

# South Derbyshire District Council

## **DRAFT Volunteer Policy**

October 2016

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## Version Control

Version	Description of version	Effective Date
1.0	SDDC Volunteer Policy	

## Approvals

Approved by	Date

## Associated Documentation

Description of Documentation	
2016-2018 Volunteer Development Plan	

## 1.0 Introduction

Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, without pay, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objective of bringing some benefit to the local community.

Volunteers can come from all ages and may choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons, for example to:

- Socialise
- Put something back into the community
- Regain or learn new skills
- Improve their work experience and their CVs
- Occupy their time
- Support their local services

For the individual, volunteering can improve confidence and self-esteem, increase knowledge and skills, and bring health benefits through raised activity. Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the well-being of our society and environment, making South Derbyshire a better place to visit, work and live in.

South Derbyshire District Council ("The Council") recognises that the skill and enthusiasm of volunteers can make a significant and valuable contribution to the services it delivers and proposes to increase volunteer involvement.

Within the Council the role of volunteers is to complement the work of paid staff, adding value to and supplementing the capacity of the service and is not intended to replace the work of paid staff.

Council volunteers will be managed in a different way to employees. It is a flexible arrangement and there is no obligation for the volunteer to accept any role or for the Council to offer it. Unlike an employee, volunteers do not have a contract of employment with the Council or have the same responsibilities and obligations as employees but they will be provided with a role description which will give a clear overview of the activities they can expect to be involved in, what will be expected of them and the skills or experience they will need.

## 2.0 The Purpose of the Policy

This Policy will formalise the way volunteers are supported and managed across the service and provides a base on which to build their involvement. It sets out the Council's key principles and objectives for the involvement of volunteers within the Council and provides a framework for best practice

- Provide a framework for all SDDC staff when considering involving volunteers in their work.
- Provide a foundation on which to build our involvement with volunteers.
- Give a cohesive and consistent approach to managing volunteers to ensure that they are fully supported
- Actively encourage volunteering and build up a pool of volunteers
- Encourage the development of volunteering in all areas of the Council where appropriate
- Recognise and promote the importance of volunteering to the work of the Council
- Ensure support, training and supervision for Council volunteers
- Identify the standards to which Council staff and volunteers are expected to adhere
- Provide guidance and best practice to Council staff in working with volunteers and ensure the application of the Council's equal opportunities policy to volunteering
- Ensure that volunteering with the Council is an enjoyable and rewarding experience

The Policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary, for example, to comply with changes in the law.

### **3.0 Recruitment**

Application forms, role descriptions, policies and other documents will be available on the Council website, and via partner volunteer organisations.

An application form will be completed and informal interviews will be held with the service volunteer point of contact. Clear defined roles will be provided by each department.

Enough information will be provided both about the specific opportunity and the Council to allow a potential volunteer to make an informed decision about what they want to do.

SDDC will ensure recruitment and selection of volunteers is carried out fairly.

Where a volunteering role requires substantial access to children, young people or vulnerable adults, an enhanced check for regulated activity will be requested through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) prior to the volunteer taking up their role.

### **4.0 Induction, support and training**

The Council recognises that whilst volunteering can be satisfying and enjoyable, it can also place greater demands and responsibilities on individuals.

As volunteers may be perceived by the public as representing the Council, they will be expected to abide by Council's policies and procedures whilst on Council premises, or undertaking any of their volunteering duties.

The Council will ensure that all volunteers receive appropriate induction, support and training to carry out their role and work within relevant policies and procedures. Feedback will be provided to volunteers and debriefs will be held after events and activities have taken place.

A nominated employee will address volunteers' needs for advice, guidance and training. The nature of support will vary depending on the volunteering role: a full-time volunteer may have different requirements to a volunteer undertaking a weekly or monthly supervised task. Employees that support volunteers will receive relevant training where appropriate.

