

APPENDIX A

Summary:

This policy provides a framework for the Council's volunteer programme which aims to:

- define the role and value of involving volunteers within the organisation
- ensure consistency that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly
- set out how staff and managers should recruit, place, support and supervise volunteers effectively to ensure the safety of customers, volunteers, staff and others
- address how to resolve any issues that may arise

This policy is accompanied by detailed guidance and pro forma for staff and managers to implement this framework

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Approval	
Policy Owner	Corporate Policy and Community Safety
Policy Author	Mandy Baggaley, Principal Policy Officer, Corporate Policy & Community Safety
Advice & Guidance	Please contact CPCS
Location	Infonet
Related Documents	Supporting guidance notes and templates are under development
Scope	This policy covers all volunteers providing or supporting the delivery of Gosport Borough Council services.

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Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all.

If you need this document in large print, on CD, in Braille or in another language, please ask.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Gosport Borough Council recognises the unique and valuable contributions made by volunteers to our Borough, supporting our communities and making a positive impact on social, economic, cultural and environmental issues.
- 1.2. The Council seeks to promote the importance and benefits of volunteering within its services and projects to enhance and extend the range and quality of them. Volunteering provides a community engagement opportunity for local residents to learn about and to participate in the work of the Council and to develop and contribute their knowledge and skills. Local people hold the insight and knowledge of local issues which assists the Council in better understanding the needs of the community it services and responding to them.
- 1.3. Volunteering can improve both mental and physical well-being and has the potential to tackle inactivity. Volunteer activity provides a network of social relationships that connect people and offers new opportunities for increased involvement and diversity within the organisation. There are many benefits to involving volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, their expertise complementing the skills of staff in council led projects and engaging with local people.
- 1.4. Definition of Volunteering - Volunteering is defined as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation (Volunteering England definition).

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to volunteers engaged in supporting the delivery of the Council's services and projects. Where an independent organisation is managing volunteers wanting to be engaged in supporting the Council, it must abide by the requirements of this policy and have equivalent procedures in place. The relevant service of the Council will need to ensure these are in place before the organisation/ group can volunteer their services.
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to: work experience, apprenticeships and student placements. It also does not apply to consultation groups and partnership boards which may include the participation of service users and local residents

3. VOLUNTEER ROLES AND AGREEMENTS

- 3.1 Volunteer role descriptions and agreements can help both parties to clarify intentions and expectations. Service areas wishing to engage volunteers must first give careful consideration to the specific roles within that service where volunteers can enhance and extend their service but not replicate or replace the work of paid staff.
- 3.2 Role descriptions are essential to ensure both prospective volunteers and the council service involved have a clear understanding of what each can expect from the other. Role description must include details of the tasks, responsibilities, qualities, skills or experience desired or required, training required in the use of tools and equipment, support included and service contact details for more information.
- 3.3 All volunteer role descriptions must be approved by the Section Head or Service Manager and be registered centrally with Corporate Policy & Community Safety team using the corporate Volunteer Role Description template.
- 3.4 Anyone approaching the Council about its volunteer opportunities should be referred to the Council's webpage to see the list of volunteer roles available and obtain a GBC Volunteer Application form to return to the contact person listed on the role description. For those not having internet access, they can still telephone or write to the Council for this information.
- 3.5 Volunteer applications should be reviewed by the appropriate service area and applicants meeting the requirements should be invited to an interview. Any person not suitable for the volunteering role they have applied for should be given an explanation why and advised of other opportunities available within the Council, if appropriate, or referred to the Go Volunteer service administered by Gosport Voluntary Action for information on volunteer opportunities across the Borough.
- 3.6 Contractual language or expectations must not be included in volunteer roles and agreements. The arrangement is completely voluntary on both sides and is not legally binding on either side.
- 3.7 No training can be offered with the proviso that the volunteer must work a minimum amount of hours for the organisation. Volunteers cannot be offered recompense such as training or a job offer in return for his or her time.
- 3.8 A Council Volunteer Agreement template is available to adapt to each volunteering role.

