



# VOLUNTEERING POLICY

**Correct at: 30 March 2012**

Author & Owner: **Human Resources**

Contact: [HR Advice Centre](#)

Tel: **0117 35 21400**

Date Adopted: 16 March 2000

The audience of this document are made aware that a physical copy may not be the latest available version. The latest version, which supersedes all previous versions, is available on The Source located at <http://intranet.bcc.lan/redirect?oid=Article-id-1950055>. Those to whom this policy applies are responsible for familiarising themselves periodically with the latest version and for complying with Policy requirements at all times.

## History of most recent Policy Changes – **Must be completed**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation etc)</b>
30 Mar 12	7	Para. 4.7: reference to subsistence allowance removed.	Removal of subsistence allowances from Expenses, Benefits & Travel Policy
1 Nov 11	4	Para. 3.6 now includes a note re: reductions in the amount of compensation payable to volunteers under 16 and over 75 years old.	Insurance Services
1 Sep 11	3	Scope amended with reference to Leave Policy	Needed to clarify scope of policy

## Table of Contents

1. <a href="#">Scope</a> .....	3
2. <a href="#">Policy Statement</a> .....	3
3. <a href="#">Principles</a> .....	3
4. <a href="#">Procedure</a> .....	5
5. <a href="#">Appendix A – Volunteering Registration Form</a> .....	9
6. <a href="#">Appendix B – Volunteer Agreement</a> .....	14

## 1. Scope

[Back to Contents](#)

This policy covers all volunteers undertaking unpaid work within Bristol City Council and locally managed schools. It does not apply to school pupils on work experience placements or students on work placements.

Please note that time off for Bristol City Council employees who volunteer is covered in the Leave Policy s1.2.15 Public duties.

## 2. Policy Statement

[Back to Contents](#)

- 2.1 A volunteer is a person who gives freely of his or her time, skills and experience without expectation of financial reward. Volunteering can take many forms. Some tasks may require specific skills whereas others may require none. Volunteering may be for a limited time (for example to assist in the completion a particular project or event), or it may be on an ongoing basis (for example to assist in the day to day delivery of a particular service).

Bristol City Council recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers can give to the organisation. Volunteers bring with them a diversity of experience, backgrounds, skills, ages and outlooks, which can provide added value to the services delivered by the Council.

This policy sets out the process for taking on and working with volunteers within the Council in a fair and equitable manner. Its aim is to ensure that the benefits of volunteering are maximised for both the volunteers and the Council.

## 3. Principles

[Back to Contents](#)

### 3.1 Status of Volunteers

A volunteer is not an employee or worker and will not have a contract of employment with the Council. All voluntary work undertaken is unpaid.

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 where available the Council will provide work for the volunteer. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and the Council is not bound to provide the work.

### 3.2 Notice

It is appreciated that it is not always possible to give advance notice, but where it is possible either the Council or the volunteer should endeavour to provide as much notice as possible of their intention to end the volunteering arrangement.

### 3.3 Volunteering Roles

It is the responsibility of the manager working with the volunteer to draw up an outline of the volunteer role. This will set out the duties of the role and the skills and experience necessary, as well as any training that is required before the voluntary work is undertaken.

Voluntary work should complement the work of paid staff and provide added value

to the benefit of service users. Volunteers are not intended to substitute for paid employees, so care should be taken to ensure that no undue demands are placed on our volunteers, and that they do not undertake work that should normally be carried out by paid staff.

### 3.4 **Diversity and Equal Opportunities**

Bristol City Council is committed to the principles of diversity and equal opportunities. We are keen to ensure that our volunteers are representative of the community and the people who use our services. We have a commitment to regularly evaluate and monitor our progress towards achieving diversity in our volunteers.

We expect all volunteers to subscribe to and adhere to the principles and practices of the Council's Equalities Policy.

