

Warwickshire County Council

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT POLICY



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy relates to the involvement of people who give unpaid help directly on behalf of Warwickshire County Council (the Council) services for community and/or environmental benefit and to Council staff volunteering outside of work.
- 1.2 The Council recognises and values the contribution that volunteers make in a variety of roles to enhance its services, meet its priorities, support its customers, and add to the quality of people's lives. The Council aims to provide fair, safe, enjoyable and empowering experiences for all its volunteers.
- 1.3 The Council supports those of its staff who wish to volunteer outside of work, either for the Council itself or for other local organisations, and recognises the value of this to Warwickshire's communities, to staff development, and to the Council's reputation.
- 1.4 This policy provides a framework for services within the Council which wish to involve volunteers, and includes minimum standards. It is not intended to replace service-specific policies and procedures around the involvement of volunteers, so long as these policies and procedures are developed within the overall principles of this corporate policy.
- 1.5 This policy broadly applies to people who volunteer on an on-going basis. It does not include those who are on work experience within the Council. Further information on work experience with the Council can be found at [Work Experience](#).
- 1.6 Where services are looking to recruit community support for one-off activities or events, it is the responsibility of the Service Manager to ensure that appropriate risk assessment is undertaken, and any action taken to ensure the health, safety and well-being of volunteers.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The volunteer policy has been developed with the following guiding principles in mind:

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- Volunteering is independently chosen, freely given and benefits both the individual and the Council.
- Volunteers are not employees. However, under health and safety legislation the Council has a duty to protect volunteers, as well as others who could be affected by our activities.

3. Recruitment

- 3.1 The Council welcomes volunteers of all ages and backgrounds. Minimum ages of a volunteer is 13 and where a volunteer is under 18, parental or guardian consent should be obtained and a risk assessment should be conducted by the Volunteer Manager ([see useful guidance for employing children](#)). Volunteers should be recruited for specific roles and will be recruited from all sections of the community.
- 3.2 All volunteering 'roles' should be advertised on the Council's web-site and within local volunteer centres with a simple role description.
- 3.3 Volunteer Role Descriptions and Person Specifications should include any criteria required to fulfil the role (including whether safeguarding checks are required).
- 3.4 Services may decide to run a formal recruitment exercise depending on whether it is appropriate for the role, where volunteers are asked to complete an application form and meet with the service for an interview or discussion. This is likely to be appropriate when:
- The volunteering opportunity requires specific skills or experience or involves working with children or vulnerable adults
 - There are a limited number of volunteer roles and demand exceeds this.

Services should consider whether a formal process is needed before the opportunity is advertised, and put in place procedures for receiving and considering applications.

If a formal recruitment process is not required, the service will consider whether it requires volunteers to register in advance either via phone or email, to allow the service to plan volunteer work accordingly. Details of how to register should be included in the information about the opportunity on the website.

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All personal data collected as part of the recruitment and selection process, as well as during the placement, will be kept in a secure place in line with Data Protection requirements.

- 3.5 The Council reserves the right to decline people wishing to undertake voluntary work in service areas for which it is responsible and to terminate such arrangements.

4. Vetting & Safeguarding

- 4.1 Managers must ensure that volunteers have received appropriate training in the Safeguarding Awareness for Adults and, or Children, depending on the nature of the volunteer role that they are involved in.
- 4.2 All volunteers will be required to provide proof of their identity.
- 4.3 All volunteers whose work may involve unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults, or alternatively employees working with volunteers under 18, (defined as a regulated activity) must undergo an enhanced DBS check plus a relevant barred list check before undertaking any such work. Volunteers should thereafter be subject to annual 're-checks'. Volunteers are requested to join the DBS Update Service to enable future criminal record checks to be undertaken in a cost effective manner. <https://www.gov.uk/db-update-service> Managers with supervised volunteers should conduct a risk assessment to consider whether any other criminal record check is appropriate eg an Enhanced check without a barred list check. Further guidance can be provided from the HR Resourcing team.
- 4.4 Where a DBS check reveals a positive trace a risk assessment must be undertaken by the relevant manager to determine if it's appropriate to allow that person to start, or continue, undertaking voluntary work. A process, guide and template risk assessment form is available on www.warwickshire.gov.uk/db Advice is also available from the HR Advisory Service. A Quality Assurance panel will review the risk assessment and make a decision regarding the selection or continuing to engage with the volunteer in the role.
- 4.5 It is the responsibility of the volunteer manager to maintain records in relation to DBS checks for volunteers.

5 Supervision and Support

- 5.1 Volunteers will be appropriately supervised during the course of their time at

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the Council. In the event that volunteers have any complaint they shall be provided with the opportunity to raise the issue(s) concerned with an appropriate manager or supervisor.

- 5.2 Volunteer managers will ensure that both parties sign the [Volunteers Common Standards Framework for WCC Managers](#) and where appropriate volunteers are issued with identity badges, and/or appropriate volunteer uniform, which will be worn at all times when volunteering.
- 5.3 The general purpose, objectives and tasks involved in each volunteer role should be agreed between the volunteer and the Council prior to the volunteering, and this must be regularly reviewed.
- 5.4 Induction, training and development for each volunteer is the responsibility of the volunteer manager and should be appropriate to the role. It is expected that all volunteers receive a basic induction around health & safety.
- 5.5 Volunteer managers should, if asked by the volunteer or former volunteer, provide references where there is a contribution that can be commented on.

6 Expenses

- 6.1 Volunteers should only be paid out-of-pocket expenses that have been approved prior to spend by their manager. Where agreed, this can include the cost of travel to and from the place of volunteering.
- 6.2 Where expenses are agreed this should be in line with those paid to WCC employees and only be for evidenced expenditure. Volunteers should not be paid other amounts, for example, honoraria. Advice is available from the HR Advisory Service.

7. Volunteers' Health, Safety and Welfare

- 7.1 The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health safety and welfare of those undertaking voluntary work, including the provision of training where appropriate, making volunteers aware of relevant risk assessments and providing any relevant equipment or materials and making personal protective equipment available. Volunteers should comply with all related health and safety obligations, local safety rules and codes of safe working practices. Volunteers must disclose any information which pertains to their own health and safety and take reasonable care of their own health and

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safety and that of others

- 7.2 The Council's Public Liability cover will only indemnify volunteers who are working on behalf of, and under direct supervision of the Council. Volunteers will be indemnified against third party claims under the Council's Public Liability Policy while carrying out their duties. Volunteers using their own transport for fulfilling their role should ensure they have the appropriate driving licence, that they are fit to drive as per the laws of the road, that they have a valid MOT (where applicable), and the appropriate motor insurance which covers use of the vehicle for volunteering purposes.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Volunteers are required to treat data and information that they come into contact in the course of their volunteering with confidentiality and within relevant data protection legislation. If appropriate Managers should ensure that volunteers understand and agree to comply with the Council's Information Compliance Policy and associated standards and procedures for the handling and security of information. Links can be found at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/imdataprotection. A breach of these will be regarded as serious.
- 8.2 Volunteers are required to provide such personal data about themselves as are necessary to maintain contact including name, address and relevant contact details, and other data necessary to meet safeguarding requirements and other reasonable requirements of the Council. Such data will be stored confidentially and within relevant data protection legislation.

9. Volunteering by Council employees

- 9.1 Guidance around staff learning, development and appraisal should ensure that volunteering is considered as a potential learning and development activity at appraisal, and treated as any other learning and development activity.
- 9.2 Guidance and conditions of service around flexible working and work-life balance should enable managers to exercise reasonable discretion for staff to work flexibly in order to accommodate volunteering activity in their own time—particularly where the volunteering activity directly supports the Council's priorities, or supports the individual's learning and development.

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