



HILLINGDON

LONDON

Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

Volunteering is a great way to share and develop your skills and experience and make a positive contribution to your local community. Hillingdon Council involve volunteers directly within the organisation to:

- Enhance the delivery of our services
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users.
- Provide different skills and perspectives.
- Enable residents to gain experiences and skills

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers, and the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

2. Principles

The Council recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to employees. We:

- Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the Council's services.
- Will not utilise volunteers to replace employees.
- Expect that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- Recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training where required for them to undertake their duties effectively.
- Recognise that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and consider any reasonable adjustments requested, to ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible

3. Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with the Council's Equality in Employment policies.

The Council will make efforts to ensure that volunteering opportunities are generally made available but may also recruit in response to ad hoc enquiries if the skills and experience on offer are of benefit to the community.

People interested in becoming volunteers with the Council will be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person. They will be given information including general information about the Council and specific information on the volunteering duties in which they are interested.

All volunteers will be asked to complete a basic application form appropriate to the activities that they are applying for and to supply two character references. Where applicants are not placed in the service applied for, they will be provided with feedback and signposted to other volunteer involving organisations where possible.

Volunteers with the Council may come into contact with vulnerable people and/or be in a position of trust. They may therefore be asked to provide information about any criminal convictions via a self disclosure form that is completed prior to starting volunteering. Every volunteer role will undergo a risk assessment. For roles which involve a regulated activity with young people or vulnerable adults, volunteers will also be required to have a full DBS disclosure check.

This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

4. Volunteer Agreements and Voluntary Work Outlines

Volunteers will receive a role description and volunteer agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work and a clear idea of their responsibilities and the volunteer's responsibilities to them.

If required, volunteers will be given an identity/security pass. It is a volunteer's responsibility to ensure that this is kept safely and not given to anyone else except the person for whom it is intended.

5. Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken. If access to systems is required then the volunteer will be given training on the system to be used. The volunteer will also need to undertake mandatory data protection, health and safety training; This will be arranged through learning and development. The volunteer will be required to follow the Council's data protection policy at all times.

If any equipment is issued to the volunteer this will be recorded and signed for. At the end of any volunteering assignment, all equipment should be returned to the named contact officer.

6. Support

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person who will provide regular support. Support sessions will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed.

8. Records

Basic details will be held on volunteers. This will include the application form, references, placement details, emergency contacts, correspondence and any other relevant information in accordance with the Council's data protection policy.

9. Expenses

Whilst unpaid, a volunteer should not be out of pocket. The Council may provide expenses for volunteers under some circumstances and this will usually be limited to food, drink, travel or any equipment they need to buy in order to undertake the role. If, for example it is agreed that a volunteer can claim mileage, then the amount will be notified to the volunteer and will be in line with HMRC car mileage rates. Receipts or other evidence will be required and expenses should be submitted using an online AP02 form through the corporate payments team.

10. Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by the Council's insurance while carrying out agreed duties under the supervision of the Council.

11. Health and Safety

The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and welfare while volunteering, in accordance with their own Health and Safety policy.

Volunteers will be expected to:

- take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their actions
- report accidents, incidents and any potential danger to a member of staff
- undertake health and safety training appropriate to their duties if asked to do so

12. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and staff will work in accordance with the Council's equal opportunities policy and will pay due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

13. Resolving concerns

The volunteer should discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact who will undertake to listen to them and make reasonable effort to resolve the problem.

If the contact person is unable to resolve the problem they will refer the matter to Head of Service, with the permission of the volunteer.

The Council reserves the right to terminate a volunteering arrangement immediately and without notice if the conduct of a volunteer is called into question.

14. Endings

When a volunteering arrangement ends, a volunteer may be asked to provide feedback on their experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They may also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with their contact officer or a member of the management team.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will be able to request a reference if they have been volunteering regularly for a period of one year or more.

15. Social Media

No comments or stories should be given directly to the media. Volunteers are expected to ensure that the information and opinions shared on social media platforms do not bring the Council into disrepute, nor breach data protection, confidentiality or personal privacy.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

The council will monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy.