

# Volunteering Policy



## Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Scope .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Key Principles.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Practice Guidelines .....</b>	<b>4</b>
5.1	Attraction of Volunteers .....	4
5.2	Volunteer Agreement.....	5
5.3	Induction, Information and Training .....	6
5.5	Responsibility for Safeguarding .....	6
5.6	Support and Supervision.....	6
5.7	Health and Safety .....	7
5.8	Insurance.....	7
5.9	Expenses .....	7
5.10	Conduct and Performance .....	7
5.11	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion .....	8
5.12	Confidentiality .....	8
5.13	Termination .....	8

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Chelmsford City Council recognises that the work of volunteers is invaluable, and that they form part of a supportive partnership, with successes being achieved that could not otherwise be obtained by either group working alone.
- 1.2 It is the Service responsibility for the way that volunteers are recruited, inducted, trained and supervised taking into account the nature of the volunteering role, the way it is undertaken and the context of the service area where the role is located.

## **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all volunteers and sets out clearly how the Council involves volunteers in its work and what volunteers can expect from the Council.

## **3.0 Key Principles**

- 3.1 This volunteer policy is underpinned by the following principles:
  - 3.1.1 The Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to the activities and involvement of volunteers.
  - 3.1.2 The Council will actively seek to attract volunteers from a range of backgrounds to reflect the diversity of contemporary Chelmsford.
  - 3.1.3 A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with the Council.
  - 3.1.4 Volunteers and employees will treat each other with respect and courtesy.
  - 3.1.5 The Council will provide induction, information, training and support to its volunteers appropriate to their role.
  - 3.1.6 Volunteers and employees will work together within the rules, policies and procedures of the Council
  - 3.1.7 Where the volunteer's role involves contact with vulnerable groups, the volunteer will be required to understand their role and responsibilities for safeguarding and specifically understand how to report concerns.

- 3.1.8 Volunteers will have a named contact and supervision for the activities undertaken.
- 3.1.9 The Council will agree a role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements and that the Council will provide an opportunity for the volunteer. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and the Council is not bound to provide the opportunity.
- 3.1.10 Volunteers will not replace employee's posts.

## **4.0 Responsibilities**

- 4.1. It is the responsibility of the Service Manager to ensure that the policy is implemented and adhered to, taking into account the nature of the volunteer role and the service area in which it is based.
- 4.1.2 Day to day co-ordination of volunteers will be overseen by an identified employee.

## **5.0 Practice Guidelines**

### **5.1 Attraction of Volunteers**

- 5.1.1 Chelmsford City Council is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children and young people that we work with. As such, all posts which involve volunteering with children and young people are subject to a safer selection process, including the disclosure of criminal records and vetting checks for eligible roles.
- 5.1.2 In accordance with the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, volunteers will be fairly selected on the skills, abilities and interests of the volunteer and the needs of the Council. However, opportunities may not always be available and in some cases a waiting system may apply. Volunteers will be briefed for the role, and their suitability will be assessed.
- 5.1.3 A clear description of the tasks to be undertaken will be provided in the form of a volunteering role profile or a written work outline or verbal briefing as appropriate to the volunteering role.

- 5.1.4 All volunteers will complete a volunteer application form and registration form, assisted by a responsible adult as appropriate. An officer from the service should then discuss the opportunity with them.
- 5.1.5 Where the role will work with children and young people or vulnerable adults, the officer should interview them face to face to discuss the role and assess their suitability for undertaking this.
- 5.1.6 Volunteers will be required to undergo checks before starting as follows:
- Criminal record check (DBS) as appropriate to the role
  - For roles which require a DBS check: There should be two references either employment or character depending on the individual's circumstances (not family members). The toolkit has a template reference for this purpose.
  - Self-declaration of criminal convictions taking into account the Council's policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders
  - Identity check. The identity check is ideally a passport or driving licence and a document showing the current address of the volunteer. However, if the volunteer is unable to provide these documents, a decision on appropriate identity documents can be on a case by case basis taking into account the nature of the volunteering role.
- 5.1.7 Children and Young People under the age of 18 may volunteer usually only after receiving parental consent or consent through a guardian or school or education provider. Confirmation of consent will be agreed by the Service taking into account the nature of the role, regularity and context of the service. Volunteering will typically be part of a schoolwork experience programme or Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 5.1.8 Children under the age of 16 must always be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

## **5.2 Volunteer Agreement**

- 5.2.1 Volunteers will be asked to sign a written volunteering agreement which will include a description of tasks and adherence to the main principles of this policy. This is not a legally binding contract of employment but is a written confirmation outlining what the volunteer will contribute and what the Council is able to offer a volunteer. Either the volunteer or the Council can terminate this agreement with or without notice at any time.