### 3.5 **Health & Safety**

The Council has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers must be treated the same as paid staff in respect of health and safety. Volunteers should at all times follow the Council's health and safety policies and procedures. A risk assessment specific to each volunteer work area and role must be undertaken by a qualified person and a copy provided to the volunteer. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who could be affected by their actions. Volunteers must not act outside their authorised area of work or duties. Volunteers must report all accidents and near misses to their supervisor.

### 3.6 **Insurance**

#### ***General***

Volunteers are covered by the Council's insurance policies (Note: there are some reductions in the amount of compensation payable in respect of the personal accident insurance for those under 16 and over 75). The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions on the part of the volunteer.

#### ***Drivers***

Volunteers can drive Council vehicles as required by their role providing they have the relevant driving licence for the vehicle. If a volunteer uses their own vehicle on Council business they must advise their insurers, or risk insurers declining their claim. A supervisor or manager must check a volunteer driver's licence and insurance documentation.

A volunteer must report any accidents during the course of their work to their supervisor. He or she must also report any motoring offences. The Council will not pay any parking fines accumulated by the volunteer.

### 3.7 **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check**

Where the volunteering activity is with children and young people under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults the volunteer will be advised that a Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau must be applied for.

Full details of disclosures are given in the Disclosure Policy and Procedure.

## 4. Procedure

[Back to Contents](#)

### 4.1 Recruitment

Volunteers may be recruited from a variety of sources, including advertising, speculative applications or word of mouth. Wherever possible managers should ensure that opportunities for volunteering within the Council are available equally to all eligible people.

#### 4.1.1 Advertising

Rather than rely on speculative or word of mouth applications, managers are encouraged to publicise or advertise volunteer opportunities appropriately in order to access potential volunteers from all sectors of society (for example, to access particular minority or ethnic communities, or particular equalities groups, such as disabled people). Volunteer opportunities can be advertised free of charge in the Council's Vacancy Bulletin and website.

#### 4.1.2 Registration and Selection

It is helpful to have an initial brief chat with a prospective volunteer to filter out obviously unsuitable applicants. The aim is to check the following:

- Does the volunteer want to do the particular volunteer role that is available?
- Is the volunteer able to do the role? (physically, mentally, practically, geographically)
- Are the times and days that the role and the volunteer are available mutually compatible?
- (If applicable) Is the volunteer prepared to wait while their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is obtained? (some volunteers may want to start immediately)

If these questions are answered satisfactorily, the person wishing to become a volunteer will be asked to complete the Volunteer Registration Form (Appendix A). Volunteers will also be asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Questionnaire, for diversity and equal opportunities monitoring purposes only. An informal interview should then be arranged.

The interview can be structured and organised without being unnecessarily formal. It should be a two-way process, an opportunity for both parties to find out more. The volunteer should be encouraged to make enquiries about the service being provided and the voluntary role that they are applying for. The following is a guide to discussion points that the interviewer may wish to cover:

The interviewer may want to tell the prospective volunteer about:

- The Council, Department or Service, and the role of volunteers.
- The client base/user group.
- Training and support necessary and available for the role.
- Their expectations of volunteers (e.g. what the minimum number of

hours commitment to the role is reasonably be required on any given day.

The interviewer may want the prospective volunteer to tell them:

- What they like about the idea of volunteering for the Council in the particular service, or in the particular type of work.
- Relevant skills, interests or experience.
- Any particular access needs they have.

It will not be necessary for volunteers undergo the formal interview process as prescribed by the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy for paid staff.

In most instances an interview with a volunteer will differ from an interview for a paid post in that a selection is not being made from a number of applicants to fill one vacancy. However, if it *is* a selection process, and not all prospective volunteers will be taken on, people should be made aware of this from the outset.

If the volunteer is to be taken on the checks of references, health and DBS disclosure must be undertaken, as appropriate.

If the prospective volunteer is deemed to be unsuitable for the particular voluntary role the reasons for the decision should be explained to them.

