

Warwick District Council

Volunteer Engagement Policy and Procedures

Foreword

Volunteers provide a unique contribution to the local community. Warwick District Council believes that such a valuable resource must be appropriately supported. As a result the following Policy and Procedures document ensures that Council officers provide a consistent and supportive approach to the volunteers. The Council recognises the valuable contribution made by volunteers, adding value to existing work, introducing new perspectives and potentially unlocking additional funding opportunities for schemes. The Council seeks to promote the importance and effectiveness of volunteering within the community.

Using this policy will ensure that recruiting, training and supporting volunteers is built into the community engagement activities undertaken by Council officers.

The policy is not intended to be prescriptive and should be used as is felt appropriate to the situation by the lead officer. It is not intended to prohibit volunteering or negatively impact on current arrangements.

Vision for Volunteering

Warwick District Council is committed to making the District a great place to live work and visit.

Volunteers have an integral role to play in promoting and contributing to community cohesion.

Volunteering can provide a significant economic advantage to communities and reflect community needs. It also contributes to the development of social capital and to the wellbeing and unity of the community. Potential positive benefits for individuals include improving health, lowering stress, reducing social isolation and raising self esteem. Volunteers also have the opportunity to develop new skills or enhance existing skills.

Warwick District Council recognises that there can be occasions whereby a volunteer's help can make an appropriate and significant contribution to the service delivery of the Council either through one off pieces of work or projects, such as the Linden Arches Project, or long term collaboration like the Friends of Abbey Fields.

This policy has been developed to ensure that:

- Staff will consider involving volunteers when planning, contracting, monitoring revising and providing services;
- Volunteering enriches public involvement and engagement;
- When the Council does not have any opportunities suitable for a prospective volunteer, it will signpost the individual to external organisations who will be able to support them.

What is a Volunteer?

Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and/or aim of bringing some benefit to the local community. Volunteers can come from all ages and backgrounds and can include people who wish to make a contribution to the community, people wanting to improve their work experience and their CVs and students. It can also be organisations or groups who wish to support local services through focussed activity such as litter picking.

The Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines Warwick District Council's principles, practices and procedures that will be followed in the recruitment, management and control of volunteers. It aims to:

- Provide a framework for all Warwick District Council staff when considering involving volunteers in their work;
- Provide a foundation on which our involvement of volunteers will be based;
- Give a cohesive and consistent approach to ensure that volunteers are fully supported during their volunteering role;
- Help ensure fairness and consistency when involving a diverse group of people, being able to refer to a written policy ensures that decisions are not made on an ad hoc basis; and
- To actively encourage volunteering and to remove any unnecessary barriers to volunteering by individuals or organisations.

Why Support Volunteers?

There are many benefits to the Council in involving volunteers:

- Volunteers can bring a different perspective to our work; often one that reflects the diverse views of the local community;
- Volunteers can help to enhance and/or extend services the Council offers;
- Volunteering empowers our citizens to actively influence decision making and service provision;
- By providing opportunities for skills development within our local community;
- Volunteering can be a valuable pathway to employment or training opportunities;
- Volunteering can provide opportunities to meet like-minded people;
- Volunteering can provide an opportunity to be involved with something interesting, absorbing and rewarding;
- Volunteering can improve general health and wellbeing; and
- Volunteering can act as a lever for bringing in external funding for enhancement of capital schemes.

Our Volunteering Principles

When appointing volunteers, Warwick District Council will adhere to the following principles:

- volunteers will not be engaged in work which facilitates the loss of an existing employee's post, nor on any tasks or projects which (within the past five years) were done by paid employees whose posts have since been deleted; and
- Volunteers will not be used to provide cover for paid staff (for example where paid staff are on leave due to sickness, holiday, maternity or industrial action).

What opportunities can the Council offer volunteers?

There is a wide range of volunteering opportunities the Council can offer, such as:

- Helping providing services, such as litter picks or graffiti removal;
- Assisting with the provision of lessons and services at Leisure centres;
- Assisting with delivery of community projects;
- Fundraising for the enhancement of services or collections such as at the art gallery;
- becoming tree wardens;
- Developing and maintaining assets e.g. Champion Hills BMX Track and Kenilworth Skate Action Group; or
- Helping to maintain and promote our green and open spaces through one of the recognised friends groups or establishing a new group.