### **5.3 Induction, Information and Training**

- 5.4.1 All volunteers will have an appropriate induction into the service area and their own work area by an employee. They will be given the information they will need to carry out their role. Where appropriate, specific training will be given, and any equipment required for the task will be provided.
- 5.4.2 Trial periods may be used by the service to ensure the volunteering opportunity is suitable for the volunteer and the service.
- 5.4.3 All volunteers are required to undertake training as follows which will be delivered by the service in the most appropriate way to enable understanding by the volunteer:
  - Safeguarding training and induction as appropriate to the volunteer role
  - Health and Safety training
  - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
  - The Volunteer Handbook

### **5.5 Responsibility for Safeguarding**

- 5.5.1 The Council is committed to promoting the welfare and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All employees and volunteers have a responsibility for spotting abuse and ensuring the safety of those who are most vulnerable and understand the reporting process related to any concerns.
- 5.5.2 All volunteers need to follow best practice, participate in relevant training and report any concerns, incidents or allegations.

### **5.6 Support and Supervision**

- 5.6.1 All volunteers will have at least one named contact person who will be an employee and they will have a designated manager whose responsibility it will be to implement this Policy. All volunteers will be given the opportunity to feedback on progress, work programmes and or objectives and to air any problems that may arise.

- 5.6.2 The supervision of volunteers will ensure that all volunteers meet expected standards of conduct and behaviour. The supervision will include the on-going assessment of safeguarding practice, attitudes and behaviour as appropriate to the role undertaken.

## **5.7 Health and Safety**

- 5.7.1 The Council has an obligation to protect the health and safety and welfare of volunteers. Volunteers are protected by the same health and safety legislation as members of staff and have the same responsibilities. Managers of volunteers will be required to risk assess the activities of a volunteer and discuss this with the volunteer prior to the volunteering activity being undertaken.
- 5.7.2 Copies of the relevant Health and Safety Procedures should be available either on site at the task or in an induction pack depending on the volunteering scheme.
- 5.7.3 All volunteers will be required to read and sign the Health and Safety Policy/Procedure appropriate to their volunteering role and adhere to health and safety instructions specific to their role and location. Relevant health and safety training will be provided to volunteers.

## **5.8 Insurance**

- 5.8.1 All volunteers are covered by the Council's insurance when they are on Council premises or engaged in any agreed voluntary activity for the Council.

## **5.9 Expenses**

- 5.9.1 The Council is not able to pay expenses of volunteers unless explicitly agreed beforehand.

## **5.10 Conduct and Performance**

- 5.10.1 The Council aims for volunteers and employees to work together in a respectful and accountable manner. It recognises however that occasionally issues or problems may arise. When a volunteer's work does not meet the standards required this will be discussed with the volunteer to resolve the issues. Likewise, where a volunteer wishes to raise an issue, they should have a discussion with their volunteer co-ordinator to resolve or alternatively use the Whistleblowing policy as appropriate.

5.10.2 Should an issue arise which may relate to a Safeguarding issue, a referral will be made in accordance with the procedure within the Safeguarding policy.

## **5.11 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

5.11.1 The Council is committed to ensuring all employees, trainees and volunteers are welcome and that our process to engage volunteers is inclusive. We welcome volunteers from all sectors of society. Any act of harassment or discrimination is unacceptable and will be dealt with as appropriate.

## **5.12 Confidentiality**

5.12.1 Where volunteers will be handling confidential information or have access to confidential information on a regular basis, they will be bound by the same regulation regarding confidentiality as members of staff. Guidance will be given by the service.

5.12.2 Information about volunteers will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Regulation.

## **5.13 Termination**

5.13.1 The Council reserves the right to refuse the services of any volunteer who does not adhere to the Council's expected standards or conduct or behaviour at any time. Expected standards are set out in the Volunteer's handbook and/or during induction training.

Version Number	Creation Date	Changes Made	Changes Made By:	Authorised and Checked?	Date of Changes
1.0	Sep 2021	Policy created	N/A	Y	Sep 2021