#### 4.1.3 **References**

Two personal references are required which ask the referee to comment on the volunteer's suitability for a particular activity or client/service user group, and to affirm that the volunteer is trustworthy and reliable. The referees need not necessarily be former employers, and should not be given by a relative. A volunteer should not commence a placement until both references are received and are satisfactory.

#### 4.1.4 **Health Checks**

Prospective volunteers must declare any health issues that may affect their ability to carry out voluntary work on their registration form. If a volunteer highlights a health issue in this respect, the supervisor must discuss it with them before any volunteering is undertaken and where appropriate further advice should be sought from Occupational Health Services.

If once a volunteer has started a volunteering role there is any concern about their fitness for the assigned role, the supervisor should discuss it with the volunteer and consider if it is appropriate to refer the volunteer to the Occupational Health Service for further advice.

#### 4.2 **Volunteering Agreement**

The Manager or Supervisor will prepare a Volunteering Agreement between the Council and the volunteer, which both parties must sign before the volunteer commences any work (Appendix B).

- 4.3 Induction**  
All volunteers must be provided with an induction that covers (at least) all items specified by the 'Induction Checklist' contained within the volunteer agreement (Appendix B).
- 4.4 Personal Identification**  
All volunteers must be provided with a means to prove their identity whilst volunteering, which must be returned when the volunteering placement ceases.
- 4.5 Training**  
The Council will provide any training that is required for the volunteering role, including any essential health and safety training.
- 4.6 Supervision**  
A supervisor will be appointed to provide guidance and support to the volunteer(s). The supervisor will review the arrangement with the volunteer after four weeks, and thereafter on a regular basis. The volunteer should raise any queries with their supervisor.
- 4.7 Payment of Expenses**  
Volunteers are unpaid. However, service managers will have discretion regarding the reimbursement of expenses to volunteers for travel expenses, which will be in accordance with the Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy. Other than expenses as stated here, no other payment should be made to volunteers within the council.
- 4.8 Confidentiality**  
During the course of their work volunteers may become aware of confidential information about the Council, its staff, customers/clients/service users and/or suppliers. Volunteers should not disclose this information or use it for their own or another's benefit without the consent of the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless it has been made public as a result of the volunteer's breach of confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires disclosure.
- 4.9 Use of Council Property, Facilities or Equipment**  
Council property, facilities and equipment (including computers and telephones) are provided for official Council business only.
- 4.10 Gifts and Hospitality**  
Volunteers must not accept gifts (including money) or hospitality (for example, an invitation to a dinner) from customers, contractors or users of Council services. A volunteer should raise any queries in relation to gifts and hospitality with their supervisor.
- 4.11 Standards of Dress and Appearance**  
Volunteers must ensure that their standards of dress, the type and style of clothes and personal ornamentation worn are appropriate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities undertaken by the volunteer.  
Volunteers must conform to requirements for clothing that apply for health and

safety reasons, and to wear any uniform issued to them.

#### **4.12 Alcohol and Drugs**

All volunteers will be expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or drugs (illegal or other), and without having their ability to undertake the volunteering role adversely impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Volunteers in jobs designated 'zero tolerance', in which the consumption of alcohol immediately prior to or during the working day is not be permitted on health and safety grounds (because of the nature of the job, for example a driver), must be made aware of this restriction.

#### **4.13 The Media**

All communication with the media (for example, television, radio, newspapers) must be directed through the office of the Head of Corporate Communications.

#### **4.14 Dealing with Problems**

The volunteer should discuss any problems associated with their placement with their supervisor. The supervisor will normally try to resolve problems informally, but if this is not possible the volunteer should write to his or her supervisor stating clearly what the problem is. The supervisor will endeavour to resolve the problem. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome they may raise the matter with their supervisor's manager, who will make a final decision on the outcome.

If a complaint is made about a volunteer, this will be notified to him or her in writing and the supervisor will decide whether any action should be taken. If the volunteer is dissatisfied with the decision he or she may raise it with the supervisor's manager.

