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## Preface

Becoming a volunteer in the City is a good way to help your local community it is also a way to help yourself. People volunteer for all sorts of reasons, to give something back to the community, to develop or share skills and experience<sup>1</sup> or simply to get involved, be active and meet people.

Volunteers add that all important 'extra' to existing services, adding value to existing provision throughout the City. We think it is important to recognise the vital work being done by our volunteers in Wolverhampton.

The evidence gathered throughout the review has been eye opening, the public sector and voluntary and community sector have been particularly hit with reductions in resources. The review is clear that volunteering is not about replacing paid staff, our aim is to continually improve the experience of volunteers who choose to give their time on behalf of the Council and the people of Wolverhampton.

In recent years there have been changes in the way and reason why people volunteer which has been highlighted in the evidence gathered. Meetings with the voluntary and community sectors and trade union discussions were productive and resulted in a 'meeting of minds' by all who participated in the review. The common aim was determined to be to work together, to develop and promote volunteering in the City and to implement jointly volunteering policies which ensure equity of access and provision for all volunteers.

We recognised the need for regular review of volunteering policy by Councillors in conjunction with the voluntary and community sector to ensure further work to develop volunteering continues to develop with partners and agencies in the City and in the Combined Authority once it is fully active.

Finally, it would be remiss of me in not placing on record my thanks and appreciation to Councillors, employees, organisations who attended meetings and the visits made, for their help, assistance and advice which proved invaluable in the preparation of this report.



*Councillor Ian Claymore, Chair of the Scrutiny Review*

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<sup>1</sup> • The number of residents aged 16-64, without any recognised qualifications in Wolverhampton is 30900 or 19.6% of the working population (16.01.2016).

## 2. Summary of Report

The report considers the City of Wolverhampton Councils volunteering offer. It considers how and why individuals volunteer, and seeks to understand the issues and challenges for volunteers and service areas in the Council.

The review group has acted in a complementary role to inform the existing Council work stream to develop the Councils volunteer policy and for the Councils offer to be shared as an exemplar with other organisations as part of the wider work that needs to happen to develop the City Volunteering Strategy.

In recent years there has been a shift in the way and reasons why people volunteer, and recognition that volunteering is an individual pursuit for which there should be robust mechanisms and support to embrace existing and develop new skills and experience; in turn this will add social value to existing service provision.

The report identifies that the Councils volunteer offer should make clear the difference between voluntary work placements, work experience and volunteering in its purest form. It outlines the different pathways, training and support that should be available to individuals, volunteers and supervisors in service areas. It considers the service area capacity and resource required to facilitate and provide equal opportunities and protection of all volunteers, supervisors and customers.

The evidence gathered during the review has captured the current mechanisms, initiatives and good practice in the council and across the City. The review group identified the barriers to accessing volunteering and highlighted opportunities that need to be factored into the draft policy. It emphasises the ambition of the Council to work closely with various organisations, public and voluntary, to take volunteering forward as a way to develop skills and experience to help people back into employment, and also to add depth and value to existing services.

This report highlights the need to work effectively within the Council service areas and with partners, particularly our voluntary sector colleagues, to maximise the impact of current and future resources. It aims to influence better access to volunteering opportunities, to improve volunteer processes and monitoring and provide more detailed information that will help to shape and develop a Volunteering Strategy for the City with partner organisations.

The review group has contributed to and considered the draft volunteering policy for people who want to volunteer in the City of Wolverhampton Council (appendix 1). The review group made recommendations for the development and delivery of the policy which clearly relates to volunteering as a pathway to developing skills and employment.

The aspirations of the review are to improve skills and employment in the City through volunteering opportunities and to promote independence to strengthen community resilience. There are clear and deliverable recommendations coming from the review group's work which will develop and strengthen current volunteering arrangements within existing internal and contracted out resources.

### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1 Volunteering was identified as a potential topic for scrutiny review at the annual work programme planning event in June 2015 and agreed as a scrutiny review item for 2015-16 by Scrutiny Board.
- 3.2 The review was needed to consider the City of Wolverhampton Council volunteer offer and the volunteer's journey in terms of the routes to employment in Wolverhampton that will inform the wider City Volunteering Strategy which will be considered by Cabinet in September 2016.
- 3.3 The core principles of a scrutiny review are:
- Setting up a review only when it is clear that it would have resonance with Wolverhampton residents and workers.
  - Applying scrutiny only to issues where there is a real and legitimate opportunity to influence.
  - Understanding when a 'narrow and deep' method of scrutiny is of greater value than one that is 'broad and shallow'.
  - Being flexible in the conducting of scrutiny to ensure that it is tailored to the different demands of each situation.
- 3.4 Volunteering in the Council will help to deliver the following corporate priorities:
- People and communities achieve their full potential - Enabling Communities to support themselves.
  - People develop the skills to get and keep work - Improving our critical skills and employability approach by supporting and providing volunteering opportunities.
- 3.5 Key question(s) that this review sought to answer:
- What is the current Council volunteer offer?
  - How do people access volunteering – how transparent is it?
  - What is the current volunteer journey within the City? Are there supported pathways and how do we currently monitor and track volunteers in the City?
  - What is the current Council coordinated volunteer offer in the City to help people into employment?
  - What best practice is available to inform the development of the volunteer offer and volunteer pathways in Wolverhampton?
  - What improvements can be made to current practice to improve the volunteer offer in the City?
  - What are the resource implications?
  - How does this sit with the thrust for value for money (VFM) and added social value?
- 3.6 The Scrutiny Review Group met on five occasions to gather evidence from a wide range of sources using a variety of methods including desk top research, written and verbal reports, site visits with volunteers and providers, witnesses attendance at meetings and round table discussions.

3.7 The review group considered the following:

- Current policy and mechanisms for training and support for volunteering.
- Perspectives of the current offer from public surveys involving employees who manage or support volunteers in the Council, the Citizens Panel and of working aged people attending the Wolverhampton Jobs Fair.
- Good practice in the City and Nationally.
- Visits were carried out to voluntary sector organisations to meet providers and talk with volunteers.
- Witness evidence from Department of Works and Pensions, voluntary projects co-ordinators, partner and voluntary sector organisations, the Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council Volunteer Service and Unison.

3.8 During evidence gathering the review group considered a substantial evidence base. Witnesses provided perspectives relating to mechanisms, resources and good practice in volunteering and contributed to a healthy debate about the barriers and advantages of robust and sustainable mechanisms for volunteers in the City.

#### 4.0 **Context - Volunteering at the City of Wolverhampton Council.**

- 4.1 Volunteering is 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 to use their time, talents, professional skills and energy to improve the lives of people in our local communities.
- 4.2 The work to improve the City of Wolverhampton Council volunteering offer started in February 2015 with a focus of improving skills and employment in the City through volunteering opportunities.
- 4.3 A stakeholders meeting took place to discuss the current offer. Employees who manage or support volunteers in the Council, representatives from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), the Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) Volunteer Service and Council Human Resources Policy Team met to find out what volunteering in the Council looked like. The messages from the meeting were that there was a long history of volunteers in the Council but data was patchy and further detail needed.
- 4.4 The 'Citizens Panel Volunteering Survey' (July 2015) was conducted to explore the capacity and interest of Wolverhampton residents and visitors to donate their time to volunteering in the City. 387 surveys were emailed and 1120 letters sent to Citizens panel. The survey was broken down into four broad categories:
- Information about the member.
  - Expectations and barriers of volunteering.
  - About their skills and experience.
  - About their interests and the organisations they would volunteer in.
- 4.5 A questionnaire was circulated to 60 Heads of Service (HoS), the questionnaire aimed to confirm number of volunteers and the current picture relating to the current volunteer

offer in the City of Wolverhampton Council including policy, process and support.

- 4.6 The Council's Senior Executive Board (SEB) received initial feedback from the surveys and agreed to develop a Heads of Service (HoS) Working Group to work with the Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator and SEB to consider the Council's volunteering offer with a focus on a structured pathway into work.
- 4.7 The Scrutiny Review of City of Wolverhampton Volunteering Offer was established by Scrutiny Board in July 2015 to look in depth at the issues identified. The core values of a scrutiny review (paragraph 3.3) have been observed and the scrutiny resource has acted in a complementary manner, the evidence and key findings of the scrutiny review has informed the HoS group work.

## **5.0 Findings**

### **5.1 Wolverhampton City Council (WCC)**

- 5.1.1 Heads of Service (HoS) questionnaire was circulated to 60 HoS relating to current picture, policy, support and process. 56 responses were received ranging from highly positive to areas where there are clear gaps that need to be addressed.
- 5.1.2 The main messages from managers and support officer survey were as follows: Some services have coordinated pathways for volunteers and others have no formal process to refer to.
- 143 core volunteers worked across the organisation (some cases for more than 10 years).
  - Almost 80% had people volunteering for less than 5 years.
  - Nine service areas in the Council have volunteer coordinators.
  - Six areas have formal volunteering processes. Only one area has a budget for volunteers. Over 40% of volunteers are of working age (it is not known if they are already working).
  - There is an appetite to help people, supporting them into work and giving them experience through volunteering.
  - There is no funding to develop the Volunteering Offer it is intended to look externally to fund anything that needs to be done.
  - The Council is not a natural place for people to approach for volunteering so, there has to be a clear offer.
- 5.1.3 The main messages of the Citizen Panel survey were shared with the review group as follows:
- 197 responses were received.
  - The majority of respondents were aged 55+.
  - 58% said they have or are considering volunteering.
  - 40 % of respondents have previously or are currently volunteering.
  - 83 respondents were not motivated to volunteer with 83% stating work and family commitments as the common causes.
  - The majority of respondents willing to do so would do so for organisations focusing on education and literacy, followed by wildlife and animals.
  - Giving back to the community was the most common reason for volunteering.

- 97% said they would volunteer for a not for profit organisation, 46% for a public sector organisation and 26% for a private company.
- The most common activity respondents would carry out was administrative duties (44%) followed by advice, information and support (41%) and general help (41%).

5.1.4 The review group carried out a public survey at the Wolverhampton Job Fair to gather face to face feedback from people of working age. The survey focussed on working age residents and their interest in volunteering at the Council.