This list is not exhaustive and officers will be willing to consider other options for volunteering with the Council. However officers need to take a balanced view on this regarding the potential benefit for the Council and the community, the resources required/available to support any work; and any potential issues that this may cause.

The Council will endeavour to signpost volunteers to relevant external partners, such as WCAVA if appropriate opportunities are not currently available with Warwick District Council.

Raising Awareness of Volunteering Opportunities

The Council will where appropriate promote volunteering and local opportunities by working in partnership with WCAVA, undertaking promotional work of opportunities both with the Council and its partners. The Council will welcome working with local schools, colleges, universities in partnership for volunteering projects, which will be co-ordinated by the relevant Service Area. The Council will, as appropriate, promote and share the successful projects and work of volunteers.

Recruitment Procedures

Should a staff member wish to appoint a volunteer, where appropriate, they will follow the Recruitment Procedure (Appendix 1).

Safeguarding

All supervisors must ensure that volunteers are aware of, and have access to the Council's Safeguarding Policy. CRB disclosures will be carried out, by the Council, on any volunteer who, in the course of their appointment, will have substantial, unsupervised access to children and young people under the age of 16 and vulnerable adults on a regular basis.

A vulnerable adult refers to any person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation which may be occasioned by actions or inactions of other people.

Health and Safety

The volunteer will have access and adhere to the Council's Health and Safety Policy and Procedures, including accident report forms. The Council will ensure that Health and Safety issues are covered at Induction and throughout the volunteer's involvement. The Council will provide specific training, which will be relevant to the roles the volunteers will undertake, such as moving and handling, vulnerable adults,

food hygiene. The Council will provide the appropriate equipment where necessary/appropriate.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The expectation is that in the majority of opportunities there should not be the need for volunteers to handle sensitive/confidential information. Where this is the case the Council would normally expect the volunteer to maintain strict confidentiality at all times, and to sign a confidentiality undertaking to this effect.

Supervision and Support

It is important that volunteers are properly supported and supervised in their work; ensuring that the level of supervision given matches the nature of the job and the experience of the volunteer. All volunteers should have a nominated supervisor/support officer, someone they can have regular access to if problems arise or when help and support is needed.

Training and Involvement

To ensure volunteers are happy, valued and can work to the best of their ability, volunteers will receive ongoing support and be integrated into the organisation. This may take the form of one to ones, group meetings, training or social occasions. Depending on the role or volunteer it may be best practice to provide another volunteer as a mentor.

Where a volunteer is based at Warwick District Council on a day to day basis they will be involved and included in general staff activities where appropriate, such as staff meetings and to have general access to Warwick District Council offices. Volunteers may also be offered, where appropriate and where subject to availability, to undertake relevant Council training courses.

Equal Opportunities

In accordance with Warwick District Council's Equal Opportunity statement, volunteer placements will be open to individuals irrespective of race, nationality, gender, disability, sexuality, age, belief or culture. In addition, and where appropriate the Volunteer Role Description Form must be completed setting out the equal opportunity dimension and any specific equality requirements of the role.

Where, during the initial meeting a prospective volunteer demonstrates hostility to, or a clear lack of support for the equal opportunity policy, they will be deemed automatically to be unsuitable for a volunteer position at Warwick District Council.

Discipline and Grievance

Volunteers are not formal employees of the Council and therefore will not be subject to Warwick District Council's disciplinary procedures. Correspondingly, volunteers will not have access to Warwick District Council's policies and procedures. However, volunteers will be entitled to use Warwick District Council's Complaints Procedure. Should they wish to raise any issue formally the Council would normally expect the matter to be raised with their contact officer (or the contact officer's line manager). However we would always encourage any dispute to be settled informally.

Expenses

In principle Volunteers should never be out of pocket for expenses incurred therefore where appropriate, may be entitled travel expenses, and subsistence allowance in accordance with the relevant Council's policy.

Best practice advises that volunteers should not accept gratuities/monies from clients or customers, although they may wish to accept small gifts such as flowers.

Dress Code

Volunteers' dress code will be at their Supervisor's discretion and should be appropriate to their role.