In matters deemed by the supervisor or manager to constitute serious or gross misconduct on the part of the volunteer the Council may end the volunteering arrangement with immediate effect. If the volunteer wishes to appeal this decision they should do so in writing to the supervisor's manager (or to the manager's manager if not appropriate to do so to the supervisor's manager) whose decision will be final.

## Appendix A

[Back to Contents](#)

Please use the [Volunteer Registration Form](#) that is available on the HR Knowledgebase.

## Appendix B

[Back to Contents](#)

### **VOLUNTEERING AGREEMENT - BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**

This agreement sets out the relationship between you (the volunteer) and Bristol City Council. The agreement is binding in honour only. It is not intended by the parties to be a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between us.

#### **Referees**

We require you to provide the names of two people from whom we can request references for you.

#### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks**

For volunteering roles working with children and young people and/or vulnerable adults we will obtain a disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

#### **Your role as a volunteer**

The task(s) that you will be asked to undertake as a volunteer is/are: [insert here the tasks to be undertaken by the volunteer/the likely days and times that the volunteering role would be available/the likely duration].

#### **What you can expect from us**

The Council will provide you with:

- An induction to the work area and your volunteering role within it.
- Training related to your volunteering role.
- A [supervisor/volunteer coordinator/manager/named person] who will supervise your volunteering and with whom you can discuss your work.
- A review of your volunteering role after four weeks. This will normally be carried out by your [supervisor/volunteer coordinator/manager/named person].
- Employers liability insurance and personal accident insurance to cover you while you are fulfilling authorised volunteer work.
- Reimbursement of your expenses, subject to being agreed in advance (in accordance with the Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy).

#### **What we expect from you**

We will discuss with you the amount of time that you are willing to commit to volunteering, when you will be available each week, and how your availability will fit in with our needs. If, for any reason, you will not be attending as we have agreed, you should let us know as soon as possible so that if necessary a substitute can be found or different arrangements can be made, and that we know you are safe and well. If we have no work for you we will let you know as soon as possible.

## **Confidentiality**

In the course of your volunteering you will come across confidential information about the Council, its staff, its clients, customers, service users or other third parties. You must respect this confidentiality and not use the information for your own benefit or disclose the information, except where required or permitted to do so by law.

## **Policies**

You will abide by the Council's Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies, as well as the provisions of the Policy for Volunteering in Bristol City Council. These can be found [at [place] or [in the documents that have been given to you]].

## **Ideas and problems**

You may have ideas for the better performance of your duties or of ways in which we can meet our objectives as an organisation. Please discuss these with your [supervisor/volunteer coordinator/manager/named person].

You may run into problems when performing your duties. You should discuss any complaint or problems with your [supervisor/volunteer coordinator/manager/named person].

Your [supervisor/volunteer coordinator/manager/named person] will discuss with you any issues that he/she may have with your work.

If you would like to change the arrangements for your volunteering or move to a different kind of volunteering, that too should be raised with your [supervisor/volunteer coordinator/manager/named person].

## **Induction Checklist**

Tick to confirm that the volunteer has received the following:

- A copy of the Policy on Volunteering in Bristol City Council.
- Copies of Health & Safety policies (including the risk assessment for the role).
- A briefing on health and safety, confidentiality and equalities procedures and/or principles (including advice on how to access associated information or advice).
- An introduction to colleagues.
- Volunteer Registration Form (completed and returned to the supervisor).
- A tour of the premises, including fire exits, toilets and other relevant facilities (e.g. tea/coffee arrangements).
- A briefing on fire procedures, including alarms and assembly areas.
- A briefing on first aid procedures, including location of first aid kits.
- A briefing on accident reporting procedures.
- Protective clothing (if applicable).
- Advice and information around any training the volunteer is required to undertake that is relevant to the role, including health and safety training.
- A briefing on any other legislation or regulations relevant to persons undertaking the work of the role (eg voluntary bar staff's requirement to be 18 years of age or over).