.

Going head to head for charity

Picture: SSE Airtricity Dublin Golfing Society

The Cyder Cup was born after a casual conversation turned into a challenge. A member of the SSE Airtricity Golfing Society in the Dublin office was speaking to another colleague who mentioned that they had a similar group in Belfast. A friendly game came about which has now turned into an annual company competition with a trophy up for grabs.

In 2016/17, the annual SSE Airtricity Cyder Cup between both Golfing Societies took place at Concra Wood, Monaghan. With typical Irish summer weather conditions of wind, hail and rain, the Dublin team was victorious and won back the illustrious trophy while raising over €1,000 for Make-A-Wish in the process. Ian Baker, SSE's Domestic Collections Manager added, "I am immensely proud of the contribution of the team to this worthwhile cause. I hope to keep this great tradition of helping others less fortunate going for many years to come."

Investing in improvements

Moving our volunteer system online

In 2016/17 we began the journey to invest, improve and simplify the volunteer sign up process. As part of this project we set up a new Be the difference internal online portal.

The new system aims to improve the efficiency and consistency of our sign up and data collection process, and make it easier to follow for employees looking to volunteer. The sign up process is quick and easy and takes less than two minutes. Once the employee has signed up, they can easily view and apply for any volunteering opportunity. The system then automatically gathers statistics and information about volunteering; helping ensure the contribution our volunteering makes is accurately captured.

Employees with queries about the new system, or any feedback on ways to improve our volunteering service, can get in touch at:

Btd.Ireland@sse.com

Voices of our volunteers

Our Be the difference Champions make themselves available to answer queries, promote the programme, help volunteers use our new volunteering database and assist colleagues with matched funding applications. That's alongside organising and attending their own Be the difference activities.

We have 25 Champions across the island, organising events and encouraging their 900 colleagues to get out of the office to volunteer and fundraise.

From meter readers to marketing managers, turn the page to find out why **Be the difference** matters to people across our business.. Without the hard work and dedication of each Champion, volunteer and fundraiser that takes part in **Be the difference**, the programme wouldn't exist –

thank you so a huge to everyone involved!

Picture: Some of our Dublin Champions

Elena Garcia, GIS Analyst, Renewables
"Volunteering offers staff the chance to give something back to the community while getting to know other colleagues and have fun on an out of the ordinary working day. I really appreciate the different volunteering options offered by SSE to help others."

Kevin Murphy, Home Energy Customer Service
*"To me volunteering is about giving up your own time in the hope it helps someone who needs help. The **Be the difference** day available to us in SSE is an incredible gesture and I love to hear the different stories from people who have used them."*

Avril Hannin, Facilities Management
"The buzz you get from volunteering with friends and colleagues is terrific and the fact that so many people benefit is just such a rewarding feeling. You also realise the amount of good-will from customers and suppliers as well. It's team work at its best."

Carol McCarney,
IT Project Manager
Be the difference Champion

"Be the difference is a fantastic way for SSE employees to do something positive for the community while also providing an opportunity to get to know other SSE employees in a more social environment, whether participating in a charity sports event or working at the Irish Cancer Society warehouse.

In the IT team we take great pride in consistently reaching our target of 100% **Be the difference** days.

Personally, being a member of the SSE Airs choir has given me the opportunity to take part in three **Be the difference** days this year as we enjoyed performing at three fundraising concerts, a genuine win-win for both the charities and the choir members.

It's great that employees can organise events for particular charities and can seek approval to have them included in the **Be the difference** programme. A good example of this is the Annual Christmas Giving Tree Appeal which takes place in Blanchardstown Shopping Centre in Dublin. Each year this worthy cause has benefitted from SSE volunteers, all of whom look forward to feeling the true spirit of Christmas as they collect toys for over 2,000 disadvantaged children.

In my experience taking part in **Be the difference** volunteering events not only benefits charities and community groups, but also makes a positive difference to the volunteer."

Rachel Kearney,
Domestic Credit Control Team Leader,
Be the difference Champion

"There has always been an immense pride in what we do as a team both inside and outside of work. To contribute as much as we can and to inspire others to make a positive impact in the lives of others is something we all aspire towards. That is the culture that we take pride in."

Some of the beneficiaries of the Credit Control department's **Be the difference** days in 2016/17 included:

- **Pieta House**
- **The Irish Cancer Society**
- **Make-A-Wish Ireland**

Picture: Darkness into Light Walk, Marley Park, Dublin

Picture: Our Belfast Champions, Emma and Danny

Sean Gallagher,
IT Department

How often do you volunteer?
Throughout the year

Tell us about your chosen charity and what you do for them?
My local primary school. I work with my colleagues in IT to refurbish old SSE laptops and teach coding to primary school children in various schools around Co. Kildare, Co. Dublin and Co. Wicklow. You don't need to be a coding genius, you just need to be willing to learn some basic Scratch, Python, or HTML.

What does the charity mean to you?
Working with young people is a great way to learn new skills whilst inspiring the next generation of coders and digital makers.

Avril Hannin,
Facilities Management

How often do you volunteer?
I volunteer at least once a year, more if possible.

Tell us about your chosen charity?
My chosen charities in equal proportions are Focus Ireland, Penny Dinners and St. Vincent de Paul. The plight of homelessness has been so bad in recent years and affects all ages and all walks of life.

What do you do for them?
I feel I help them through the medium of music with the support of my fellow "SSE Airs" our own bunch of work choristers. We have held an annual Christmas charity concert collaborating with the High Hopes Choir for the last two years and raised funding in the region of €7,000. It was a total surprise to me and I don't think I've ever experienced such a "warm fuzzy feeling" when SSE announced that they were going to add a generous €100,000 to our 2015 efforts and a further €75,000 to our 2016 efforts.

What does the charity mean to you?
It means a lot to me. My inspiration to volunteer and support various charities has definitely come from my close contact with the High Hopes Choir all of whom have been affected by or know someone affected by homelessness. They continue to raise awareness of this problem through their singing.

Emma Campbell,
Gas NI Meter Reading Division

How often do you volunteer?
At least twice a year and I am a Be the difference Champion for the Belfast office.

Tell us about your chosen charity?
My chosen charity is Assisi Animal Sanctuary; they take in and rescue unwanted pets which include dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs, giving them a temporary loving home until the animals are successfully rehomed.

What do you do for them?
I walk the dogs, clean out the animal cages, replace bedding and do general day to day sanctuary maintenance.

What does the charity mean to you?
I am an animal lover and always have been. I have always had dogs growing up and would like to try to help as many as possible in my lifetime. It really makes the difference having the support of SSE behind me and allowing me to take the time to volunteer throughout the year.

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND

The Network for Responsible Business

MEMBER