Private Use of Council Equipment

All volunteers will be expected to adhere to the Council's policies on the private use of Council equipment, including use of the internet, email, telephones and post as per Council employees and Councillors

Insurance

Volunteers appointed to Warwick District Council will be covered under the Council's employers, public liability and professional indemnity insurance where appropriate.

Use of own vehicle

Volunteers should be informed of the need to notify their insurance company if they intend to use their car for volunteer activities and must ensure that their policy is extended to cover business use. They will also be required to produce a current driving licence, evidence of car insurance and MOT if appropriate.

Ending the relationship

Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteer or voluntary group may be terminated by the Council at one week's notice, or immediately where behaviour is equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

Evaluation: It is important that Warwick District Council is able to measure the impact of the volunteer placements it offers. All supervisors should ask their Volunteer to complete the Volunteer Evaluation Form at the end of their placement (Appendix 2).

Monitoring and Review

It will be the responsibility of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in liaison with WCAVA to regularly review the operation of Warwick District Council's Volunteer Engagement Policy and Procedures to ensure that it is in accordance with other relevant policies.

Measures of Success

It is the responsibility for the service area implementing or working with volunteers to identify the measures they feel are appropriate and show benefit to the service area within the Service Area Plan and Portfolio Holder Statement.

Recruitment Procedures

Step 1

Should a staff member wish to appoint a volunteer, they will follow this Procedure. Complete a Volunteer Role Description Form which must be approved by the Head of Service outlining:

- Tasks,
- Responsibilities,
- Reporting lines,
- Terms and conditions, including duration, hours, expenses, insurance, etc, relating to the appointment,
- Role specification, outlining the relevant experience, skills, knowledge, abilities and equal opportunities awareness necessary to carry out the role effectively.

Step 2

The proposed volunteering opportunity will be advertised via external partners and through the District Council website. Interested parties will be required to complete a Volunteer Application Form (Appendix 3) The Council cannot accept volunteers under the age of 16 unless officially on a work experience arrangement. However, there is no upper age limit or health restrictions but ability to undertake each role will be considered at interview.

Step 3

The prospective volunteer will be invited to an informal meeting with the intended Supervisor and appropriate Human Resources representative if necessary. The Volunteer Role Description Form, an informal discussion will take place regarding the interests of the volunteer and requirements of the role with a view to assessing suitability.

Following this meeting, the Council representative/s will decide upon the individual's suitability and will inform the prospective volunteer within one week. There will be a probationary period of one month. At the end of the month, the supervisor and the volunteer will discuss any issues or extra support required by the volunteer and whether the role is right for the volunteer.

Step 4

Prior to commencement of the volunteering role, the Supervisor must ensure the following documents are completed and returned to Human Resources by the volunteer:

Volunteer Personal Details Form (Appendix 4)

Volunteer Agreement Form (containing confidentiality clause and Data Protection clause) (Appendix 5)

If necessary, a completed CRB form with relevant identification (see below)

If necessary, a 'Personal Commitment Statement' relating to IT access (to be returned to IT)

Copies of driving licence if appropriate (see below)

A suitable reference, excluding relations, to attest to their character and suitability for the position

Step 5

Prior to commencement of the volunteering role, each successful volunteer shall be allocated to another volunteer mentor and/or a particular employee who will supervise and support the individual throughout their volunteering placement. The supervisor's responsibilities will include ensuring the volunteer receives the following:

- A Volunteer's Induction and Recruitment Checklist (see Appendix 6)
- Volunteer Role Description (example Appendix 8)
- Regular supervision and support sessions
- Positive feedback on the volunteer's contribution
- Adequate office accommodation if appropriate and all equipment necessary for them to perform their tasks effectively (unless it is stated that the volunteer will provide this)
- A risk assessment appropriate to their role.
- An Evaluation Form at the end of their placement (Appendix 2)
- A feedback form on volunteering work under taken (Appendix 2a)

Volunteer Evaluation Form
All information remains confidential

VOLUNTEER DETAILS –

Name of Volunteer leaving

Post title

Service Area

Nature of work undertaken

Did you enjoy the role? Yes/No

If you did not enjoy the role, why not?

Did you understand the role expected? Yes/No

If you did not understand the role, what would have assisted you further?