4. SAFEGUARDING VOLUNTEERS AND OTHERS

- 4.1 Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm and must be included in all consideration of involving volunteers within Council services. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and this extends to the roles and activities of all volunteers undertaking duties on behalf of the Council.
- 4.2 The Council also has a statutory obligation to ensure it is suitably checking, vetting and training its volunteers who may be in positions of trust or come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Volunteers must also be aware of this duty and have received safeguarding induction training appropriate to their role. Any volunteer coming into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults as part of their volunteering role, must receive safeguarding awareness induction and be given the Council's Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy and guidance to understand how to raise a safeguarding query or concern with their supervisor or any Council officer.
- 4.3 All managers intending to work with volunteers must consider the volunteer roles within the context of safeguarding and should consult the Safeguarding Officer if in any doubt about the safeguarding requirements of any volunteer role.
- 4.4 It must be established whether vetting through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is required and if so, at what level, before volunteer roles are approved and advertised. Applicants for volunteer roles where a DBS check is required must be informed of that requirement. DBS checks will be carried out on any volunteer who in the course of their activity has regular, unsupervised, contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- 4.5 Young people under 18 years old may be considered for volunteer roles if the role descriptions have been risk assessed and approved as appropriate to their age, where parental consent for the young person to volunteer has been obtained and the Council has in place direct supervision by DBS checked staff trained in safeguarding of any volunteer in one-to one contact with children, young persons, or vulnerable adults. All role descriptions must specify whether or not they are suitable for anyone under 18 years old.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 5.1 The Council has a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to health and safety risks. All volunteers will be made aware of Health and Safety procedures and any practical safety concerns relevant to their volunteer role as part of their induction.
- 5.2. All volunteer roles will be risk assessed, by the service areas responsible for

them, covering both the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. In addition, where a volunteer states they have a pre-existing medical condition or disability, an individual risk assessment may also be necessary. Where applicable, adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and specific instruction on the use of hand tools, equipment, machinery and vehicles must be provided and evidenced by their supervisor .

- 5.3 Volunteers will be expected to recognise that they are also responsible for their own Health and Safety and that of those around them. Volunteers will be expected to carry out duties without endangering either their own Health and Safety or that of staff, other volunteers or the general public. Before undertaking any activities, every volunteer should consider the particular health and safety hazards associated with the site/task and whether their individual circumstances and medical conditions expose them to particular hazards.
- 5.4 Any accidents or serious injuries must be reported by the volunteer to the Council through their supervisor and recorded the appropriate forms.

6. DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6.1 The expectation is that in the majority of volunteering opportunities, there should not be the need for volunteers to handle sensitive personal data or confidential material. If there is any need, this should be specified in the role description and the Council will expect the volunteer to maintain confidentiality.
- 6.2 Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (Data Protection legislation) refers to the holding of information. It gives people the right to know what information is held about them, and sets out rules to make sure that this information is handled properly. Supervisors should alert volunteers to their responsibilities, where necessary, under data protection during induction.
- 6.3 Volunteers should regard all information they have access to, or are given as a result of their volunteering, as being restricted unless advised otherwise. No information should be released to a third party without first seeking the agreement of their supervisor. Where an information sharing protocol has been entered into by the Council, volunteers must not disclose personal details (home address, telephone number etc) to customers, but should use their business address when an address has to be given relating to living persons, which can include both staff and volunteers.
- 6.4. All Council staff handling or accessing the personal data of volunteers must comply with the Council's data protection procedures.
- 6.5. Volunteers should be supplied with the following information to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under the data protection legislation.

