

FAQ's for Volunteer Management

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Do I need a volunteer?

A volunteer will undertake short or long term projects with the Council, without experiencing financial gain.

You should write a role description to help you decide if you need a volunteer. Once you are clear about the role the individual will do on behalf of the Council you should send a completed role description (appendix 1) to the Volunteer Management Group (VMG). The VMG will review the role description and support you with the recruitment of a volunteer.

Can I offer a volunteering opportunity to young people (under 18)?

The Council can offer volunteering opportunities to young people (under 18) where the project is specifically aimed at that age group. All staff working with young people should ensure that they comply with the *Safeguarding Children and Young Peoples Policy and Procedure* and attend the Safeguarding of Children and Young People – level 1 training.

How will I keep track of the activities within the volunteer role?

Every volunteer will have a volunteer supervisor who has attended volunteer management training. The volunteer should be treated similarly to a staff member with regular opportunities for updates, discussions and feedback about the service using the volunteer supervision template (appendix 5).

Who can become a volunteer supervisor?

Any staff member can become a volunteer supervisor, provided they have completed the volunteer management training. If a staff member has not had line management responsibility in the past their direct line manager should provide support for the first six months and include opportunities for monitoring through the appraisal process.

When/how do I book volunteer management training?

The Council offers a Volunteer Management training course. You should book your place through the course booking section on EIS. Do this as soon as you start thinking about taking on a volunteer, the earlier you do the training the more likely you are to manage the volunteer recruitment process well and get the best person for the role.

What should I include in the volunteer role description?

Each volunteering role must have a role description, for which there is a template (appendix 1). This must be submitted to the VMG for approval before a volunteer advert can be placed.

What should I include in the volunteer advert?

Your volunteer advert (appendix 2) should be no longer than a four line summary which tells potential volunteers what the organisation / project does, and gets them interested in helping. Your role description will provide the basis for the advert. You should use language to attract people's attention i.e. "Our friendly team", "Our exciting project".

When and where should I advertise the volunteer role?

You can advertise your role as soon as you receive approval for the post from the VMG. Volunteering roles can be advertised through the Volunteer Centre Dacorum. You should also try more targeted approaches to networks that may have an interest in that area of work. Data protection rules must be adhered to when targeting these networks.

What should I do when people are interested in the volunteer opportunity?

All applicants who apply for a volunteer role must be contacted by telephone, email or letter within 10 working days of the closing date for applications. When making contact please remember that this person will be giving up their spare time to help you and your department. Please ensure that;

- you are positive about the opportunity and the organisation
- you explain the process and the opportunity clearly
- you make the volunteer feel valued
- you listen and give opportunity for questions.

How do I select the right person for the role?

You should be clear from the start what the selection process will be. Options are;

- Informal chat/discussion
- telephone interview
- trial period or taster session
- application form
- formal Interview
- references
- DBS checks

You should decide what is right for the role, don't over complicate things. The process should be representative of the opportunity.

Who can carry out an interview with a volunteer?

If a formal interview is used, the internal interview process should be followed and a member of staff trained in Recruitment and Selection should be present.

I don't think the volunteer is right for the role, how do I tell them?

All applicants should be notified if they are not successful. You should provide constructive feedback and identify the reasons why the volunteer is not suitable, referring to the requirements of the role description.

I've chosen a volunteer, how do I get them started?

Your first step should be to complete your Risk Assessment (appendix 6) and relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks before your volunteer starts. When this is complete, every volunteer must have an induction. A quick reference guide to the induction can be found in appendix 3.

How can I support, train and retain my volunteer?

One of the biggest reasons given by volunteers for leaving a role is that they don't feel valued. They are much more likely to stay if they feel appreciated and can see that their work is contributing to the success of the organisation. Volunteers should have the opportunity to receive Council communications and give feedback about the service. Stay on top of support and training for volunteers by using;

Appendix 4: Volunteer Supervision Template.

Appendix 5: Checklist to help you retain your volunteers

How can I involve and reward my volunteer?

Volunteers should be kept informed about what is happening through meetings, emails and other appropriate communication. They should be given regular opportunities to express their views on the organisation.

The contributions and achievements of volunteers should always be recognised and you should always thank them for their time.

If you're interested in finding out more about volunteer management check out the *Volunteer Management Toolkit* (Volunteer Centres Hertfordshire).

What should I do about expenses and travel?

Volunteers who claim mileage for their vehicle must confirm with the Council that they will be covered when travelling to and from their volunteer activities prior to any travel being made. If you are unsure about expenses please speak to the Volunteer Management Group.