

Lincolnshire County Council Volunteer Engagement Policy

September 2018

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge as a pathway into employment. Regardless of the motivation, what unites them all is that they find it both challenging and rewarding.
- 1.2 Volunteers bring a range of expertise to particular tasks or projects. Their expertise should complement and add value to the skills of staff. In many instances, volunteers can develop a range of support to service users that cannot be provided solely by paid staff, and the Council welcomes volunteers in all service areas. The Council is committed to engaging with volunteers in a way that complements and expands service delivery.

2.0 Vision for Volunteering

- 2.1 The Council has a vision of thriving communities where volunteers play an active role in shaping local service delivery, promoting community cohesion and positively influencing decision making.
- 2.2 The Council will work with local communities and partners to develop a diverse range of suitable volunteering activities that are relevant for all people in Lincolnshire.

3.0 What is volunteering?

- 3.1 The Council regards volunteering as an unpaid activity where someone freely gives their time to help an organisation or an individual who they are not related to. In other words, volunteers are not paid staff and do not have a legally binding contractual relationship with the Council.
- 3.2 Volunteering is not work experience therefore anyone applying for a work experience placement should be managed as part of the work experience process. The Work Experience Guidance ensures that the Council has a corporate and consistent process for work experience placements for children and young people, and complies with its legal duty towards safeguarding and health and safety for these groups.

4.0 Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

- 4.1 Volunteer role descriptions, application forms, policies and other documents will be available on the Council website, or via partner volunteer organisations. More detailed information will be available through the Council's Customer Service Centre.
- 4.2 The role descriptions of officers with responsibility for recruiting and managing volunteers should incorporate the following statements:
 - To help sustain and enhance volunteer activities taking a leadership role in developing and promoting new opportunities and roles for volunteers that support the Council's Volunteer Engagement Policy.

- To contribute to the recruitment, selection and supervision of volunteers and to identify training needs of volunteers.

5.0 Induction and Training

5.1 The Council will provide all volunteers with an introduction to the organisation as well as induction and training tailored to the volunteering opportunity. The corporate training package and manager's guidance is now available for core training areas for volunteers:

- Information Governance
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding
- Equality and Diversity

Training packages and guidance are available on Volunteers page on George at <http://george/section.asp?docid=105772&ovt=1>

6.0 Health and Safety

6.1 We have a duty of care to avoid exposing our volunteers to health and safety risks. All volunteers will be made aware of our Health and Safety Policy and any practical safety concerns as part of their induction. Volunteers are expected to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy. All volunteer roles will be risk assessed, covering both the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. In addition, where a volunteer makes us aware of a pre-existing medical condition or disability, an individual risk assessment may also be necessary.

6.2 Further valuable LCC health & safety information and guidance is available on the following links on the LCC intranet:

G25 Authorised Volunteers

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/jobs/manuals/health-and-safety-manual/employee-groups/volunteers/g25-authorized-volunteers/47636.article?tab=downloads>

Health & Safety Manual Index

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/jobs/manuals/health-and-safety-manual/health-and-safety-manual-index/>

7.0 Information Governance

7.1 All supervisors must ensure that during induction volunteers are aware of the Council's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. Volunteers must receive appropriate training, for example Information Governance training.

7.2 A Privacy Notice provides information about why and how we process personal data about individuals. The privacy notice must be provided at the time that the information is obtained and can be provided in a number of format such as in writing, electronically, orally (face to face when speaking to an individual) or through signage such as posters. For further detailed information on how we process personal information please see the

8.0 Raising the Participation Age (RPA) – Volunteers aged 16 - 18

8.1 In 2015, the Government has raised the participation age, obliging young people to stay in education until their 18th birthday (but should be encouraged to remain until they have completed any qualifications they are undertaking). This does not necessarily mean staying in school. Young people will be able to participate through:

- Full time education such as school or college
- Work based learning such as an apprenticeship
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or **volunteering** for 20 hours or more a week.

Whatever programme they are undertaking, it needs to be accredited training funded by the Education Funding Agency (publicly funded)

8.2 The Council therefore has a duty in relation to RPA and will need to ensure that all 16 and 17 year olds have suitable education or training offers and that they are encouraged and supported to participate. It is therefore important that volunteers aged 16 and 17 meet the requirements of Raising the Participation Age.

9.0 Safeguarding

9.1 All supervisors must ensure that volunteers are aware of, and have received appropriate training in the Council's Safeguarding Policy on Children and Adults.

9.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be carried out on any volunteer who in the course of their activity has regular, unsupervised, contact with the same group of children or young people. A DBS check will also need to be carried out on volunteers who care for or deal with the personal affairs of any adult. Further guidance can be found in the County Council's safeguarding policies and procedures.

10.0 Equal Opportunities

10.1 We are fully committed to the Council's Equality Policy and will proactively offer volunteering opportunities to people from different backgrounds as a contribution to developing and maintaining an organisation where differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

11.0 Ongoing Support

11.1 All volunteers will receive appropriate support and supervision in their activity. The level of supervision will match the nature of the role and the experience of the volunteer. All volunteers will have a nominated Volunteer Supervisor, someone they can have regular access to if problems arise or when help and support is needed.

12.0 Expenses

- 12.1 The Council is committed to paying *reasonable* 'out of pocket' expenses ensuring that potential volunteers are not excluded due to financial reasons. However, these need to be agreed with relevant managers before the volunteer commences their activity. Where expenses are not agreed, volunteers must be made aware of this at the first opportunity in the recruitment process.

13.0 Volunteers in Receipt of benefits

- 13.1 It is the responsibility of the volunteer to establish whether volunteering is going to affect their entitlement to any social security benefits. Further advice should be obtained from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Job Centre Plus, or Citizens Advice Lincolnshire.

14.0 Insurance

- 14.1 Volunteers must sign the Volunteer Indemnity Form on the first day of induction. This provides them with basic accident cover and also indemnifies the volunteer against any claim made against them or the Council whilst carrying out their activity.
- 14.2 Where volunteers drive as part of their voluntary activity, and use their own vehicle, they must ensure they possess the relevant class of insurance. Further guidance should be sought from the Volunteer's own insurance company. Supervisors must check and record this documentation if required.

15.0 Complaints

- 15.1 As volunteers are not employees, they are unable to use the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure. However, they are entitled to use the Council's Complaints Procedure.
- 15.2 Complaints by volunteers should be raised in the first instance with their Volunteer Supervisor, and dealt with informally where possible. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by their Supervisor, or if the complaint is against their own Supervisor, by another Volunteer Supervisor or their line manager.
- 15.3 If a complaint is brought against a volunteer, this will be investigated by the relevant supervisor. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and informally as possible. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the volunteer may be told their services are no longer required with immediate effect.

16.0 Moving On

- 16.1 The Council welcomes feedback and encourages volunteers to offer ideas for improvements. Volunteers who choose to stop volunteering at any time will also be invited to provide feedback before they move on.
- 16.2 Volunteers who are leaving the organisation and who have made a regular commitment to it should be offered an exit interview, reference and/or statement of their achievements to ensure that their services are properly and formally appreciated.

17.0 Termination of Activity

- 17.1 Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteers may be terminated by the supervisor at one week's notice, or immediately where inappropriate behaviour has occurred or where an H&S risk has been identified. In all cases, the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

18.0 Review

- 18.1 This policy will be reviewed by 31 October 2021.