

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES CABINET MEMBER

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1 OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. To seek approval for the council's new Volunteer Engagement policy.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The introduction of the Volunteer Engagement policy is to address the recruitment and co-ordination of volunteers across the council. Volunteers play a vital role in many areas of the council and the new policy has been written to provide a framework for the consistent treatment of these volunteers.
- 2.2 As a result of the work of the council's recession group, it is anticipated that increased demand for volunteering opportunities may arise as a result of the recession. The council can offer opportunities to widen the skills base of those wishing to volunteer.
- 2.3 This policy will give a structured approach for the recruitment and co-ordination of volunteers, which will aid services that engage volunteers. This policy supports the council's attempts to increase third sector participation more broadly, in line with the requirements of the Corporate Area Assessment (CAA).
- 2.4 The policy also links to the proposed revised Special Leave policy, which now includes the provision of paid leave for volunteering by council employees.

3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 To consider and accept the new policy.
- 3.2 To reject the proposed policy.
- 3.3 To suggest revisions to the proposed policy.

4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Accepting the new policy would offer clarity and consistency to volunteers and managers, whilst also enabling the council to report more accurately on third sector participation for CAA purposes.

- 4.2 Rejecting the proposed policy would continue the current inconsistent approach to volunteering across the council.
- 4.3 Recommending further changes to the policy would require further consultation and delay implementation.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

With the expected increase in the number of volunteers coming to the council, there will be a small increase in the administration costs associated with the checks required for volunteers.

5.2 Staffing

The policy is applicable to all employees of the council other than those employed by schools with delegated powers. It is recognised that when a volunteer is engaged, there is an additional supervisory responsibility required from council employees who engage volunteers.

5.3 Property

None.

5.4 IT

With the expected increase in the number of volunteers coming to the council, there may be a small increase in the use of IT and therefore its associated costs.

6 OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

- 6.1 The new Volunteer Engagement policy is in line with the Compact Volunteering Code of Good Practice.

7 OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The relevant trade unions have been consulted and are supportive of the new policy.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the new policy be approved and adopted.

SERVICE DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCES

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Date: 14 September 2009

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None

1.0 Introduction

1.1 North Lincolnshire Council is committed to the development of volunteering across local communities in line with the Compact volunteering code of good practice.

1.2 This policy applies to all employees of the council with the exception of those employed by schools with delegated powers.

1.3 A volunteer is unpaid, has chosen their role and will only receive out of pocket expenses if this is agreed at the onset.

1.4 We seek to involve volunteers to:

- Enhance our services to our clients.
- Bring new skills and perspectives.
- Develop the skills and experience of those volunteering.
- Through their involvement, increase our contact with the local community we serve.

1.5 The purpose of this guidance is to help all those involved in the co-ordination of volunteers within the council to adhere to good practice and support volunteers in a planned and structured way.

1.6 This guidance is also designed to give recognition to the important role volunteers play in the wider community and to ensure the following objectives are met:

- Volunteers are involved in the most appropriate activity and feel part of the council.
- Volunteers are welcomed, receive a relevant induction and feel valued.
- Volunteers' contributions are maximised by providing appropriate training and support.
- More people become involved as volunteers.

1.7 There are five key principles that are fundamental to volunteering:

- Choice – volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.
- Diversity – volunteering should be open to all, regardless of background, ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.
- Mutual benefit – volunteers offer their skills without payment but should benefit in other ways for their contribution. It must be recognised as a reciprocal relationship where the volunteer feels personally fulfilled.
- Recognition – explicit recognition valuing the contribution made is fundamental to a fair relationship.
- Volunteers will not be used to replace paid employees.

2.0 Benefits

2.1 To the council and the public:

- Volunteers come from all walks of life and offer a diverse, broad range of experiences and skills. These experiences/skills can be drawn upon and developed to positively impact on a range of activities across North Lincolnshire
- volunteers may be engaged to do either one-off tasks and/or ongoing work with particular individuals, groups or projects
- volunteers can be flexible and innovative in their approach
- volunteers enhance a sense of community and help to build a healthy civil society
- the wider community and the environment benefit from the contribution made by volunteers.

