

# Time Off for Volunteering Policy

The Council believes in the importance of giving back to the community and the benefits that volunteering can have, not only for those receiving the support but for staff health and happiness. It can be hard to find the time in our busy lives to volunteer, however the benefits can be enormous!

We recognise this and believe these efforts should be rewarded by providing your normal salary for this time well spent out of Council business.

## Benefits

Volunteering has huge benefits for you and the community. Volunteering can:

- Have a real and valuable impact on people, communities and society in general
- Help you learn and share new skills and experience
- Help you meet different types of people
- Improve your morale, physical health and work-life balance
- Be fun!

## Eligibility

Following the successful completion of their probationary period, employees will be granted up to 2 paid Volunteer days (14.8 hours) off work per holiday year. Time off is pro rata for part time staff.

Volunteer days may not be split into half days leave.

You will be paid the equivalent of what you are contracted to work on the day that you take leave. For Example, if you work 6 hour on a Friday and you take a Volunteer day on Friday, you will be paid for 6 hours work at your normal rate of pay.

## What projects can I support?

You can support any registered charity of local service that operates within your area or within the local area of your office.

\*For example, supporting a charitable organisation such as Cancer Research volunteering to man the route on a night walk or a locally focused activity such as garden maintenance at a local care home.

Any activities which cannot be shown to be of benefit for the local community or registered charitable organisation, will not qualify under this scheme. Volunteer days will not be permitted in the following circumstances:

- In connection with a party political activity
- If there is a potential detriment to service
- In connection with religious activities
- Where there is a conflict of interests with your role or the wider objectives of the Council
- Where it involves activity that is likely to bring the Council into disrepute

You should also not participate in any activities may impact your health or wellbeing.

### **Health & Safety**

It is your responsibility to ensure you are meeting all health and safety standards, no matter the type of volunteering arrangement you choose to do. You should ensure that the organisation that you are volunteering with has sufficient insurance cover for the role that you undertake.

### **Expenses/equipment**

We will not pay any expenses you may have through volunteering activity. We will not provide or pay for any equipment required for your chosen volunteering role. You should discuss this with the organisation that you are volunteering with as they may offer to pay reasonable expenses.

### **How to request a Volunteer day**

If you wish to take part in volunteering, you should speak with your line manager. Please provide details of the name of the voluntary organisation or charity you will be working with and what type of voluntary work will be involved. Any requests for a Volunteer day should be authorised by your line manager in the same way as annual leave. If the date requested for a Volunteer day conflicts with other team absences, workload capacity or the Council does not feel the voluntary work is appropriate, then your manager may refuse the request and will provide justification for the refusal.

### **Representing the Council**

Whilst you are volunteering and being paid to do so, you are effectively representing the Council in the same way you would in the workplace, and we therefore expect that you would act as an ambassador for the Council at all times.