- Privacy Notice for Volunteers.
- Data Protection Policy

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 7.1 The Council is firmly committed to equal opportunities and values equality and diversity in all areas of its work. This commitment includes the involvement of volunteers, in developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and experiences are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences # are able to participate and contribute.
- 7.2 The council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in the discharge of its functions. The Councils' Statement of Commitment to Equality and Diversity offers opportunities for the council to discharge its equality duties in:
- Preventing discrimination, harassment, victimization and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not
- 7.3 Volunteering offers opportunities for a range of different people to work together to improve their community, gain and share experience, reduce loneliness and isolation, build confidence and foster good relations. Volunteering may also offer individuals the chance to participate in public life where participation is disproportionately low and develop experience that can contribute to their Curriculum Vitae and help in gaining future employment.
- 7.4 Volunteers of all backgrounds (subject to the age provisions of Sections 4) are welcomed. However, there may be some situations, for reasons of health and safety, physical or some other requirement where some volunteering opportunities re not suitable for all volunteers. Each opportunity will be risk and equality assessed so that any exclusions are adequately explained and evidenced.
- 7.5 All are required to adhere to the council's Statement of Commitment to Equality and Diversity when undertaking volunteer roles on behalf of the Council. Any volunteer conducting themselves in contravention of this Commitment, i.e discriminating against, victimising or harassing a person or group on the basis of a protected characteristic will be subject to dismissal from their volunteer role as detailed in Section 11.

8. RECRUITMENT

- 8.1 The Council will maintain an updated central register of its volunteering

Roles. All volunteer roles in need of volunteers will be posted on a dedicated Council webpage and be advertised on the Go Volunteer database managed by Gosport Voluntary Action. Any volunteers registered for that service can access the Council volunteer opportunities and contact the service officer supervising each role.

- 8.2 As per sections 3.4 and 3.5 Service areas will be responsible for reviewing and responding to the applications received for the volunteer roles they have registered. A new volunteer role can be created around the specific skills and experience of a prospective volunteer if the role will enhance or extend the range of that service and not duplicate or replace the work of a paid or formerly paid Council position. Any new volunteer roles created must be approved by the Section Head or Service Manager and be centrally registered.
- 8.3 European Union (EU) nationals will still be able to volunteer in the UK after the UK has left the EU if they have one of the following:
- Settled or pre-settled status
 - A visa which doesn't prevent them from volunteering
 - Enrolment in any EU funded volunteering programme with a placement in the UK, such as Erasmus + or the European Solidarity Corps.
- 8.4 Asylum seekers have been able to volunteer for registered charities, other voluntary organisations or organisations that raise funds for them, but this has now been extended to include volunteering for public sector bodies. The rules are the same as for voluntary sector volunteering: the volunteer must receive no payment other than reimbursement for genuine expenditure on fares or meals during volunteering; there must be no arrangements between the organisation and individual that would create a contractually binding obligation on the volunteer; the volunteer must provide a service for the organisation; and the volunteering must not be for a role that would normally be filled by a paid worker.
- 8.5 The Home Office has said that volunteering by refused asylum seekers is lawful, but that the government does not support their volunteering; it expects them to return to their home country, and volunteering will not delay their removal from the UK.

9. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

- 9.1 Induction and training are key elements to the success of any programme. Volunteers must feel welcome and accepted at all times. Their needs must be addressed in consideration of the resources available. Volunteers should be provided with all the information, training and support they need to carry out their role. A corporate Volunteer Handbook template will allow service areas to customise induction information relevant to their volunteer roles.
- 9.2 Training and support must be specifically tailored to each role description

and include instruction on the safe use of any tools, equipment, machinery or vehicles required in the role description. This must be checked and evidenced by the volunteer supervisor.

- 9.3 The induction programme for each role must be reviewed regularly with feedback sought from participating volunteers. A trial period may be set, if the volunteer or supervisor is unsure of the volunteer's suitability for the role.

10. SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

- 10.1 Every volunteer must have a named officer to serve as their main point of contact and supervisor during their placement. The supervisor will be responsible for arranging any training, resources or equipment needed to fulfil agreed tasks, providing advice, guidance and opportunities for volunteers to feedback and ensuring out of pocket expenses are paid promptly.
- 10.2 Supervisors must meet regularly with their volunteers to discuss their placement, development opportunities or any problems or issues that may arise. Up-to-date records must be maintained for each volunteer to record that necessary checks, induction and training have been completed according to the supporting guidance accompanying this policy.