2.2 To the volunteer:

- Provides outlets for people's skills and abilities
- widens social horizons and increases self esteem

- opens the way to learning new skills, life skills and developing self-confidence
- improves the volunteer's CV

3.0 Co-ordination of volunteers

3.1 The council wishes to ensure that standard processes are adopted during the identification and co-ordination of volunteering opportunities, in accordance with these guidelines.

3.2 Those involved in the co-ordination of volunteers within the council need to first identify and define the role that they wish a volunteer to fill and how long such a role is expected to last. See Appendix 1 (Volunteer role description template).

3.3 This information should then be advertised through the Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire (VANL) group and on specific volunteering websites such as,

www.do-it.org.uk

www.vinspired.com (Volunteering opportunities for those aged 16 – 25 years)

www.vanl.org.uk

Advertising on the above websites is organised through VANL.

www.timebank.org.uk

3.4 VANL will co-ordinate all volunteering opportunities and applications, they can be contacted on 01724 845155 for further information.

3.5 VANL also offers training for those involved in the co-ordination of volunteers to encourage good practice.

3.6 Managers with a volunteering opportunity will meet with all prospective volunteers to assess their current skills and suitability for current volunteer roles, taking into consideration the work the volunteer would like to undertake and how best their potential might be realised.

3.7 Before confirming the volunteering opportunity, as appropriate, the following will have been undertaken:

- Volunteer has completed a volunteering application form. (Volunteer application forms are available from VANL).
- Satisfactory references have been obtained.
- Health checks have been undertaken.
- Criminal Record Bureau (CRB)/ Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) checks have been completed where the volunteer will have access to children and vulnerable adults.
- Driver checks have been undertaken; see Driver Document Checks GAG, A.2e.

3.8 After consultation, each volunteer will be provided with a Volunteer Agreement to confirm the specific role they will be undertaking and establish what the council undertakes to provide for them. See Appendix 2 (Volunteering agreement).

3.9 All volunteers will have an induction to the council. This will be recorded on a volunteer induction record. This must be retained. See Appendix 3 (Volunteer induction record).

3.10 Review meetings should be built in to offer continued support to the volunteer.

Note 1: People in receipt of state benefits can volunteer and receive out of pocket expenses. Benefits claimants must inform the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) before volunteering. A free booklet entitled 'A Guide to Volunteering while on Benefits' has been produced by the DWP and provides further information.

4.0 Expectations

4.1 Volunteers can expect the following from the council:

- Volunteer engagement has the support of employees and trade unions

- Volunteer roles are clearly defined
- The council has time set aside for the co-ordination of new volunteers
- Selection procedures are open and inclusive
- Volunteer induction is in place
- Volunteers have a named contact
- The council will provide support and training appropriate to the role
- The council has employers liability, public liability and personal accident insurance to include volunteers
- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses in a simple way, which is free of embarrassment. Volunteers will be paid mileage at the appropriate casual user rate, unless the volunteers are employees of the council and would ordinarily receive a different rate i.e. essential or lease, in which case that rate will apply
- Volunteers views will be taken into consideration in decision making

4.2 The council expects the following from volunteers:

- The privacy, property and confidentiality of others will be respected
- Volunteers will in no way discriminate on unlawful grounds
- Health and Safety procedures will be followed as appropriate (volunteers are encouraged to attend regular training and refresher sessions as required)
- Volunteers will maintain regular contact and immediately report any problems to their designated named contact
- Volunteers will aim to fulfil the commitment they have made, as fully as possible, and if unable to attend must inform their designated contact

Volunteer Opportunity/Role Description

Volunteering Opportunity Title:

Description of the role (please provide details of the nature and key responsibilities):

Preferred skills/qualifications/experience (if required):

Training/support (Would the volunteer be required to undertake specific training before commencement of the opportunity, e.g. child protection, health and safety?):

CRB/ ISA check requirement (only if working with children or vulnerable adults):

Additional checks required (satisfactory references, medical checks):

Time commitment (give details of days, times, length of opportunity and flexibility of arrangements):

Opportunity location:
Contact details:
Expenses (payment of out of pocket expenses for fuel/travel/subsistence, advise of rates and how to claim):
Insurance (give details of any insurance restrictions):
Probation period/review date (if applicable):
Recruitment (what type of selection will be used):
Signed Dated: (Manager)

The original should be kept on file and a copy given to the volunteer

Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are an important and valued part of North Lincolnshire Council. We want you to enjoy volunteering with us and feel a full part of our team.