Were you provided the correct equipment for the role? Yes/No

If you were not provided the correct equipment please list what you would have found useful:

Would you consider undertaking further volunteering work with Warwick District Council? Yes/No

If you would not consider undertaking further opportunities with the Council, please provide reasons:

Do you have any other issues you would like to raise or points you would like to make?

Please return to ?who was your liaison officer with the Council

Volunteer Evaluation Form
All information remains confidential

VOLUNTEER DETAILS – TO BE COMPLETED BY OFFICER CONTACT

Name of Volunteer leaving

Post title

Service Area

Leaving date

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON CARRYING OUT THE EXIT INTERVIEW

Person conducting interview:

Date interview took place

	Yes	no
Does the job description accurately reflect the duties of the work?		
Do you feel you have had the appropriate training to carry out your role?		
Would you consider returning to Warwick District Council?		
Have you found the experience useful?		

Do you have any other issues you would like to raise or points you would like to make?

SIGNATURE

When this form and any attached notes have been completed, both parties should sign to confirm that this is an accurate record of the exit interview.

Signed (Interviewer)

Date

Signed (interviewee)

Date

ACTION

As a result of this exit interview what actions are necessary or recommended?
(Any identified actions should be reported to the Head of Service by the person who conducted the interview).

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE HEAD OF SERVICE WITHIN ONE WEEK FOR RECORDING,
MONITORING & FILING.**

Volunteer Application Form

Opportunity	
Service Area	
Volunteer Name	
Volunteer Contact Address	
Volunteer Contact telephone number	
Volunteer Contact email address	
Contact Officer Name	

Relevant experience and qualifications

Warwick District Council welcomes applications from people who have disabilities and guarantees to interview disabled candidates who meet the essential requirements of the post applied for. For this purpose, disability is defined as "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (over 12 months) adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

YES NO

If yes, please indicate below if you have any special requirements regarding attendance at interview.

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Relationships to Councillors and/or Senior Officers

Please give details of any relationship to any Councillor or Senior Officer for the District Council.

Name of Councillor and/or Senior Officers	Position held within the Council	Relationship

Data Protection Act			
<p>All the information requested in this Form is maintained as sensitive personal data in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information you provide will be held on manual or computerised systems. The Council will observe strict confidentiality and disclosures will only be made for Payroll, Personnel Administration and Statistical purposes.</p> <p>Your Application Form will be kept securely by the officer responsible for the volunteering opportunity, their line manager and Head of Service. The information will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the Council, without your prior consent.</p>			
Declaration			
<p>I certify that all information contained in this form and any attachments is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I realise that false information or omissions may lead to dismissal or the withdrawal of a job offer. I also acknowledge that canvassing of elected members of the council or employees of the Council, directly or indirectly, in connection with this job will disqualify me.</p>			
Signature		Date	

Volunteer Personal Details Form

Name	
Contact Address	
Contact telephone number	
Contact email address	
Emergency Contact Name	
Emergency Contact telephone number	
Emergency Contact address	
Any health issues need to be considered as part of this role	

Volunteer Agreement Form (containing confidentiality clause and Data Protection clause)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Effective date: _____

Authorised Signature: _____

Full name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

On behalf of the organisation above [delete if individual], I understand that in connection with volunteering work with Warwick District Council ("the Council") we may from time to time have access to, or be required to process, or be made aware of, confidential information belonging to, or possessed by, the Council.

I hereby undertake, agree and acknowledge as follows:

- (a) That all information of whatsoever nature (whether oral, written or held on any information system), containing or consisting of material of a personal, technical, operational, administrative, economic, planning, business or financial nature and relating the Council or any of its clients or partners (such information together referred to herein as "confidential information") shall be treated as strictly confidential and shall not, without the specific written approval of a Head of Service of the Council, be disclosed to any persons, other than those authorised to receive it.
- (b) That no 'confidential information' shall be used by me/us for any purpose other than in connection with the business for the Council.
- (c) That the obligations herein contained to maintain the confidentiality of the 'confidential information', and not to use the same, shall continue after the termination of the business
- (d) That in the event of any confidential information being removed from the offices of the Council by me/us for the purpose of the business or for any other reason, I/we undertake to keep the said information secure.
- (e) That at the termination of the business with the Council I/we will return to the Council all the 'confidential information' in my/our possession or control insofar as the same shall be in tangible form.

This undertaking shall not apply to any confidential information which is already in the public domain, other than as a consequence of unauthorised disclosure by us, or any other person.

This undertaking shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law.

A Volunteer's Induction and Recruitment Checklist

Opportunity	
Service Area	
Number of Hours	
Working Pattern	
Contact Officer	
Notes	

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY / COMMENT / DATE	DONE	INITIAL
Collate Application Pack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advert - Volunteer Role Description - Application Form Other items as requested/necessary 			
Establish Recruitment Timetable and diarise the dates.			
If external advertising is required, liaise with Website Manager over appropriate advert location for website and inform WCAVA			
As applications come in, store securely			
C2. On closing date copy received application forms according line manager considers applicants. Keep originals Consider if candidate has declared a disability.			
When short listing has taken place, record who has been short listed			
Prepare an Interview Timetable and agree it to from the short listing summary.			
Write to the short listed inviting them to interview – (enclose a map if necessary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting they bring proof of right to reside / work or work permit • Any qualifications the role requires – originals? 			
Send rejection before interview letters to non-short listed			
From the short listing summary, input candidates on the visitors system under the contact name of who will greet them			

Copy Interview Timetable and send to all members of the interview panel, Reception and whoever is greeting			
Retrieve all paperwork from line manager with Post Interview Form attached. Check A&I satisfied. Relationship Check – if 'yes' email HofS for authorisation			
Send rejection after interview letters to non-successful – agree feedback with recruiting manager and send interview expenses form if applicable			
Send the offer of appointment letter to successful candidate including all relevant volunteering documents			
Send for references. If this has been withheld – obtain permission. Any references requested other than those listed on the application form must have separate authorisation from candidate			
Request CRB Disclosure Check – if applicable	Liaison through HR		
When 2 references are received, advise the recruiting line manager and confirm they are satisfactory. If they are potentially detrimental discuss with HR for advice	HR / Line		
Finish Summary Form to show who was appointed.			
Ensure all pre-appointment requirements have been met.			
Confirm start date with manager and note if they will catch / miss payroll cut off dates – discuss with manager			

INDUCTION			
ACTION	COMMENT / DATE	DONE	INITIAL
Prepare Welcome Pack for new starter			
Use standard email to advise the following of the new starter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICT (if applicable) - Corporate Induction (if applicable discuss with HR) - Car Park Pass (if applicable) - Notify Reception 			
Volunteer File. Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JD - Completed Application Form - Invitation to Interview - 2 References - Completed induction checklist 			

INDUCTION CHECKLIST

Name Volunteer role

Service Area Date of Commencement

1. Conditions of Employment Explained

Details	Tick once completed
Working hours	
Absence Procedure	
Holidays	
Introductions to key personnel	
Tour of the department/building/ area	
Toilets	
Refreshment facilities and rules i.e. tea money	
Entrance and Exits	
Notice Boards	
Computer – Shown computer and had Moodle explained given log on details (if applicable)	
Health & Safety Policy	
Emergency Procedures & Shown Meeting area	
Fire Drill	
Accident Book	
First Aid Rep	
Confidential clause agreement	

Managers: consider what IT applications will be required – please advise IT prior to start date!

Volunteer Role Description

Job Title: Enter here
Service Area: Enter here

Purpose of job – Give one statement explaining the job’s overall objectives
Enter here
Main responsibilities – Give a maximum of eight brief descriptions of what
Enter here

Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Job Specific Qualifications & Experience	Enter Here	Enter Here
Non Job Specific Qualifications & Experience	Enter Here	Enter Here

Job Specific Knowledge, Skills & Abilities	Enter Here	Enter Here
Non Job Specific Knowledge, Skills & Abilities	Enter Here	Enter Here
Other Requirements	Enter Here	Enter Here

<p>Dimensions – Quote figures which give a picture of the job in any annual budgetary amounts which the job is either directly or indirectly concerned with or any other statistics related to the work.</p>
<p>Enter Here</p>
<p>Approval</p>
<p>Head of Service or nominee signature</p> <p>Date:</p>