5.1.5 The main messages:

- Footfall of 1200 at the Job Fair, 59 people completed the survey.
- Of the respondents 31 female and 28 male.
- 91.3% of the respondents were of working age 18-64 years.
- The review group found it very encouraging that the majority of respondents were willing to volunteer at the Council (59%) or would consider volunteering (36%).
- More respondents indicated a preference towards administrative, retail, community, computers and ICT and information and advice. There were more specific areas highlighted such as legal, teaching, hospitality and security / warehouse work.
- 26 respondents identified no experience as the most common barrier to volunteering, also identified was lack of skills, confidence and relevant qualifications. Transport cost and availability were highlighted as barriers by almost a quarter of respondent's and 15% (9) of the respondents said they had no barriers to volunteering.
- 70% of respondents highlighted accredited training as a motivator to volunteering with a further 22 highlighting non accredited training. Paid expenses were the highest motivator with 76% (45) of respondents.
- 27% (16) of respondents were from WV10 postcode, 15% from WV3 and 10% from WV8. There were no respondents from WV9, WV7, WV5 or WV4.
- 50% of respondents were white British, 20% Asian British Indian, 13% White other, 5% Black Caribbean.
- The importance of training was highlighted and it was confirmed that the WVSC Volunteer Service does provide some free training, however with funding reductions there was less available. The Head of Economic Inclusion advised that some initial discussions had been held about accredited training at the Council and that discussion was underway regarding the use of the learning hub.

5.1.6 The surveys identified key things that need to happen:

- Improve the offer to include training, accreditation, experience
- A clear pathway for volunteers coming into the organisation
- Volunteers have a consistent and positive experience across all Council services
- Volunteering to create a work history and a pathway into employment
- Monitoring progress and tracking volunteers in the Council
- Engagement with Trade Unions to clarify that the volunteer offer is not about replacing paid jobs
- Volunteering strategy should be detached from the Budget Savings
- There needs to be a register of volunteering opportunities and role descriptions
- Look at best practice in the City and other Authorities

- Work closely with partners in DWP and WVSC and the Volunteer Service as the organisation the Council funds to work with volunteers in the wider City
- More information was needed relating to public attitudes about volunteering
- Final report of this group by January to feed into the wider City Volunteering Strategy by March 2016.

## **5.2 Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) - Voluntary work experience (volunteering) pathway to work and sanctions**

5.2.1 DWP provided a summary of their approach to volunteering into employment. The main messages:

- DWP are keen for people of working age to have option to volunteer.
- People claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) can volunteer between two and eight weeks as part of their journey into employment at the same time as actively seeking employment.
- Anyone can volunteer to gain work experience to develop their curriculum vitae (CV) and to offer volunteering to the community and build on skills they have.
- Volunteering opportunities are identified through the volunteer service and DWP are looking at working with a variety of organisations across the City. When a voluntary work placement is known about by the work coach and is part of the journey to work there would be no impact on JSA.
- There are no volunteers at the DWP job centres however voluntary work placements are arranged.
- The work coach meets with the individual and carries out a diagnostic interview. They use work experience as one of a number of tools to help move the individual into work.
- The demand for work experience is on-going and work coaches try to get individuals involved at some part of their journey. Young people generally have little or no work experience and will participate in voluntary work experience at an early stage of their journey; 25 plus age group some have work history and voluntary work experience may be picked up later in their journey (somewhere in the 26-39 weeks bracket), the focus of their journey to get them back into work as soon as possible.
- Further details relating to the Work Programme (WP):
  - Under 25 year olds move into the WP if they have been unemployed for 39 weeks.
  - Over 25 year olds move into the WP if they have been unemployed for more than 52 weeks.
  - Young people are on the WP for almost 3 years with older individuals are being on the WP for up to four years.
  - If the individual does not attend the WP DWP will look to see if sanctions will apply.
  - The longer an individual is on the WP, DWP will work more intensively with them.
  - Less people are coming back to the WP (6-10 a week).
- The process for employers has been revised and now a single sheet form is all that is required for potential employers to join the DWP to offer work experience.

- Between 16-30 hours is allocated per week to voluntary placements depending on the individual and the individual's needs.
- An issue highlighted by the review group was the length of DWP WP placements of eight weeks and a recognition that many of the accredited training course would take longer than that time to complete. This in effect would mean that an individual would have to come off the pathway to work to complete the training.
- All JSA claimants are recorded in unemployment figures including those on work experience placements, those individuals not claiming JSA would not show in the figures.
- All JSA and ESA claimants are allocated a work coach to support them in their journey.
- People furthest from gaining work often need intensive mentoring that DWP cannot provide. In these cases flexibility may be possible through close liaison between DWP and Talent Match. Talent Match has a dedicated resource and individual circumstances and development can be considered between DWP work coaches and the programme provider and negotiated on an individual basis.
- The review group welcomed the close working approach and suggested that this approach could be used more widely for other programmes and initiatives.
- They also welcomed the partnership approach between DWP and Talent Match and highlighted the need for this review to be clear about the difference between volunteering and voluntary work experience. He highlighted tensions by some JSA claimants who thought they had been told to go and volunteer by job coaches.

### 5.3 Talent Match (TM)

5.3.1 TM provided a summary of the volunteering offer and work with DWP to engage young people who are furthest from employment in voluntary work experience to gain skills and experience. The main messages:

- TM is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and focuses on enabling young people furthest away from being work-ready to secure or take up enterprising and/or job opportunities, by improving confidence, optimism and offering intensive support through the provision of solution focused mentors.
- TM has been live for 12 months and is currently handling 60-70 referrals a month from DWP.
- TM is struggling to meet demand which outweighs resource. Mentors can only mentor up to ten young people at a time.
- Two hubs are operational YMCA Wolverhampton Central and Bilston, which also covers Darlaston referrals.
- Target audience for TM is young people furthest from the work place; criminal history, drugs and alcohol, looked after children and other issues.
- There are probably a further 20% of young people (YP) 'hidden' not receiving benefit who chose to dismiss the statutory process but can access volunteering and work experience. It is important for YP health and wellbeing and development that they can access training and move into employment.
- 60 YP have moved into employment, both part-time and full time, during the first year of operation and many more have gone back into education, college and university.

- Volunteering and work experience does move YP closer to the job market and Big Lottery funding has been secured for a further 18 mentors across the Black Country (BC) this year.
- YP are referred to TM from organisations such as Base 25, Children and family support, the Shaw Trust, The Princes Trust.
- Family referrals and self-referrals are also a mechanism used to access the TM programme.
- Match funding has been allowed for the Big Lottery funding therefore effectively doubling funding available this year.

#### **5.4 Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council Volunteer Centre and the volunteering offer**

5.4.1 Wolverhampton Volunteers is a project hosted by Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC). WVCS exists to support the development and sustainability of an effective voluntary and community sector, promoting the principle and practice of voluntary and community activity, in order to facilitate the development of diverse, strong communities and to enhance quality of life within the City of Wolverhampton.

5.4.2 The volunteer service aims to make it as easy as possible for any Wolverhampton resident aged 18 or over to volunteer and to help local voluntary and community organisations get access to the right volunteers. The evidence identified the reason why people volunteer as follows:

- To give back to the community. They may be retired or have practical expertise. School governors' are an excellent example of volunteers who make a valuable contribution to communities.
- To gain experience and skills. They may be a graduate, a school leaver, person returning to work following a career break or change of career direction, unemployed, part-time, people for whom English is not a first language.
- To be active and involved. They may be isolated in their home or community.
- To complete 'voluntary work placement'. Long term unemployed arrange placements as part of the Governments Work Programme helping people into employment by undertaking fixed term work experience.

5.4.3 Main messages highlighted at a site visit to the volunteer service were as follows:

- Anyone over the age of eighteen and a resident of the City of Wolverhampton can volunteer.
- Anyone can go to the volunteer service to speak with an advisor.
- The volunteer service can offer a one to one appointment.
- There is some support for under eighteen year olds they are provided with a list of direct volunteering.
- There is a website and computers in the volunteer service with BT Connect available.
- Advisors can offer Information Technology (IT) support.
- A pack containing the following guides is available
  - Volunteer Data for Wolverhampton
  - Volunteer service Overview
  - Volunteer registration form
  - Skills and experience Log Sheet
  - Valued Volunteer Award

- Applications can be written or completed on the internet. The training newsletter gives access to over 50 pages of opportunities.
- The personal development plan help to find the most appropriate volunteering opportunity for a person's qualifications and skills and can help the service to identify any training or skill development opportunities that may develop an individual.
- The volunteer will narrow the list down to three opportunities. If the trainer does not feel that volunteering opportunities at the service are right for the individual they will sign post them to relevant training, including plumbing or other manual trades which are not available through the service due to insurance risks etc.
- Help can be given to find the right opportunity and if necessary individuals can be assisted with travelling expenses. The referral to an organisation is made from the volunteer service or people can self-refer. The organisation responds to volunteers within two weeks.
- Pathways for the individual are discussed to ensure the best training and a clearer path of what to do next. The website is available but it had only been up and running for two weeks and therefore there were less opportunities posted on line. Organisations have to register and upload the volunteering opportunities themselves.
- There are 80 new volunteers registered each month and the same number coming back to volunteering.
- Any person logging 50 hours will get the Volunteering Award Certificate. The skills and experience log records the roles and hours undertaken are a record of experience and part of the pathway back to work.
- Awards are usually given as part of volunteer's week. Attention was drawn to the need to recognise people who continue to volunteer.
- The Volunteering service has recently achieved Quality Accreditation which required strategic and volunteering work via the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) which was not easy to achieve.
- There is a lot of work happening around investing in volunteers and voluntary organisations are doing everything they can to support volunteers and make sure that they in turn are supporting the service users.
- There are more young people volunteering than thought, generally speaking people think more older people volunteer. It was encouraging that a third of volunteers were not white British which reflects the multicultural City.
- The review group were advised that the volunteer service works closely with the Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC) to ensure volunteers can get their English language up to a level where they can find employment.
- Organisations have to complete a registration form and there are safeguards in place; volunteers that need DBS checks have to produce them to the organisation, it is not the responsibility of the WVSC to check volunteers' certification, and they do not have the capacity.