This agreement tells you in brief what you can expect from us and what we would like from you. We aim to be flexible and we will do our best to accommodate any changes if this would assist you.

Attached is a copy of the volunteer opportunity giving details of the volunteering and its location, contact details, time commitment / dates, training, expenses, insurance and any required checks.

We, North Lincolnshire Council, will do our best:

- to introduce you to how the council works and your role with us and to provide any training you need.
- to provide regular meetings with your contact so that you can tell us if you are happy with how your volunteering is organised and get feedback from us.
- to respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them.
- to pay your travel and out of pocket expenses promptly.
- to consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes.
- to insure you against injury you suffer or cause due to negligence.
- to provide a safe workplace.
- to apply our equal opportunities policy.
- to apply our complaints procedure should any problem arise.

I, [insert name of volunteer], agree to do my best:

- to volunteer to the best of my ability in the role outlined, and
- to give as much warning as possible if I am unable to attend as arranged.

And will comply with:

- North Lincolnshire Council's policies, including health and safety, equal opportunities, confidentiality and child/adult protection.

Note: this agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.

Signed Dated:
(Volunteer)

Print Name

**WELCOME TO NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE
Volunteer Induction Checklist**

Volunteer Name:.....

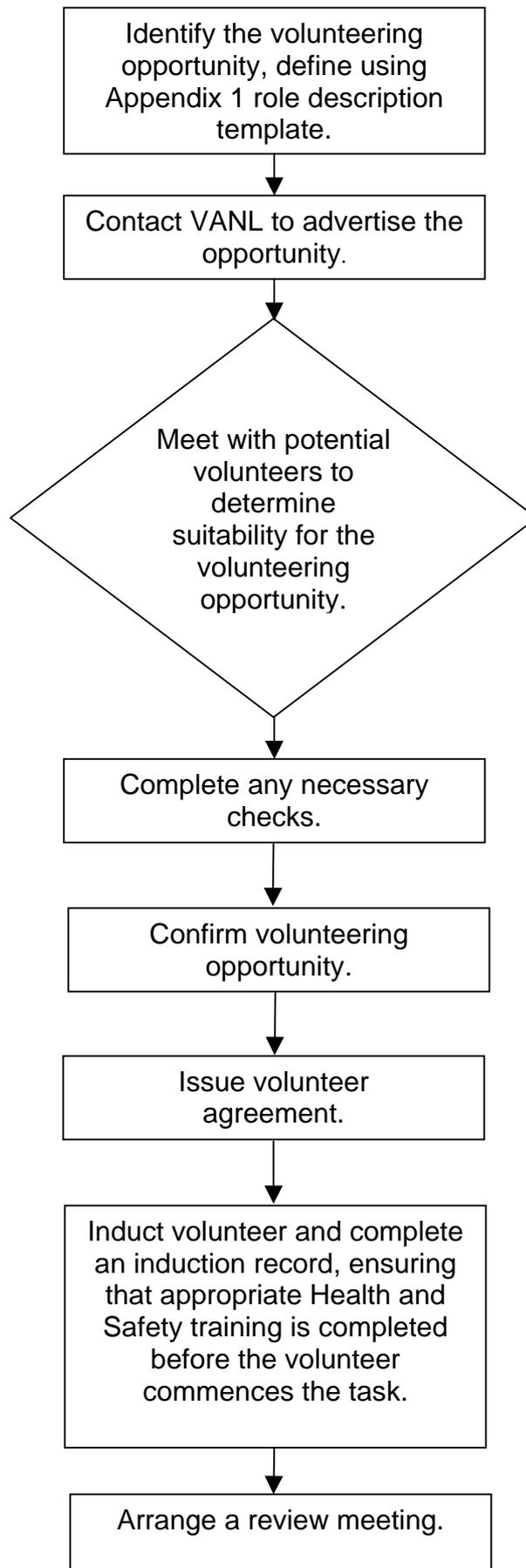
Service: Team:

Volunteering Opportunity: Date of Commencement:

FIRST DAY					
<i>(volunteer & NLC to initial where completed)</i>					
			<i>Volunteer</i>	<i>NLC</i>	
ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT					
	Introductions to your team				
	Workplace layout				
	Where you will work				
	Domestic arrangements (lunch, drinks, toilets, stationery, telephone, as appropriate)				
	Would any adaptations be beneficial to support you in carrying out your work	Yes	No		
	Arrangements for storing personal items, eg desk, lockers				
	Explanation of the council and its structure relevant to position				
HUMAN RESOURCES					
	Confirm the requirements of the role using volunteer role description				
	Agree commitment to attendance and who to notify if unable to attend				
	Claiming expenses				
	Relevant policies – equal opportunities, diversity, health and safety				
	Code of Conduct - awareness				
	Access to buildings: entry card/identity badge/signing in requirements				
	Personal alarm – issue and explain usage (as appropriate)				
	Uniform details				

HEALTH & SAFETY			
	Booked on appropriate Health and Safety training (e.g. manual handling, COSHH etc.) – enter date below		
	Fire - fire procedure, signing in sheet, fire exit(s), roll call point, location of fire alarm, location of fire equipment, requirement to sign in at different locations		
	First aid provision and structure in your workplace (name of first aider, how to report accidents)		
	Risk assessments - go through risk assessments as appropriate to job		
	No smoking policy		
	Driver's checks complete & handbook issued		
	Safety equipment/clothing - where and how to obtain it, how to use it		
	Lone working arrangements (where applicable)		
	Welfare Service available - provide leaflet		
	Use of equipment:		
	➤ Machinery - use of (appropriate to job)		
IT			
	Password(s)		
	Availability of PC/laptop and associated equipment		
	Installation of necessary software arranged		
	e-learning for Government Connect & Introduction to IT Security Policy arranged		
	Introduction to Intralinc plus demonstration given		
	Introduction to North Lincolnshire Council's website plus demonstration given		
	Discuss "green IT" issues (use of Green IT Strategy) e.g. use of recycled paper, printing in duplex, standby mode, power switch off		
	Use of mobile phone (where applicable) – policy & declaration sheet to be completed		

FIRST WEEK		
<i>(volunteer & NLC to initial where completed)</i>		
	Relationship between service unit and other North Lincolnshire Council service units (refer to North Lincolnshire Council organisation chart)	
	Description/explanation of Service Units (a) organisation (b) functions	
MANAGING YOUR PERFORMANCE		
	Role description – check contribution is fully understood	
	Service/Business Plans – give explanation in relation to the job	
	Supervision – explain process	
	Review meeting – set date	
CULTURE		
	Discuss and explain North Lincolnshire Council's culture using Culture leaflet [to be covered on corporate induction course – enter date below]	
CUSTOMER SERVICE		
	Discuss and explain Customer Care Charter [to be covered on corporate induction course)	
DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY		
	Diversity course booked (Introduction to Diversity) – enter date below	
COMMUNICATION		
	- methods used in service, groups, what will receive	
DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION		
	Discuss the Council's procedures in respect of Freedom of Information & Data Protection (to be covered on corporate induction course)	
RISK		
	Discuss Risk Management – to ensure individual actions reduce risks in the workplace	
DEVELOPING SELF		
	North Lincolnshire Council's 'Going Forward Together' will be covered on Corporate Induction course) - enter date below	
	Discuss North Lincolnshire Council's Code of Conduct using leaflet	
	Generic Competencies – discuss expected behaviours	
	Identify any initial training requirements	



Explain how training requirements are dealt with, training records, evaluation of training and training plan			
Arrange training review meeting date			
Arrange dates for appropriate mandatory induction sessions:			
<u>Induction Workshops</u>			
Corporate induction	Date:		
Health & Safety	Date:		
Introduction to Diversity	Date		
Skills for Life assessment complete			
Induction completed			

I confirm I have received and understood the information discussed above.

Signed Employee Date

Signed Manager Date