

Denbighshire County Council Volunteer Policy



Volunteer policy

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Introduction

Denbighshire County Council regards volunteering as an unpaid activity where someone freely gives their time to help an organisation or an individual who they are not related to. In other words, volunteers are not paid staff and do not have a legally binding contractual relationship with the Council.

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Denbighshire County Council. People volunteer for a number of reasons, for example:

- To socialise
- To put something back into society
- To regain or learn new employment skills
- To occupy their time

Denbighshire County Council acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways and that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. Denbighshire County Council values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Managers are advised to read the Handbook for Managers of Volunteers prior to recruiting volunteers.

Please note that Volunteering and Work Experience have differences, and there is therefore a separate Work Experience Guidance document available.

Aim

The overall aims of the volunteering policy, in conjunction with the Handbook for Managers of Volunteers, is to develop and promote best practice in the involvement and support of volunteers in the work of Denbighshire County Council. This policy aims to:

- Encourage the development of volunteering in all areas of the Council.
- Recognise and promote the importance of volunteering to the work of the Council.

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- Ensure support, training and supervision for Council volunteers.
- Identify the standards to which Council employees and volunteers are expected to adhere.
- Provide guidance and best practice to Council staff in working with volunteers and ensure the application of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy to volunteering.
- Ensure that volunteering with the council is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The Council aims to work with local communities and partners to develop a diverse range of suitable volunteering activities that are relevant for the people of Denbighshire.

Statement of Values and Principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Denbighshire County Council and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise, Denbighshire County Council cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all. The acceptance of a volunteer to a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out the agreed tasks. Any person must be aged 16 or over to volunteer with the Council.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement within the Council or referred to the Denbighshire

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Voluntary Services Council (DVSC), which coordinates volunteering opportunities across Denbighshire.

The council will carry out safer recruitment checks on all volunteers, which may include evidence of Right to Work in the UK, references, and DBS and basic health checks where the role requires these.

Recruitment of volunteers within Social Care is governed by regulations set out by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) and Social Care Wales.

Please see the flowchart in Appendix 1 for an overview of the process to recruit volunteers. Further guidance is contained within the Handbook for Managers of Volunteers.

Staff Volunteers

Staff members volunteering for a different team/Service within the Council will be treated in the same manner as an external volunteer and according to this Volunteering Policy. Where an employee of Denbighshire County Council wishes to volunteer either internally or externally, this will be supported in accordance with the Time Off Work Policy.

Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC)

DVSC is the leadership body in Denbighshire for celebrating, promoting and supporting [#DenbighshireVolunteers](#). Their role is to provide support to volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and the third sector and to be an influential voice in Denbighshire. DVSC's digital platform allows members of the public to register their interest in volunteering, find opportunities for themselves and to record their volunteer hours.

Registered Office: Naylor Leyland Centre, Well Street, Ruthin. LL15 1AF

Email: engagement@dvsc.co.uk

Website: www.dvsc.co.uk

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Managing a Volunteer

Managers are advised to read the Handbook for Managers of Volunteers to ensure they are confident in best practice of managing volunteers. This includes how recruit volunteers, as well as ensuring appropriate inductions and Health and Safety checks are carried out. Managers are also required to ensure they provide ongoing supervision support, as they would for employees.

Health and Safety

The Council has a duty of care to avoid exposing our volunteers to health and safety risks. All volunteers will be made aware of the Council's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and any practical safety concerns as part of their induction. Volunteers are expected to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Procedures. All volunteer roles will be risk assessed, covering both the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. In addition, where a volunteer makes us aware of a pre-existing medical condition or disability, an individual risk assessment may also be necessary. If the role requires PPE, the council will provide this as they would an employee.

Training

The council supports volunteer's personal and professional development, and as such, all volunteers will be able to access Denbighshire County Council's online e-Learning modules, if they wish to complete them during their volunteering placement. Volunteers should contact HR for login details.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All supervisors must ensure that during induction volunteers are aware of the Councils confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. If their role requires, volunteers must receive appropriate training.

Safeguarding

All supervisors must ensure that volunteers are aware of, and have received the appropriate training in the Councils Safeguarding Policy on Children and Adults.

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Denbighshire County Council follows the procedures outlined by the Disclosure and Barring Service to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults. A volunteer wishing to participate in an activity that is outlined in the DBS Criteria cannot participate in the Volunteering Activity until the Council has received a cleared DBS.

Expenses

The Council is committed to paying reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses ensuring that potential volunteers are not excluded due to financial reasons. These need to be agreed with the relevant manager before the volunteer commences their activity. Where expenses are not agreed, volunteers must be made aware of this at their first opportunity in the recruitment process.

Volunteers in Receipt of Benefits

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to establish whether volunteering is going to affect their entitlement to any social security benefits. Further advice should be obtained from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Job Centre Plus, or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Insurance

Denbighshire County Council's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage. Where volunteers drive as part of their voluntary activity, and use their own vehicle, they must ensure they possess the relevant class of insurance. Further guidance should be sought from the volunteer's own insurance company.

Complaints

As volunteers are not employees, they are unable to use the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure. However, they are entitled to use the Council's Complaints procedure. Complaints by volunteers should be raised in the first instance with their Volunteer Supervisor, and dealt with informally where possible. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the Supervisor, or if the complaint is against their own Supervisor, by another Volunteer Supervisor or line manager.

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If a complaint is made against a 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 issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the volunteer may be told their services are no longer required with immediate effect.

Equality and Diversity

Denbighshire County Council is a Disability Confident Employer, and are committed to equal opportunities and fair treatment for all. Whilst volunteers are not employees and are therefore not protected as employees under the Equality Act, it is not acceptable to discriminate against them. We will ensure that volunteering opportunities are inclusive and available to all. Volunteers still have a right not to be discriminated against, in the same way as a customer or service user has this right.

Any decisions made about a volunteer's suitability for tasks, or regarding their ongoing volunteering within the Council, will be made fairly and in line with equality legislation.

There is an expectation that all our volunteers will adhere to the Council's equality policies, ensuring that their own conduct when carrying out volunteering tasks does not discriminate against others or breach equality legislation. Volunteers are advised to read the Handbook and Code of Conduct for Volunteers.

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Appendix 1 – Flowchart