## **5.0 Community-based volunteering**

There are many community based groups that work with the Council. These include 'Friends of Groups'; Footpath and environmental groups; Neighbourhood and Park Watch groups. The Council will facilitate the creation of such groups and, by providing technical support and assistance, enable them to achieve mutual goals.

As these groups are working independently and are not an integral part of the Council, they are not covered by this Policy.

## **6.0 Volunteering with the Council**

The Council wants to make information on volunteering easily available to everyone and will publicise roles on the Council's website and through the South Derbyshire CVS Volunteering opportunities database.

When required, the Council will engage with potential volunteers through specific, targeted campaigns. Volunteer opportunities may also be made available in local volunteer centres.

Volunteers in roles involving vulnerable adults or children may need particular support, advice and training. Managers should make volunteers aware of the special requirements of the role and of behaviour that is not acceptable.

## **7.0 Volunteer Agreement**

Volunteers will be asked to abide by the Volunteer Agreement, which will clearly set out the Council's expectations of volunteers with regard to behaviour and conduct, and what volunteers can expect in return.

The Volunteer Agreement is not a legally binding contract of employment between the Council and the volunteer. It may be withdrawn from at any time at the discretion of either party, although whilst the parties are working together, the principles are expected to apply. Neither party commits to any employment relationship being created either now or at any time in the future. However, this Agreement does not exclude volunteers from applying for jobs within the Council.

## **8.0 Confidentiality and data protection**

Some aspects of the volunteer's role may be confidential. Issues around confidentiality will be discussed with the volunteer during the induction process. The volunteer will also be made aware of the Council's policies on confidentiality and data protection, and will be expected to comply with them.

Personal information about volunteers will be maintained in line with South Derbyshire District Council's data protection procedures and confidentiality guidelines.

## **9.0 Insurance**

Volunteers registered with and supervised by South Derbyshire District Council are insured for personal injury and are covered by professional and public liability insurance, in the same way as employees. However, the insurance will not cover unauthorised actions, or actions outside the volunteer's role description.

Friends groups, and other volunteer groups working without charge and at the request of the Council, are also covered by the Council's insurance.

## **10.0 Volunteer expenses**

South Derbyshire District Council recognises that volunteers should not lose out financially because of their volunteering activities. The Council will provide a clear procedure for the reimbursement of eligible expenses.

All agreed, eligible expenses incurred during the course of volunteering duties and training will be reimbursed on provision of appropriate receipts and/or mileage forms.

## **11.0 Equality and diversity**

South Derbyshire District Council intends to draw on as wide a pool of volunteers as possible. Volunteers from all backgrounds, including those from the protected characteristic groups defined in the 2010 Equality Act, will be treated with respect and encouraged to work within the Council's equality and diversity policies.

During the induction process, it will be made clear to the volunteer that they should treat all employees, clients, other volunteers and members of the public with respect, regardless of their backgrounds and beliefs, and that volunteers should expect the same in return.

Volunteers will be expected to accept and adhere to the equality and diversity policies in terms of their treatment of people they come into contact with as a result of their volunteer role.

## **12.0 Health and Safety**

South Derbyshire District Council's Health and Safety policies and guidance set the standards for a safe and healthy working environment and must be followed by volunteers at all times. Health and safety information will be made available during the volunteer's induction and for reference as required throughout the placement.

The Council is responsible for the health and safety of its volunteers. A risk assessment will be undertaken for each volunteer role. Necessary personal protective equipment will be made available, either on loan or provided without charge as appropriate.

### 13.0 Safeguarding

All volunteers should be made aware of the Council's Safeguarding Policy and it should form part of the induction package for new volunteers. As a minimum all volunteers should be advised on what safeguarding is what to look out for and what to do if they witness anything that causes concern (reporting & referring).

### 14.0 Further information

Contact: Chris Smith Communities Manager on 01283 595942. [Chris.smith@south-derbys.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.smith@south-derbys.gov.uk)