## **5.5 Access to Business (A2B)**

5.5.1 A2B was set up for people on disability payments. When it started it had three members of staff and 100 clients in the first year; it now has 17 staff and over 1500 clients a year. The organisation offers advice to employed, self-employed and volunteers. The main messages about the organisation were as follows:

- The organisation has a volunteer peer-to-peer support/social group 'Access for All' which organises events such as a Christmas Party for all.
- In 2011, A2B inherited a shop in the Wulfrun Centre which posted job opportunities on the wall. The shop was open for four years and was supported by 30 volunteers each week who gained skills towards work; over 280 jobs were posted each week.
- The shop and A2B supported and trained people into work and volunteering opportunities.
- The shop was given notice to close in September 2015 and is now closed; it was the perfect place and opportunity to promote volunteering. Out of the 102 volunteers that A2B has supported 37 have moved into employment.
- The review group watched a film presentation about volunteering and met with volunteers who shared personal experiences about their journey into employment and the different paths they had taken to gain skills and confidence through volunteering.
- A2B receive referrals for people with learning difficulties and long term disability. All services are free and referrals are received from DWP Jobcentre, community centres, council job fairs, the website and open days at A2B.
- A2B indicated that more businesses should give volunteering opportunities in Wolverhampton.

## **5.6 Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual Transgender (LGBT) Network Wolverhampton**

5.6.1 LGBT network works with all LGBT people and groups in Wolverhampton to provide effective support a range of enjoyable experiences that will enhance service users personal, social and skills development. The main messages about the organisation are as follows:

- The strength of LGBT lies in the relationship between its staff, volunteers and other supporters, developing services in response to service user needs.
- There is an agreed phone plan and flexibility of times to cover the main hours users want to use the service, volunteers are generally required after p.m.
- The most important quality needed in volunteers is to be someone who really cares about others and want to support and empower them as their best interests are paramount.
- The volunteer offer includes awards and rewards and a regular network letter covers how you want to become involved with the organisation, to get involved with developing skills and interests through support, workshops and supervision.
- The special nature of LGBT means that the confidence building has to gradually help self-esteem.
- Work Programme volunteers had carried out voluntary work experience at LGBT as part of their journey into work but the experience had not been positive, they were not the right volunteers with five out of nine not really wanting to be there.
- LGBT volunteer offer is advertised in the job centre, there is no funding available; volunteer expenses have to be paid.
- LGBT has received no referrals from WVSC.
- There had been some conversations relating to offering counselling arrangements to the City of Wolverhampton University students; this was unsuccessful however the review group suggested contacting the

Wolverhampton College to discuss delivery of counselling services for young people.

## 5.7 Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC)

5.7.1 The RMC offers a range of free impartial advice and guidance to clients in a number of community languages.

- On average 80 to 100 people a day visit the RMC for advice, although numbers often exceed that. In addition 30 - 40 of the different languages which are spoken in the City are available to clients at RMC through the language skills of RMC's volunteers and staff. Over 65% of volunteers are from the migrant communities RMC serves.
- In relation to the volunteering picture the Head of Operations advised of the following:
  - Currently 68 volunteers are based in the RMC offices; 21 are health champions volunteering in the community. Over the course of a year over 100 volunteers are involved.
  - The volunteers age range is 18-65 years the average age currently is 27 years.
  - Advertising for volunteers is via the Volunteer service and on the website; many opportunities are also by word of mouth.
- Volunteers are involved in a range of roles:
  - Volunteer caseworker
  - Admin support volunteer
  - Health volunteer
  - Community health champion
  - Employment champion
  - Marketing and publicity volunteer
  - ESOL volunteer

### 5.7.2 The RMC Volunteering Offer

- Volunteers express an interest and are interviewed. If they are successful they are invited for a full induction.
- All volunteers have a named mentor who they initially shadow before the mentor decides that they are ready to work independently.
- The induction and training guide helps individuals to progress at their own pace. They monitor their own progress and are supported throughout their development.
- The volunteers are part of an externally accredited volunteer programme via ASDAN, a volunteering short course at level 1 to all volunteers. RMC are considering broadening the courses volunteers can work towards.
- The offer includes a wide range of training from a range of sources – Welfare Rights, CAB, SWARM, Family Law, Substance misuse, NHS Charges, Samaritans, Aquarius, SUIT, Letter writing training, database training, QR codes, Aspiring Futures, food banks, AVR.
- The skills and opportunities RMC bring include:
  - Gaining confidence

- Communication skills including developing their English Language
  - Experience of a UK workplace
  - Knowledge and insight in other cultures benefitting integration and cohesion
  - Specific skills including telephone skills, customer service skills, public speaking, admin skills, computer skills, public speaking, admin skills, computer skills
  - Opportunity to make a positive contribution
  - Builds social networks combatting isolation
  - Readiness for the work place
- RMC are able to provide additional assistance to volunteers to move into employment including support to access education, help with job applications and give feedback. Interview preparation on an informal basis. Volunteers are encouraged to gain support of the employment team; many volunteers are current clients who access our services including employment assistance alongside their volunteering.
  - Eleven of the current 22 staff are former volunteers.
  - Since August 2014 over 25 RMC volunteers are known to have moved on to paid employment.
  - If issues are complex the volunteers go back to their mentor for support.
  - The Volunteer service signposts volunteers to RMC and RMC signposts volunteers to other organisations, making sure volunteers get to the right place for them.
  - The RMC volunteer offer was found to be deeply impressive, starting at the first point of contact and support throughout mentoring training and support into employment.
  - The numbers of migrants coming into Wolverhampton and asking for advice and support week on week and month on month is increasing. RMC is looking to see how it can secure its future.

## **5.8 Arts, Heritage and Culture best practice**

Development of community hubs and other Council volunteering work streams in arts, heritage and culture has begun with the aim of strengthening community resilience.

### **5.8.1 Volunteers in Libraries**

For a number of years volunteers have been utilised to help deliver services. The traditional reading and writing roles had recently been extended to covers activities as follows:

- IT helpers
  - Support for baby book time sessions
  - Library helper; promotion and events
  - Homework Club helper
  - Reading Group Leader
  - Macmillan Library Cancer Information and Support Assistant
  - Writers Group Assistant
  - Self-serve Machine Champions
- Volunteers help the library to deliver additional services but it also benefits individuals and helps to develop stronger communities.
  - There are a number of ways in which volunteers are recruited including referrals from Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) Volunteer Service,

Wolverhampton University, regular library users, school work experience and Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

- The process to become a volunteer is to complete a form; meet and determine what they want to get from the volunteering opportunity, the role agreed and start date identified.
- An induction course is given at the start of placement; this may take longer if the volunteer hours are quite short. The employees get to know the volunteers over a period of time. It is usually three months before the volunteers can use the library as a job reference site and are given the opportunity to access the learning hub to gain basic core skills such as health and safety etc which can be recorded on their Curriculum Vitae (CV).
- It is more difficult to attract volunteers from the South East of the City but there were lots of applications from the South West, the majority who volunteer tend to be retired, job seekers or people who want to improve their English. Many come because they are lonely and now lead active and inclusive lives in the community
- Volunteers tend to stay about six months however several have done in excess of 100 hours volunteering and students are expected to do 100 hours.
- There are additional costs to the service, 6-8 hours had been added onto a post to co-ordinate the volunteers plus staff time working with them and inducting into the roles.
- Potential volunteers are assessed as to their suitability for each role.
- Those who are not suitable for the library service or who come to the end of their volunteering could be referred to the volunteer service.
- Many of the volunteers do not want to train, they actually enjoy giving something back to the community.
- DBS checks are free for volunteers but the administration fee is around five pounds for each check. Organisations need to be accredited to carry out checks. The review group suggested that the Council should join up with WVSC to carry out the checks.
- The review group praised the clarity and style of the library leaflet for volunteers which had been circulated previously to the group.

#### 5.8.2 Volunteers in Arts Cultural and Heritage

- Venues include Bantock House, Bilston Craft Gallery and City Archives, all of which had offered volunteer placements for local people for a number of years. Additional grant funded projects are carried out at the museums and galleries.
- Volunteers bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the service and the depth of Civic Pride that is within the fields of the arts, culture and heritage. Local people want to get together, interview and write up black country heritage. There is a rich resource to get involved and work with unemployed and part time employees who are inspired to get involved ;some of which go on to study the related topics. She advised it is important for the volunteers to get a foot in the door, to learn how to present themselves, turn up on time, dress properly and have the lower entry job roles which are also pathways for volunteers into work.
- The types of roles available, that reflect the job market. The roles are advertised on the website as follows:
  - Visitor Ambassador – based front of house
  - Cultural Learning Activity Assistants – based within cultural learning team

- Researchers – based with cultural learning team
- Preventative Conservators – based at Bantock House
- Technical Team Support – based with the tech team
- Digital support – based with marketing
- Volunteers are asked to commit to a minimum of a four hours shift at least once a week. The majority of volunteers prefer the front of house roles but that volunteers are encouraged to try other roles.
- The review group were advised that volunteers come from all walks of life but the following trends have emerged for people who want to share their experience, gain experience and develop their CVs:
  - Undergrauates in art and history
  - Recent graduates, some with doctorates
  - People with disabilities
  - People with personal challenges
  - Retired people form creative fields or who have loyalty to the venues and want to offer time and support
- The venues are positive places which give volunteers and visitors time to reflect and think, they are safe environments. The value of support to the venues to the venues is worth about £30,000 in real terms.
- Social interaction and opportunity to gain experience is important and volunteers were often 'real characters' full of interest and local knowledge, all of which the review group thought makes a difference to the business of attracting visitors to the venues. The manager of cultural learning and participation agreed to look into using some of the local characters as part of the future marketing of the venues. She advised that women outnumber male volunteers three to one.
- The process to recruit volunteers is as follows:
  - Application form emailed with details of the roles
  - Once a group of 10-12 potential volunteers has built up applicants are invited for an initial discussion/ information sharing session and an induction.
  - Volunteers agree a start date and availability with the lead person in the team in which the role is based.
- Training is given, a two day customer service course, 'Give something, Get something – Volunteer!' programme which covers challenging stereotypes, building confidence, excellence in customer service. Participants work together and receive a certificate of achievement at an informal presentation before starting their volunteering role.
- Volunteers are encouraged to apply for paid posts and casual work as well as volunteering.
- For volunteers who aim to move on, a half day training course in employment skills, CV writing, application and interview skills took place on 9 December 2015.
- Any volunteer roles that had been created had been agreed with the union and the roles are an add on service and not a primary role from the traditional service.

## **5.9 What does National best practice look like?**

- 5.9.1 Evidence at previous sessions had highlighted the need for a consistent volunteer offer across the Council.
- 5.9.2 Core reasons why the Council should promote volunteering, as follows:

- Volunteering is widely recognised as a fundamental element of society that has a positive impact on individuals, organisations and the wider community and can be a powerful driver for social change that can be very empowering to all involved.
- Wolverhampton has a thriving culture of volunteering which takes place in individual organisations under a range of policies throughout statutory, private and primarily the voluntary, community and faith sectors.
- The aim of the corporate Strategy is to enhance and build on what already exists within the City by encouraging and assisting organisations that support volunteering to adopt an effective, efficient and consistent approach across the City.
- Volunteering is part of the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) 'Get Britain Working' strategy.
- Volunteering not only increases the capacity of the health and social care workforce, but also the quality of services provided (Institute of Action).

#### 5.9.3 Consistent themes across the national volunteering strategies:

- A clear vision
- Clear values and principles
- Purpose of the strategy
- Patterns/data about volunteering in the area
- Definition of volunteering
- Addressing the need – new and hard to reach groups
- Equality and diversity
- Volunteering and skills/employment
- Action plan for implementation
- Measuring progress / evaluation
- Measuring progress / evaluation
- Celebrating volunteers Opportunities – Olympics 2012 / City events

#### 5.9.4 Expectations and what the organisation can offer the volunteer:

- Organisation will act in accordance with Council Policies and Procedures
- Provide a named responsible employee within the organisation who will meet with the volunteer regularly for management supervision, feedback and support
- An introduction to the work of the organisation, its employees, the volunteering role and initial training needed to carry out the tasks.
- Help volunteer to be aware of Council policies and procedures and be shown how to access them and adhere to them
- Revisit role description as and when necessary ensure relevance to the role and volunteers learning
- Respect volunteers and make them feel valued and included
- To resolve fairly any difficulties, grievances or problems
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment
- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work on our behalf
- Pay reasonable out of pocket expense as agreed in advance
- Store personal details in accordance with current data protection laws
- Recognise volunteer achievements and make available information about award schemes that they may want to undertake.

## 5.10 Unison

#### 5.10.1 The TUC and volunteering England

Joint charter for strengthening relations between paid staff and volunteers (2012):  
The charter sets out the key principles on which volunteering is organised and how good relations between paid staff and volunteers are built. It has been developed jointly by Volunteering England (VE) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and has been endorsed by the wider volunteering and trade union movements.

#### 5.11 Investing in Volunteers (iV)

5.11.1 Investing in Volunteers (iV) is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. It is the quality standard to benchmark the quality of your volunteer management and involvement, prove and improve the effectiveness of your work with volunteers and enhance your organisation's reputation. (See appendix 3)

#### 5.12 Heads of Service Group (Hos)

5.12.1 The HoS group has received the initial findings of the scrutiny review group and have agreed to continue to gather evidence from volunteers working in the Council to shape the draft Policy and Volunteer Offer.

5.12.2 The HoS group received the following main messages from the review group evidence base:

- Valuable lessons and language had been learnt for our volunteer offer from Talent Match, particularly relating to those furthest away from the labour market, where support is most needed there must be a structured pathway through volunteering to higher and further education and a job.
- Highlighted the need to be clear about the differences between volunteering and voluntary work experience.
- Highlighted the social value of volunteering and how volunteering means different things to different people.
- The review group recognised the need to separate out real volunteering which can be a few hours per week over a number of years from the Voluntary work experience associated with the DWP Work Programme, typically up to eight weeks of thirty hours per week.
- The Volunteer Service is funded by the Council to co-ordinate volunteers in the City. The evidence highlighted the need for the Council and WVSC Volunteer service, to work closely to develop the Council volunteering offer, the way DBS checks are dealt with in the City and with the unions and other partners to feed into the Wider City Volunteering Strategy.
- Volunteers are not always tracked and that there must be mechanisms to log them and make better use of the capacity in the City.
- Highlighted the need to promote volunteering opportunities in the Council. Many opportunities were passed on by word of mouth and as such this does not provide for equal access to volunteering opportunities.
- The new volunteering offer has to incorporate better mechanisms and rewards for the volunteers and has to reach out to potential new volunteers across the City.
- The Council has to work city-wide with partners, to develop and identify other routes into volunteering and to take account of the best practice highlighted.
- Highlighted that the DBS issues are looked at again when the Volunteering Strategy for the City is developed with the Head of Economic Inclusion tasked to flag this issue in the wider City Strategy.

- Welcomed the partnership approach between DWP and Talent Match and highlighted the need for this review to be clear about the difference between volunteering and voluntary work experience.
- The volunteer offer will only stand up if it has the right support mechanisms in place, and RMC feel that their volunteering offer reflects this.
- Good practice shared by Libraries and Arts, Heritage and Culture should be highlighted as good practice and built on in the Councils Volunteering Offer.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

### **6.1 Summary of Conclusions**

- 6.1.1 Early indications from the review found that access to volunteering was disparate across the Council and the volunteering webpage was in need of improvement to encourage volunteering in the Council.
- 6.1.2 The Chair of the review group and officers felt that for the Council to lead or broker City volunteering the Council needed to improve the Council's volunteer offer. The evidence base from the review highlights that there are a number of actions required to bring volunteering up to a corporate standard.
- 6.1.3 The Council is not a natural choice for volunteers to come to volunteer, there is a need for equity and fairness in our processes and certainty around this not being used as unpaid job substitution. The established pathway for volunteers in the City is through the Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Volunteer Service which the Council works closely with to develop opportunities in the Council.
- 6.1.4 There was an assumption that volunteering was largely a middle class pursuit and the initial survey supported this. The second survey conducted at the Wolverhampton jobs fair targeted working aged individuals looking for work and gave a different perspective and a greater focus for the volunteering offer to include skills and training in a variety of services.
- 6.1.5 Definition of volunteering needs clarifying – voluntary work experience as part of the Work Programme (WP) directed individuals towards volunteering as part of their Job seekers programme.
- 6.1.6 There are many more volunteering opportunities to explore with partners and businesses in the City, including exploring the opportunities for student volunteering. Young people wanting to develop skills and experience to boost CV's and confidence in the work place and working with retired people who want to use their time, talents, professional skills and energy to improve the lives of people in our local communities.
- 6.2 The main conclusions arising from the scrutiny review respond to the questions raised in the scoping of this work. They shape the recommendations to Cabinet and will feed baseline information into the wider development of a City Strategy for Volunteering. The conclusions fall into four main areas:
- 6.2.1 Volunteer Policy
- Although there is excellent practice in some services there were initial concerns that volunteer arrangements across the Authority were disparate and not consistently monitored.

- The review identified that the term 'volunteer' is used for several types of volunteer and work experience and needed clear definition and to be kept separate from work experience.
- The volunteer role and descriptions need to be developed in service areas by the HoS group.
- Assurances that volunteering will not replace jobs need to be highlighted in the guidance.
- Concerns around DBS checks to be addressed ensuring they are in order, relevant and valid for volunteers coming into the City Council and partner agencies.
- There should be equality monitoring of volunteers.
- Volunteer roles should be advertised not passed on word of mouth and a proper selection process undertaken.
- There should be a workplace charter for integration of volunteers into the workplace.
- That the views of current volunteers are taken into account in developing the current policy.
- It was made clear that it is not the intention of the policy to actively pursue more volunteers and that the driver for the review was to get a policy in place to ensure equity across services and in volunteering opportunities.

#### 6.2.2 Skills and Pathways

- Heads of Service Group (HoS) have considered the initial findings of the review group and have provided feedback to shape the review work.
- The HoS group welcomed the progress that had been made by the Review Group and acknowledged how much work had already been undertaken to inform the policy and offer. They will be meeting again to further discuss and action the conclusions and recommendations of the scrutiny group which will further inform the policy development.
- The skills and pathways identified will be on an individual basis depending on the needs of the individual and the level and duration of the volunteer role
- Volunteer roles within service areas will be identified.

#### 6.2.3 Additionality

- Constructive discussions with Unison to address points raised about volunteering replacing real jobs and the TUC volunteering guidance.

#### 6.2.4 Resource

- Some concerns about the hidden costs of volunteering indicating that the report implies some cost such as the DBS checks and other common resource implications for example recruitment costs, training and supervising volunteers.
- Recognition that resources would vary depending on the level and duration of volunteering opportunity and that some volunteers would need more training than others.
- Suggestion that group supervision could be explored across the organisation to reduce the officer resource diverted from the 'day' job.
- Recognition that many service areas already provide a good volunteering offer from within their existing budget.
- There will be a resource implication for recruiting more volunteers to Council services

## 7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations arising from the conclusion of the review group are:

### Volunteering policy

- R1. That the Heads of Service (HoS) Group develop the draft volunteering policy and the offer, taking into account the comments and recommendations arising from the review of the City of Wolverhampton Volunteering offer.
- R2. That the HoS group ascertain, through consultation, the current volunteers perception of the draft volunteering offer.
- R3. That definition of volunteering and work experience is included in the council volunteering policy and guidelines.
- R4. That where applicable any person volunteering within the Council will have the required DBS checks as specified by the receiving service area.
- R5. That the HoS group develop a process for volunteers entering the workplace and volunteer role descriptions.
- R6. That 'Investing in Volunteers' (IiV) standards be included in the policy appendices, and HoS to explore accreditation for the Council.
- R7. That there is a 12 month review of the final policy.

