



# **EMPLOYER SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

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## **Introduction**

Employer Supported Volunteering is when organisations actively support and encourage their employees to volunteer. Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice. Volunteers should not replace paid employees and should not be for the purposes of covering tasks that employees are not prepared to do or that the organisation is not prepared to pay for.

## **Statement of Commitment**

This document sets out Blaby District Councils policy on promoting and supporting involvement in voluntary activity by its staff. The voluntary activity should be linked to the Councils vision of Blaby District being a great place to live, work and visit and to the Council's corporate priorities which are: -

- Strong, healthy, safe, sustainable communities where the most vulnerable are supported
- A thriving, prosperous, innovative local economy with a skilled and healthy workforce contributing to the local community
- A strong leisure and tourist sector and well maintained and accessible attractions available in the local area encourage visitors to the district

Blaby District Council encourages volunteering for staff because it: -

- offers a personal development opportunity i.e. team bonding, developing skills, boosting morale.
- offers health and wellbeing benefits
- builds employee engagement through a sense of pride and satisfaction in supporting the community
- raises the profile of the council, in a positive way, in the local community
- demonstrates a social commitment, which can be an important factor for helping to attract the best candidates through its recruitment process.
- offers individuals the opportunity to work with and develop relationships with our community and it's residents.

The policy covers:

### **1. Support**

- 1.1 time off
- 1.2 insurance
- 1.3 activities covered
- 1.4 DBS checks
- 1.5 risk assessments

### **2. Responsibilities**

- 2.1 confidentiality
- 2.2 conduct

### **3. Process**

- 3.1 applying for leave
- 3.2 monitoring and evaluation

## **Support**

The Council offers the following support:

### **1.1 Time Off**

Staff will be allowed 2 hours paid leave per month (with the exception of Community Volunteer Week)

Managers should see volunteering as an opportunity to develop their staff and work with employees to agree the most suitable opportunity.

Approvals will be considered on their individual merits taking into account the business needs of the Council which will be the determining factor. Time off will be granted by the individuals line manager.

Volunteers will not be reimbursed for any of their free time.

### **1.2 Insurance**

Whilst the Council may endorse the chosen volunteering activities of staff, it can not guarantee responsibility for insuring them when engaged in activities outside of its premises. The Council will work with individuals to ensure that they are adequately covered either by the Council or by their chosen voluntary organisation.

### **1.3 Activities Covered**

The volunteering opportunity must: -

Contribute to an individual's personal development

Support Blaby District through contributing to the Council's corporate priorities

Benefit the organisation, either directly or by building the knowledge and experience of the organisations volunteer workforce.

- Volunteering activity should take place within Blaby District and should be to support Youth Clubs, Sports Clubs, Community Groups, Schools/Academies, Religious & Faith-based organisation's (for non-religious projects that are open to all irrespective of belief), Charities, not-for-profit organisation's and social enterprises.
- Individual volunteering can cover a number of activities and does not necessarily need to be related to an employee's current role or skills, this can be a chance to try something new. Alternatively employees may want to put their expertise to help those who may not usually have access to specialist skills.
- Individuals are encouraged to find volunteering activities for themselves but we will also use internal communications to highlight opportunities available and where possible try to match volunteers to organisations.
- Teams may wish to volunteer together to assist their team development whilst contributing to projects or activities. Team volunteering can be approved at the discretion of the Group Manager, taking account of organisational and service priorities.

### **1.4 DBS Checks**

Some external organisations, for example those working with children or vulnerable adults, may require their volunteers to undergo Disclosure Barring Checks. Such checks can be carried out by the HR team. The host organisation is responsible for ensuring that they have the relevant safeguarding policies in place prior to the start of the volunteering activity

### **1.5 Risk Assessments**

Risk assessments are needed to ensure organisations running the volunteering activities are fulfilling their duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their volunteers. The Council will work with organisations to ensure that the relevant risk assessments are in place.

## **2. Responsibilities**

Employees are trusted to use this time for its intended purpose, any suspected instances of misuse will be investigated in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedures.

### **2.1 Confidentiality**

Staff should be aware of Data Protection issues and maintain confidentiality procedures. Information of a confidential nature should only be discussed with the designated person of the organisation or when a safeguarding concern is raised.

### **2.2 Conduct**

Staff undertaking volunteering activities approved by the council, are reminded that they would be representing the Council and are therefore bound by its policies and procedures in relation to their conduct and behaviour. Any concerns in relation to an employees conduct whilst volunteering will be investigated in line with relevant council disciplinary procedures.

## **3. Process**

Staff interested in volunteering must complete the Employer Supported Volunteer Application Form.

### **3.1 Applying for Volunteer Placement**

Approval of the placement rests with the individual's line manager. Before submitting a request this must be discussed with a line manager.

Once this has been agreed the application form should be completed and passed to the line manager to sign off.

The line manager will then pass this onto the Voluntary and Community Sector Officer who will co-ordinate placements.

Reasonable requests for a volunteer placement, that meet the criteria, will be approved, however, requests could be declined if:-

- There are health and safety concerns
- The criteria are not clearly met e.g. no apparent benefit to the individual or organisation
- There are concerns of the impact on the delivery of team/service objectives or
- There is a potential conflict of interest with your role or the Council's interests.

### **3.2 Monitoring & Evaluation**

On completion of the volunteer placement the member of staff will be given an opportunity to feed back on their experience to enable us to refine and improve the volunteering programme or activity.

Recording and reporting on volunteering allows BDC to understand uptake in volunteering and the impact it has made both within the organisation and the community.