11. COMPLAINTS , GRIEVANCES AND DISMISSAL

- 11.1 It is important that volunteers enjoy and feel valued in contributing their time and talents. The relationship between the Council and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not include or imply any contractual obligation. However, it is essential that the Council is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to its customers in all areas where volunteers are engaged. This may include expectations for reporting of absence, notice of leaving the volunteer role, etc.
- 11.2 Complaints by volunteers should be raised in the first instance with their supervisor to discuss and resolve. The complaint will be investigated fully by their supervisor, or if the complaint is against their own supervisor, by another supervisor or their line manager.
- 11.3 If a complaint brought against a volunteer, this will be investigated by their supervisor. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly as possible. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the volunteer may be advised their services are no longer required with immediate effect.
- 11.4 If a volunteer's conduct is equivalent to gross misconduct, their services will be terminated immediately and relevant authorities informed if there is any illegal activity. At all times, the volunteer will be able to freely state their case and can have a friend to accompany them at all times in the process.

12. INSURANCE LIABILITY

- 12.1 Volunteers operating on behalf of the Council and in accordance to this policy and its guidance are covered under its public liability policy. This policy provides cover for volunteers against loss or injury caused by negligence on the part of the Council. It also protects the public against loss, injury or damage to property caused by the negligence of anyone acting on behalf of the Council, including volunteers.
- 12.2 However, the Council will require recognised independent organisations/groups which are volunteering on behalf of the Council to hold their own Public Liability insurance.
- 12.3 Council volunteers using their own vehicles while volunteering for the Council have the responsibility to ensure that they hold; adequate insurance cover i.e. business use cover, hold a valid full UK driving licence, the vehicle is taxed, has a current MOT certificate (unless the vehicle is less than three years old), the vehicle is serviced and is maintained to meet statutory legal requirements. The volunteer supervisor must check and record this documentation.
- 12.4 As stated in Section 3.2 and 5.2, specific instruction on the safe use of any Council tools, equipment, machinery or vehicles relevant to each role must be provided and completion evidenced as part of the induction process and then be reviewed, updated and rechecked as appropriate to that role.
- 12.5 Supervisors should advise volunteers about where they should store any personal belongings while volunteering as part of their induction, but all volunteers are responsible for the care of their personal belongings. The Council cannot be responsible nor accept liability for any loss of or damage to a volunteers belongings.

13. EXPENSES

- 13.1 Refunding volunteer costs is a legitimate cost associated with any volunteer programme or project. The Council will reimburse any agreed out of pocket expenses that the volunteer has paid themselves to make sure that volunteering is accessible to all, regardless of income.
- 13.2 It is important that volunteers are paid actual out-of-pocket expenses only, in reference to National Minimum Wage Act legislation and in line with Government recommendations. If anything other than out-of-pocket expenses is paid then this would also have legal, tax and national insurance implications.
- 13.3 Expenses must be approved by a supervisor prior to any claim being made. Records must be kept of any reimbursements made and should include the necessary receipts to justify the need to claim. The Council reserves the right to refuse an incomplete claim or defer until resolution.

- 13.4 All records supporting expenses claims, such as receipts, claim forms and insurance policies, will be subject to examination from time to time by internal audit. All claims must be submitted using the Volunteer Expenses Form which includes information about current subsistence and mileage rates for vehicles and bicycles.
- 13.5 Volunteers should not be encouraged to use their own vehicle while volunteering unless necessary and must comply with the requirements set out in Section 12.3
- 13.6 Mileage can only be claimed in respect of journeys actually incurred: no claim can be made for estimated mileage. As a general rule, the mileage to be claimed will be that actually incurred on the approved journey, provided that the most reasonable route was taken.
- 13.7 Mileage for use of a vehicle for volunteering activity is based on the allowance rates currently in operation for vehicle type and size as set out by the HMRC and in line with GBC mileage rates. Volunteers must keep proper mileage records and in most cases the volunteers should notify their supervisor of the impending journey.
- 13.8 The Motoring policy applies equally to volunteers and staff who carry out any journey in a motor vehicle regardless of if they claim mileage allowance or not.