### Skills and pathways

- R8. That all volunteers are referred to the Volunteer Service at Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) in the first instance to determine the best pathway for the individual.
- R9. That the volunteer pathway should include the following:
  - a) A volunteer role description for each service area detailing how the role will support existing service delivery.
  - b) The agreement with a volunteer will detail mandatory and job specific training and support for the role.
  - c) Initiating a DBS check where applicable for all volunteers in Council services.
  - d) Ensuring robust equality monitoring processes are in place identifying and following up gaps in current practice and other relevant policies. In exploring this officers have identified and raised the need to review the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement with H.R.
  - e) All volunteers are registered on the Agresso system and records of DBS, training and equality are monitored.
  - f) All service groups should monitor volunteers to check progress and development needs in line with the volunteer offer.
- R10. That a sensible review period is built into each volunteering role for the protection of the service, the benefit of the volunteer and to ensure the role has not changed substantially over a set period of time.
- R11. That volunteers are provided access to the Council Learning Hub to develop skills for mandatory and role specific training.
- R12. That the HoS group and Volunteer Service develop a package of training for managers, volunteers and volunteer supervisors to be delivered via the Council learning hub.

### Additionality

- R.13 That the volunteer role description should be service specific and include the following:

- a) The volunteering hours required (determined by the task).
  - b) The days and duration of the volunteering opportunity (determined by the task).
  - c) The training available – what skills they need, the support role and skill development.
  - d) How the role will support existing service delivery.
  - e) An agreed and appropriate review period for the protection of the service and the volunteer.
  - f) DBS checks to be arranged if applicable.
  - g) Volunteering code of conduct.
  - h) Advertising opportunities to access volunteering with WVSC and partner organisations.
- R.14 That specific text should be included in the policy taken from the TUC guidance to ensure that volunteering provides additionality to rather than replacement of existing staffing resources.
- R.15 That as part of the development of the wider partnership Volunteering Strategy, a discussion with the Inclusion Board and Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) to explore arrangements for DBS checks should take place. Where feasible a process for ensuring that DBS checks are in place should be incorporated as part of the contractual arrangements for the agency providing volunteering services.
- R.16 That there is a review of the volunteering policy once the Combined Authority is functioning to ensure synergy with the wider region.

#### Resource

##### R.17

- a) That an investigation or assessment of the types of costs associated with volunteering is undertaken by HoS as part of the policy refinement and incorporated within the guidance to service areas.
- b) That the HoS group identifies resource implications of training, DBS checks and supervising volunteers for each service area.
- c) That the HoS group explore and identify funding opportunities with funders, partners and businesses, internally and externally.

## 8.0 Contributors to the review

### 8.1 Councillors and co-opted members

Review Group Chair: Cllr Ian Claymore

Labour	Conservative
Cllr Payal Bedi	Cllr Mark Evans
Cllr Alan Bolshaw	
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre	
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	
Cllr Lynne Moran	
Cllr Judith Rowley	

### 8.2 Officer Support

Strategic Director:	Tim Johnson, Place
Lead Officer:	Sheila Collett, Head of Service, Economic Inclusion

Scrutiny link officer: Martha Cummings  
 Scrutiny Officer: Deb Breedon, Governance

8.3 **Cabinet Member(s)** Cllr John Reynolds, City Economy

8.4 Schedule of **Witness evidence**

Q	Witness	Focus and Evidence provided
1	16 September 2015 Martha Cummings, WCC Sheila Collett, WCC	Background evidence and discussion about the current volunteer offer. Citizen Panel volunteering survey evaluation Service area survey of current volunteering practice across the City Council
2	21 October 2015 Deb Breedon Scrutiny Officer, Abigail Vella, Graduate trainee and Asia Edward, apprentice Cathy Taylor (DWP) Stuart Rogers (DWP) Kim Babb (Talent Match) Ian Darch (WVSC) Robert Johnson Libraries WCC Tess Radcliffe / Marie Cooper WCC	Public volunteering survey at job fair evaluation to explore the levels of interest in volunteering with the City Council and how it could be enhanced to support unemployed individuals DWP Voluntary work experience (WP) pathway to work and sanctions. Talent Match working with DWP and organisations across the City to support young people furthest from the work place. More evidence and discussion about partnership working and understanding the difference between volunteering and work experience. What is the current volunteer offer and what is the current volunteer journey within the City Council Evidence of best practice and where volunteering process works well.
3	28 October 2015 Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council Tom Irvine, Training Co-ordinator Ian Darch CE WVSC Jose Kelly Access 2 Business Martha Bishop LGBT Faye Jeffery, Head of Operations RMC Shawkat Lashary, (Lead Caseworker) RMC Geeta Raj Volunteer Co-ordinator RMC Martha Cummings, WCC	The current volunteer journey within the City from a variety of voluntary organisations. The wide range of opportunities for volunteering to gain experience and confidence, and how to access them in an equal way across all sectors. Evidence of policy, processes and good practice, including the volunteer charter and leaflets to inform the potential volunteers. Potential barriers and issues were discussed in open forum such as DBS checks, language barriers and travelling expenses. Evidence of highly qualified volunteers needing work experience in this country, graduates needing to build work experience and confidence in a supported environment. Lack of capacity and resources highlighted at voluntary sector visits and the role of established volunteers in supporting new volunteers as a means of resourcing the volunteer offer

		National best practice and examples of policy and charter documents shared.
4	18 November 2015 Wendy Walker, WVSC Volunteer Centre Ian Darch, CE WVSC Adrian Turner, Unison	Consideration of the draft volunteering policy including supported pathway to skill development and employment. Unison guidance and clarification about additionality, service specific policy requirements and the resource implications of recruiting volunteers.
5	9 December 2015	Agreeing conclusions and forming recommendations
6	21 January 2016 Cllr John Reynolds	Draft report

### **Financial implications**

No direct funding was available to carry out this work however it is intended to look externally to fund anything that needs to be done.

### **Background documents**

City of Wolverhampton Council Volunteer Policy (Draft 11.01.2016)

Flow Chart

Guidance

[Investing in Volunteers](#)

[Volunteering England/TUC Charter](#)

Scrutiny Review Group Papers:

16 September 2015

21 October 2015

28 October 2015

18 November 2015

9 December 2015

4 February 2016

## **Appendix 1**

# **City of Wolverhampton Council Volunteer Policy (Draft 11.01.16)**

## **1. Introduction**

This policy outlines the City of Wolverhampton Council's framework for the recruitment, management and development of our volunteers.

Its purpose is to clearly set out the approach we will take to involve volunteers in the work of the Council.

The Council recognises that volunteers make a unique contribution to the local community, and often bring a range of expertise and new perspectives which can add immense value to existing work within the Council. The Council is committed to the principal that the involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement

the work of paid staff and will not be used to displace staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service.

## **2. Vision for Volunteering**

The vision for volunteering on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council is to enable and support our volunteers to play an active part in contributing to delivering the best services possible for our City.

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

In developing and promoting best practice, our aims and objectives are to:

- Encourage the development of volunteering in all areas of the Council by providing clear guidance around the expectations of officers and volunteers.
- Recognise and promote the importance of volunteering to the work of the Council using consistent, open and transparent processes.
- Ensure support, training and supervision for Council officers and volunteers
- Identify the standards to which Council staff and volunteers are expected to adhere
- Provide guidance and best practice to Council staff in working with volunteers and ensure the application of all relevant policies in support of the volunteer
- Ensure that volunteering is an enjoyable, rewarding, positive and effective experience for the volunteer and the Council
- Ensure that where appropriate to the needs of each individual volunteer, that volunteers receive the training and support to help them on their pathway to employment.

## **4. Why Volunteer?**

People volunteer for a variety of reasons including:

- Give something back to an organisation that has impacted on a person's life, either directly or indirectly
- Make a difference to the lives of others
- Spend quality time away from work or a busy lifestyle
- Gain confidence and self-esteem
- Meeting new people and making new friends
- A chance to socialise
- Getting to know the local community

For some, volunteering can be a route to employment, an opportunity to develop skills to enable further progression within an existing career, or a chance to try something new which may lead to a career change. As a City, we want to actively support people to achieve and keep employment, and volunteering can be a way of:

- Gaining new skills, knowledge and experience
- Developing existing skills and knowledge
- Enhancing a curriculum vitae (CV) and gaining valuable references
- Improving employment prospects through work experience
- Gaining an accreditation
- Using one's professional skills and knowledge to benefit others (usually described as pro bono)

In welcoming volunteers from all backgrounds in the community the Council wants to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring that volunteers are given a rewarding experience and the wider community gains from high standards of good practice.

### **5. What is Volunteering - Definition?**

People who volunteer can come from all ages and backgrounds, and may be described as individuals whose primary aim is to help an organisation to achieve its service objectives and/or bring some benefit to the local community.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations describes volunteering 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 and social action. Everyone has the right to volunteer and volunteering can have significant benefits for individuals.”*

This Council subscribes to the definition of volunteering that is provided by the ‘*Charter for strengthening relations between paid staff and volunteers*’ which states:

*“Volunteering is freely undertaken and not for financial gain, it involves the commitment of time and energy for the benefits of society and the community”*

Volunteering England and TUC.

### **6. Is volunteering the same as Work Experience?**

No, although both can be undertaken voluntarily.

Work experience generally is where someone spends a limited time with an employer to learn directly about work and the working environment, although some tasks may be performed it is more an opportunity to watch and learn. This can be paid or unpaid.

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

### **7. Expectations**

This section outlines what volunteers can expect from the Council and what is expected of our volunteers.

#### **The City of Wolverhampton Council will:**

- Ensure that the involvement of volunteers compliments and supplements the work of paid staff and is not used to displace staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service
- Promote volunteering widely through a variety of sources to make it accessible to all sections of the community.
- Treat volunteers with respect and create an environment where they can feel included and valued in their role.

- Apply the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy in selecting and recruiting volunteers
- Work with the volunteer to ensure availability, skills, talents and interests are suitably matched with volunteer role
- Identify a named person who will be responsible for the supervision, management and personal development of the volunteer.
- Provide a clear volunteer role description for every volunteer
- Provide induction on the work of the organisation, its staff and the volunteer role.
- Identify any relevant training and further skills required to carry out the role. Where the volunteer is unemployed and wishes to utilise volunteering as a means of improving employability, this will include additional support from a named Council officer within City Economy who will help the volunteer to decide the best route for them to improve their employment opportunities.
- Act in accordance with Council policies and procedures whilst ensuring volunteers can access, are aware and adhere to them.
- Review role descriptions as and when necessary involving volunteers where appropriate and supporting them through the changes.
- Monitor the volunteers attendance, achievements and performance in their role
- Recognise and acknowledge the achievement of volunteers utilising and making available information about award schemes.
- Seek wherever possible to reimburse volunteers (on production of a receipt) for reasonable expenses. (Agreed in advance with responsible officer)
- Resolve any difficulties, grievances or problems fairly and in accordance with the Council's guidance and procedures.
- Provide a safe working environment where volunteers are adequately insured whilst carrying out a role on behalf of the Council.
- Register all volunteers on the Council's Agresso system to ensure that records of DBS, training and equality are monitored across all City Council services

**The volunteer agrees to:**

- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Council's guidelines and Data Protection Legislation.
- Operate within agreed guidelines and remits.
- Carry out tasks in a way that corresponds to the aims, objectives and policies of the Council.
- Provide relevant information in relation to the volunteer role.
- Undertake mandatory training and any other training as required to carry out a role or develop the volunteers learning. This may be via e-learning or a voluntary sector partner organisation where guidance and support will be provided.
- Bring any concerns relating to the role to the attention of the supervising or appropriate officer.
- Volunteer at the times agreed or inform the named officer if this is not possible
- Provide receipts for out of pocket expenses (where agreed).

**8. General Information**  
**Recruitment**

All volunteer roles will be identified, advertised, recruited to and managed in accordance with processes and outcomes that have been approved and agreed by the Council and its VCS volunteer support provider.

The volunteer role will set out the necessary skills, attitude, experience and availability needed to carry out the role. It will also detail the training and support available to volunteers and how the role will support existing service delivery. Where possible, tasks will be adapted to suit the needs, abilities and interests of the individual volunteers.

In some instances dependent on the role the volunteer may be required to provide additional information including references, undergo a Data Barring Search; complete a medical questionnaire, or copies of a driving licence. This will be made clear by the supervising service area in the advertisement for the role.

Once accepted to a role, a start date will be agreed and the volunteer will be required to sign a volunteer agreement. This will include details of any mandatory and job specific training and support required for the role

### **Induction, Training and Support**

The Council will provide a named officer who will introduce the volunteer to the organisation. The named officer will be responsible for the supervision, management, training, personal development and provide general support to the volunteer.

All volunteers will be supported to complete mandatory training and any other relevant training in relation to the role.

Unemployed volunteers primarily or those wishing to utilise volunteering as a route to enhancing their employability will be given additional support from a named officer within City Economy Team. Together they will develop and agree a structured pathway to enhance the volunteers learning and skills moving them closer to employment opportunities.

### **Health and Safety**

The volunteer will have access to and adhere to the Council's Health and Safety Policy and Procedures. The Council will ensure that Health and Safety issues are covered at Induction and throughout the volunteering period.

The Council will provide specific training which is relevant to the roles the volunteer will undertake, along with appropriate/necessary safety equipment.

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection Act 1998**

During induction all volunteers will be made aware of the Council's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies.

All information volunteers have access to or are given in their volunteering role must be regarded as confidential unless advised otherwise.

## **Safeguarding**

The Council may request a criminal record check processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as part of its recruitment process.

For certain roles the check will also include information held on the DBS children and adults' barred lists, together with any information held locally by police forces that is reasonably considered to be relevant to the volunteer role.

These checks are to assist the Council in making safer recruitment decisions. When a check has been processed by the DBS and completed the individual will receive a DBS certificate.

The Council can only apply for a check if the role is eligible for one and will be used, stored and kept in accordance with the relevant Code of Practice issued under section 122(2) of the Police Act 1997.

All supervisors will ensure that volunteers are aware of, have access to and have received appropriate training in the Council's Safeguarding Policy on Children and Adults.

## **Equalities**

Wolverhampton City Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity across the organisation. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and that each volunteer feels able to give of their best.

To that end we will proactively promote equality and fairness by implementing a volunteer programme that is open to all irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and will treat all our volunteers fairly and with respect.

The Council is fully committed to creating an organisation where differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued enabling the volunteer to fully participate and contribute.

## **Insurance**

Volunteers will be indemnified against third party claims under the Council's liability policy while carrying out their duties.

## **Recognition**

The Council highly values the contribution of volunteers and aims to recognise their contribution wherever possible informally and formally. This may include internal and external awards opportunities e.g. UK National Honours (where criteria have been met).

## **Expenses**

The Council will endeavour to ensure that no volunteer will be out-of-pocket as a result of volunteering on behalf of the Council. The supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that available expenses are discussed fully with volunteers prior to them commencing in their role. All expenses should be discussed and agreed in advance with the supervising officer.

## **Computer Access**

All volunteers will be supported to use the Council's computers for training and in accordance with their role. Volunteers must follow the Council's Policy on Acceptable Usage which will be discussed and provided on induction.

## **Complaints or issues**

Any matters of concern should be raised with the volunteer supervisor in the first instance.

If the complaint or issue is with the supervisor then another volunteer supervisor or line manager should be made aware.

If the complaint or issue is with the volunteer, this will be investigated by the relevant supervisor.

Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and informally as possible. If the matter requires more formal investigation the responsible officer will follow appropriate Council procedures.

## **Moving on**

All volunteer placements will be subject to regular review, looking at the effectiveness and quality of the volunteer role.

Volunteers who may be moving on from a particular role, leaving the Council or choose to stop volunteering for a period of time will be supported to do so, and will be invited to provide feedback to help us to improve our volunteering offer.

Volunteers who are leaving and have made a regular commitment will be offered an exit interview, reference and/or statement of their achievement to ensure that their services are properly and formally appreciated.

## **Termination of Activity**

Where appropriate the role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the supervisor at one week's notice or immediately where inappropriate behaviour has occurred. In all cases, the volunteer will receive an explanation of the decision and action taken.

## **Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

The Council is committed to the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy, and will ensure processes including an action plan are in place to ensure outcomes

reflect strategic priorities and further meet best practice requirements. The first full review of the policy will take place in April 2017 but a continuing overview will be undertaken to ensure that the policy aligns with the wider national and regional policy landscape including the Combined Authority developments.

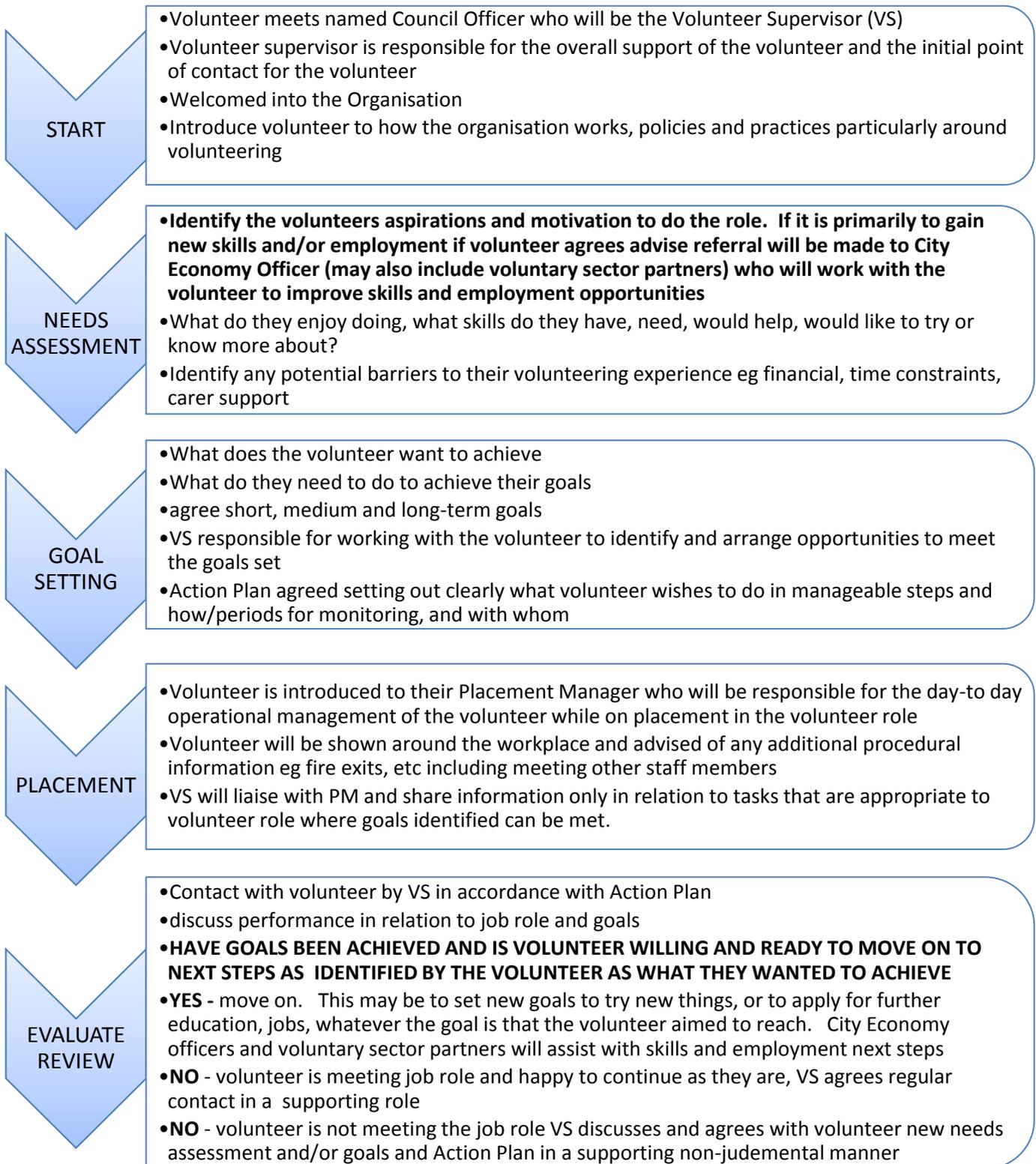
### **Background documents**

Guidance

Flow Chart

[Volunteering England/TUC Charter](#)

[Investing in Volunteers](#)



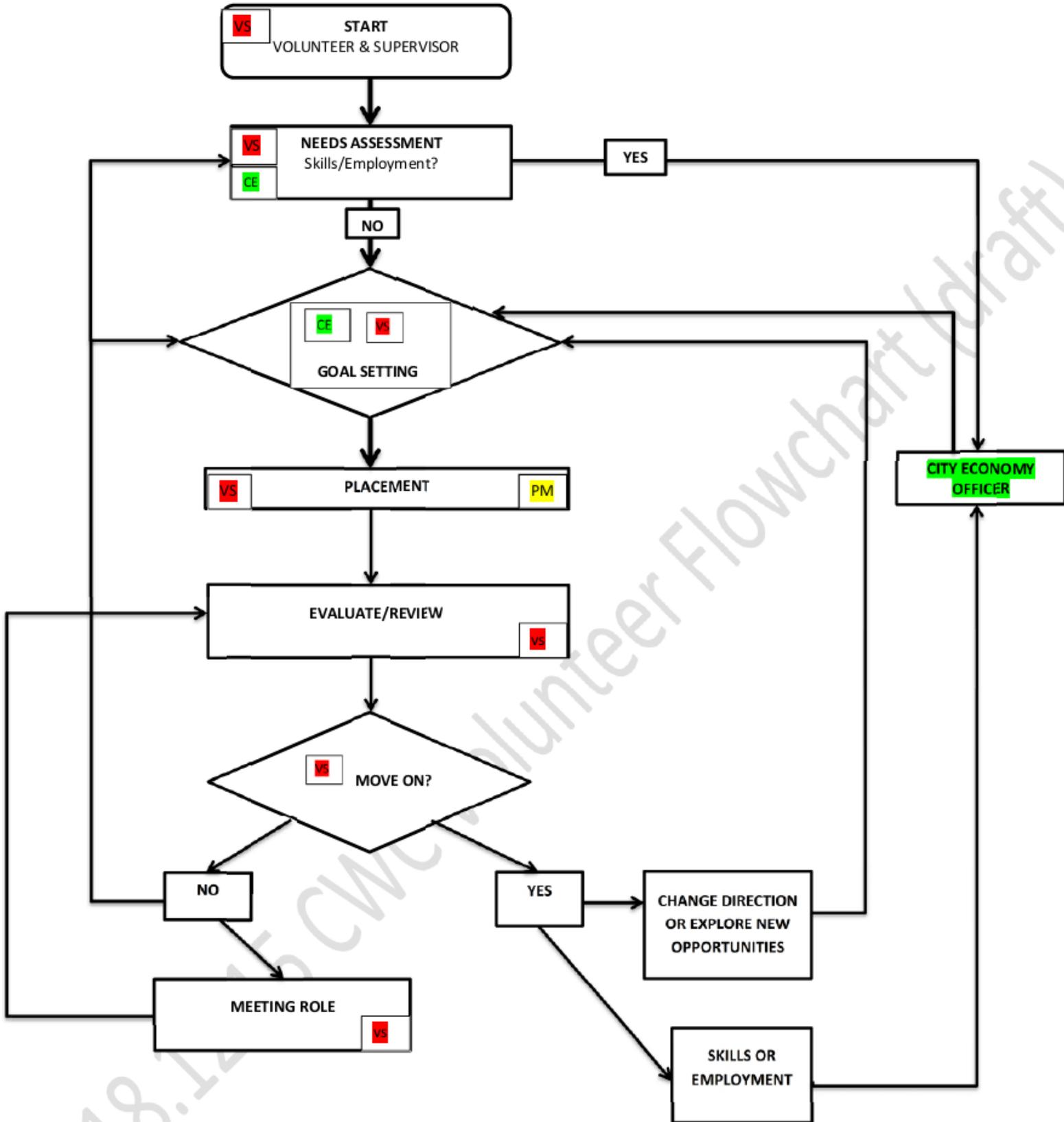
# CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL - Supported Pathway to Skills and Employability Flowchart

KEY:

**VS** Volunteer Supervisor

**PM** Placement Manager

**CE** City Economy Officer



## A Charter for Strengthening Relations Between Paid Staff and Volunteers: **Volunteering England and the TUC**

This Charter sets out the key principles on which volunteering is organised and how good relations between paid staff and volunteers are built. It has been developed jointly by Volunteering England (VE) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and has been endorsed by the wider volunteering and trade union movements.

Its starting point is that volunteering plays an essential role in the economic and social fabric of the UK. It is estimated that some 22 million people volunteer each year, contributing around £23bn to the economy. Volunteering helps build social capital and community cohesion and plays an important role in the delivery of key public services. Volunteering is also good for the volunteer: it helps improve health and wellbeing and provides opportunities for individuals to acquire skills and knowledge that can enhance career development or employment prospects. This Charter demonstrates the value and importance that both organisations place on voluntary activity and the time, skills and commitment given by volunteers.

This Charter recognises that voluntary action and trade unionism share common values. Both are founded on the principles of mutuality and reciprocity, leading to positive changes in the workplace and community. The trade union movement itself is built on the involvement and engagement of volunteers.

Volunteering England and the TUC acknowledge that on the whole, relations between paid staff and volunteers are harmonious and mutually rewarding. They can, however, be enhanced by good procedures, clarity of respective roles, mutual trust and support. This Charter sets out the key principles to help underpin good relations in the workplace.

These principles should be used as a guide by individual organisations to develop more detailed policies and procedures that reflect local needs and circumstances. This should be done, wherever possible, between local union representatives, employers and volunteering managers.



# The TUC and Volunteering England

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The TUC and Volunteering England have produced a joint Charter for Strengthening Relations Between Paid Staff and Volunteers. (2012)

[Read or download the charter](#)

## **A Charter for Strengthening Relations Between Paid Staff and Volunteers.**

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Paid work is any activity that is undertaken at the direction of an employer and is financially compensable

Volunteering is freely undertaken and not for financial gain; it involves the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community.

### Charter Principles

- All volunteering is undertaken by choice, and all individuals should have the right to volunteer, or indeed not to volunteer;
- While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards for their activities, they should receive reasonable out of pocket expenses;
- The involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff, and should not be used to displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service;
- The added value of volunteers should be highlighted as part of commissioning or grantmaking process but their involvement should not be used to reduce contract costs;
- Effective structures should be put in place to support and develop volunteers and the activities they undertake, and these should be fully considered and costed when services are planned and developed;
- Volunteers and paid staff should be provided with opportunities to contribute to the development of volunteering policies and procedures;
- Volunteers, like paid staff, should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination;
- All paid workers and volunteers should have access to appropriate training and development;
- There should be recognised machinery for the resolution of any problems between organisations and volunteers or between paid staff and volunteers;
- In the interests of harmonious relations between volunteers and paid staff, volunteers should not be used to undertake the work of paid staff during industrial disputes.

This Charter stands between Volunteering England and the TUC as a statement of principles and good practice. It is also a model for use by individual unions, volunteer involving organisations in the public, third and private sectors and other bodies in discussions around the use of volunteers.

Volunteering England and the TUC have produced some case studies, examples of local agreements and practical ideas to help trade unions and

organisations. We have also set out some of the legal background relating to volunteering. These are available at [www.tuc.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.tuc.org.uk/volunteering)

The Charter sets out key principles on how volunteering should be organised and has been produced to help trade unions and employers as a guide to good practice in the involvement of volunteers in the workplace.

The Charter makes clear that volunteering is distinct from paid work. Roles that volunteers undertake should complement and not substitute those performed by paid staff. This guide clarifies the distinction between paid workers and volunteers and sets out how good relationships between staff and volunteers can best be fostered.

Listed below are some FAQs relating to the involvement of volunteers. More detailed guidance is available at the [Volunteering England website](#).

### **FAQs about volunteering**

1. **What is volunteering?**

Volunteering is any activity or work in the community for which someone undertakes a specific task but receives no payment. A volunteer freely gives his or her own time to a job without financial recompense.

### **Volunteers and the Law**

2. **Do volunteers need to have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check?**

A Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check provides information about an individual's criminal record. Volunteers must be checked before they take up certain positions where they would be working with children or vulnerable adults. There are two levels of check: Standard and Enhanced. Enhanced checks are aimed more at people caring regularly term for those at risk, or training or in sole supervision of them.

3. **Do volunteers have to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority?**

The [Independent Safeguarding Authority](#) (ISA) is a new body set up to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. If volunteers work with or want to work with vulnerable adults or children, they need to apply to register with the ISA in the same way as an employee. Unlike employees, the ISA does not charge an application fee for volunteers. If somebody has a record of unsuitability for working with vulnerable groups or they have committed certain offences, they may not be able to register with the ISA, put on an ISA Barred List and may not be able to work with vulnerable people.

4. **Do volunteers have employment rights?**

Volunteers do not have a contract of employment and so don't have the rights of an ordinary employee or worker. These include the right to a minimum wage, holiday and sick pay, and other statutory rights. While volunteering is not contractual, it is good practice for part-time or full-time volunteers to be given some form of 'volunteer agreement' setting out mutual expectations and relevant organisational policies.

5. **Do volunteers qualify for the National Minimum Wage?**

Since volunteers are not workers, they are therefore not covered by the National Minimum Wage Act 1998. This means they do not qualify for the national minimum wage (NMW). Under the Act, some full-time volunteers may be classed as 'voluntary workers'. As long as certain guidelines are followed, these volunteers should be covered by the voluntary worker exemption (Section 44) to the National Minimum Wage Act and therefore will not be eligible to receive the minimum wage.

6. **Does the Data Protection Act apply to volunteers?**

Yes. Volunteers have the same rights under the Data Protection Act as employees. This means the organisation must comply with rules on personal data held on a computer or in paper files.

7. **Does Health and Safety Legislation apply to volunteers?**

Yes. Organisations have a duty of care towards their volunteers. In practice this means taking all reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood of harm coming to them, either through action or inaction. Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 also places a duty on employers (ie an organisation that employs at least one paid member of staff) "to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that persons not in their employment, who may be affected by their undertaking, are not exposed to risks to their health and safety" and "to give information as might as might affect their health or safety".

8. **Do Working Time Regulations apply to volunteers?**

The EU Working Time Regulations 1998 cover matters such as daily working hours, rest breaks and holiday entitlement. They only apply to workers and employees working under a contract, so organisations are not obliged to follow this piece of legislation when working with volunteers.

## **Volunteering Agreements**

### **What is a Volunteering Agreement?**

A volunteering agreement sets out the roles of volunteers. The agreement used by an organisation should be drawn up in discussion with trade union representatives and issued to all new volunteers. It should also set out details for how the management of volunteers will be dealt with and how problems will be handled. Other issues should include how the organisation will involve and support volunteers, what volunteers can expect from the organisation and what in turn the organisation expects from volunteers. Information should be made available on recruitment and selection, support and supervision, as well as an outline of the different volunteer roles and activities available. In addition this document should include equal opportunities and diversity, insurance, health and safety and confidentiality policies.

Volunteering agreements will not be appropriate for all volunteering opportunities. For example, agreements are unlikely to be valuable for one-off volunteering opportunities, particularly common in environmental and youth volunteering.

For more information, see [Volunteering England's information on Volunteer Agreements](#).

### **Do volunteers get a contract?**

Volunteers have no contractual relationship with an organisation. However, when a person undertakes to volunteer for an organisation, an agreement is reached between them and the organisation. This may be verbal or it may be confirmed in a written document or letter. The agreement will confirm that the relationship is based on volunteering rather than employment and is not a contract of employment. As such, this agreement would have no legal significance.

### **Will having an Agreement contribute to the creation of a contract with volunteers?**

We have heard concerns that having a volunteering agreement or problem solving policy in place in effect puts in place a contract for volunteers and as such confers employment rights. All volunteers should be given a clear description in writing of the volunteering opportunity, including agreed hours of work. But this does not in itself create a legal obligation on either the organisation or the volunteer. In fact, having an agreement will help set out intentions and expectations for both parties. It would also help to keep things clear if a clear distinction is made between procedures covering paid staff and volunteers, such as grievance and disciplinary, equal opportunities, health and safety and confidentiality policies.

For more information on avoiding creating a contract, see [Volunteers and the law](#).

### **Are volunteers entitled to expenses?**

Volunteers should be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses. These could include:

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering.
- Travel undertaken in the course of volunteering.
- Meals taken during the course of volunteering (usually a single meal up to a certain value per day).
- Postage and telephone costs if working from home.
- Protective clothing or other essential equipment.
- Expenses relating to childcare or care of other dependents.
- Only out-of-pocket expenses should be paid – not a flat rate, as volunteers in receipt of state benefits are entitled to receive out of pocket expenses only. Any money received which is over and above out-of-pocket expenses may be regarded as income by HM Revenue and Customs, and is therefore taxable. It may also be viewed as a sign of a contractual relationship and should therefore be avoided to make things less complicated for both the volunteer and the organisation.

## **Volunteering and Benefits**

### **Does volunteering affect entitlement to welfare benefits?**

Volunteering should not affect a person's entitlement to benefits.

People claiming Job Seekers Allowance can do as much voluntary work as they want as long as they remain available for and are actively seeking work. This will mean that they will have to show that they are looking for work and applying for jobs where appropriate. Social security regulations say that claimants can volunteer in any "organisation the activities of which are carried on otherwise than for profit".

With Incapacity Benefit, there used to be a rule that people could only volunteer for 16 hours a week. This rule no longer applies, and people in receipt of Incapacity Benefit can volunteer for as long as they want.

The Disability Living Allowance is paid in acknowledgement of the fact that life for someone with a disability may be more expensive – for instance, someone with mobility problems may be reliant on taxis. Volunteering will not affect whether an individual receives this benefit or not.

For more information, see the Job Centre Plus publication [Volunteering While Receiving Benefits](#) (PDF).

**Can Volunteers claim expenses if they also receive welfare benefits**

Volunteers can receive reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (any expenses that they have incurred because they are volunteering) without their benefits being affected.

There have been some problems in the past where volunteers on benefits have been given advance payments (for instance for something that would cost a lot, such as childcare or a weekly travelcard). The Social Security Amendment (Volunteers) Regulations 2001 clarified income support, JSA, and Incapacity Benefit rules to make it clear that volunteers can receive advance payment for expenses to be incurred in the future. Paying expenses in advance helps ensure that volunteers without the financial means to cover costs up-front can still actively volunteer.

[Not Protectively Marked]

Indicators	Practice
8 The organisation takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All volunteers know what forms of support/supervision the organisation offers them, and who to contact regarding their role.</li> <li>Either one-to-one and/or group support/supervision sessions are offered, as appropriate which are relevant to the level of responsibility and emotional demand of the role.</li> <li>Volunteers are aware that they can refuse demands they consider unrealistic, beyond the scope of the role or that they do not have the skills to carry out.</li> <li>Volunteers are asked for feedback about their role and their involvement with the organisation.</li> <li>Volunteers are informed of all relevant changes in the organisation which affect their role.</li> </ol>
9 The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management Committee/Trustees and paid staff recognise the value of volunteers' contributions and communicate effectively their appreciation to volunteers, both formally and informally.</li> <li>Volunteers have an opportunity to make known their views about the organisation's work, including its policies and procedures, and to participate in decision making.</li> <li>The organisation provides volunteers with the opportunity to continue developing their skills and talents within the roles on offer if appropriate.</li> <li>Volunteers leaving the organisation, who have made a regular commitment to it, are offered a reference and/or other statement of their achievements.</li> <li>The organisation endeavours to obtain feedback from volunteers leaving the organisation.</li> </ol>



## INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS QUALITY STANDARD

For organisations that involve volunteers



Volunteer Ireland is working in partnership with Volunteer Now to deliver Investing in Volunteers, the quality standard for volunteer management, in the Republic of Ireland.



[Not Protectively Marked]

Indicators	Practice
1 There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation has a written policy on volunteer involvement that sets out the organisation's values for volunteer involvement and highlights the need for procedures for managing volunteers, based on principles of equality and diversity.</li> <li>Where the organisation has policies that relate to the involvement of human resources, volunteers should have their own equivalent policy and should only be included in general policies if appropriate.</li> <li>People at all levels of the organisation have been informed of, and can articulate the organisation's reasons for involving volunteers and the benefits to volunteers.</li> <li>The organisation adopts appropriate procedures for regularly reviewing volunteer involvement in the organisation, including policy and procedure.</li> </ol>
2 The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation designates responsibility for recruiting, selecting, supporting and protecting volunteers, to a key person or group of people within the organisation; and these responsibilities are clearly outlined in job or role descriptions and regularly reviewed.</li> <li>The organisation takes steps to ensure that those who supervise volunteers have the relevant knowledge and experience.</li> <li>Time is given during staff meetings to discuss volunteer issues.</li> <li>The organisation's annual plan includes objectives for volunteer involvement which are reviewed regularly.</li> <li>The organisation seeks to secure adequate financial resources to cover the running of the volunteer programme and ensure that all volunteers have the necessary resources and materials to carry out their role.</li> </ol>
3 The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organisation is open to involving volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, and commits the necessary resources.</li> <li>Staff and volunteers are encouraged to embrace diversity among co-workers.</li> <li>Images and/or descriptions of the organisation reflect the diversity of the community, and are appropriate to the objectives of the organisation.</li> <li>Information about the organisation and ways in which volunteers can be involved is made as widely available as possible.</li> <li>The organisation monitors the diversity of the volunteer team, and implements procedures that aim to increase diversity and representation from the local community.</li> </ol>
4 The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 'description' is drawn up for each volunteer role.</li> <li>The organisation sets out the necessary skills, attitude, experience and availability needed to carry out the role.</li> <li>If feasible, a variety of tasks is made available which will attract a range of people, while still meeting the needs and aims of the organisation.</li> <li>Where possible, tasks are adapted to suit the needs, abilities and interests of individual volunteers.</li> </ol>



Indicators	Practice
5 The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An assessment of potential risk to volunteers is conducted when designing volunteer roles.</li> <li>Volunteers are covered by appropriate insurance.</li> <li>There is a clear policy on the reimbursement of volunteers' out of pocket expenses which is rooted in the organisational ethos, and which takes account of the organisation's financial situation.</li> <li>Volunteers' personal details are protected in line with Data Protection principles.</li> </ol>
6 The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People interested in volunteering are provided with clear information about the opportunities, the recruitment and selection procedure, what volunteers can expect from the organisation, and what the organisation's expectations are.</li> <li>Recruitment or matching procedures are appropriate to the volunteer role(s) and individual's needs and applied consistently.</li> <li>The organisation asks only for information needed in order to make a placement and this is recorded in a consistent manner.</li> <li>At some point in the recruitment procedure time is given to explore the individual's reasons for volunteering.</li> <li>Volunteers are informed if their application is unsuccessful and are offered feedback and are signposted to other organisations as appropriate.</li> <li>Where appropriate, potential volunteers are given further opportunities to find out more about the volunteering opportunities before committing themselves.</li> <li>The organisation takes a considered approach to taking up references which is consistent and equitable for all volunteers, bearing in mind the nature of the organisation's work and the volunteering role.</li> <li>The organisation's approach to the use of official checks takes into account the relevant Government guidelines, and the roles in which volunteers will be placed.</li> <li>The organisation has considered which types of convictions/disciplinary actions may or may not be relevant to the volunteering being undertaken.</li> </ol>
7 Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to their role, the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new volunteers are introduced to the relevant paid staff and other volunteers with whom they will come into contact.</li> <li>Volunteers are provided with the necessary information and/or training to carry out their role, including any policies as appropriate.</li> <li>There is clarity between the volunteer and the organisation about the boundaries of the volunteers' roles.</li> <li>Volunteers are advised how the organisation will address situations where the volunteer has behaved inappropriately.</li> <li>Volunteers are advised of the procedure to use if they wish to complain about their treatment by paid staff, users, committee members or other volunteers.</li> </ol>

