



# **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

**June 2018**

**Version 4**

## ACCESS FOR ALL

Ashfield District Council (ADC) believes that equality is one of the key values of the organisation and must be embedded within all of the services we provide. The Authority will treat everyone as individuals with the same attention, courtesy and respect to ensure that people feel valued and respected and have equality of opportunity regardless of:

- Marital or civil partnership status
- Gender
- Gender reassignment / gender identity
- Religious belief
- Race (including colour, nationality or ethnic origins)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Maternity and paternity

The Authority is legally required to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations within and between communities to build good community relations.

The Corporate Equalities and Inclusion Policy can be downloaded from our website: [www.ashfield.gov.uk](http://www.ashfield.gov.uk) (search for Equalities).

If you need help understanding any of this document:

Write to:

Ashfield District Council,  
Council Offices,  
Urban Road,  
Kirkby-in-Ashfield,  
NOTTINGHAM,  
NG17 8DA

Telephone: 01623 450000

Email: [volunteering@ashfield.gov.uk](mailto:volunteering@ashfield.gov.uk)

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# CORPORATE VOLUNTEER POLICY

The Council adopted the Volunteer Policy in November 2010 following two years of development. The Policy provides a framework for the development of work with volunteers across the Authority in a common, consistent, equitable and sustainable way whilst demonstrating the commitment that the Council has to the range of volunteer contributions made to Council services.

During a typical year, 131 Ashfield residents were actively volunteering for approximately 185 hours per week with the Council. Using the Living Wage (2017) as a guide, this gave Council services added value of £66,660. Ad-hoc activities within the District enabled 536 people to also take part resulting in a further 1,072 hours of activity, totalling £7,718.

Volunteer roles greatly enhance the quality of life for Ashfield residents and include improving the environment, assisting with events and health and wellbeing related activities.

In 2017 the Council was presented with the Keep Britain Tidy, Community Engagement Award as a measure of this commitment to the District and its volunteers.

Officers have supported volunteers within their roles for many years and the Council's Volunteer Policy will develop further support around volunteering in the future.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council recognises the vital contribution volunteers make to improving quality of life in communities across the District of Ashfield. In many respects volunteers are key drivers in helping bind communities together and therefore the Council needs to play its part in supporting and nurturing the current and the next generation of volunteers.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to increasing opportunities for local people to volunteer and a number of areas of activity within the Council particularly lend themselves to volunteering.
- 1.3 This Policy identifies how the Council will recruit and manage volunteers placed within the organisation.
- 1.4 The Policy's development is clearly linked to Community / Health and Environmental Volunteers whilst working alongside other bodies such as local area based partnerships, College / School placement schemes, both internal and external to the Council and with local businesses.

## 2.0 WHO ARE VOLUNTEERS?

- 2.1 **VOLUNTEERS** are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit their community.
  - It is something an individual chooses to do.
  - There is no duress or coercion.
  - Their time is freely given.
  - There is no payment or expectation of payment.
  - This is readily distinguishable from reimbursement of expenses which

ensures volunteers are not out of pocket as a consequence of their volunteering.

- Every individual has the right to volunteer.
- Volunteering can be associated with a charitable or voluntary body. It can also include involvement with statutory agencies, self-help, events, sports clubs and informal community groups.
- Volunteering includes action that effects social changes.
- Volunteers from Schools will be risk assessed through the School / Council process and it is noted that anyone under the age of 18 will be supervised at all times whilst volunteering.

## 2.2

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING?**

**Learning New Skills and Developing Confidence** - Many volunteers encounter a variety of new challenges when they give their time in their communities. Sharing new experiences with new people, they can learn new skills that can give them confidence to face challenges in other areas of their lives.

**Matching Skills to People's Abilities and Strengths** - Identifying appropriate volunteering opportunities will help with improved or enhanced self confidence and better skills, greater self esteem and social wellbeing.

**Meeting New People** - Joining together to bring about a change or improve the community is a great way to bond with others and become part of a network that may stay in touch long after the task is done. These networks strengthen communities and increase their capacity to support each other and tackle local issues. It might also help to meet people from a diverse range of backgrounds – people that are not usually part of daily life – increasing tolerance and respect.

**Having Fun** - Helping others can be fun. Not every volunteer experience is the same, but by finding an opportunity that matches interests, there is a good chance of having fun whilst contributing time.

**Improving Health** - Volunteering can improve health. Volunteering may give:

- a heightened sense of wellbeing and a stronger immune system
- an improvement in insomnia
- speedier recovery from surgery
- older and younger people a particular focus e.g. volunteering in sport / events includes all ages and abilities
- social responsibility to become involved in international events such as the Olympics.

**Boosting Career Options** - Many employers may prefer to employ a candidate with volunteering experience over one without as they believe that volunteering can enhance an individual's skills. Some employers believe that the experience gained through volunteering can be more valuable than that gained in paid employment.

Further education providers and schools are keen to strengthen student portfolios and CVs by signposting to volunteer opportunities.

Enhancing Local Services – volunteering activities often provide services, facilities and physical improvements that benefit the wider community and would otherwise not be provided. They can also add value to existing services and investments by helping to achieve additional benefits. Engaging volunteers can also help to ensure that services and projects are meeting local needs, by involving people in their delivery.

Improving Neighbourhood Perceptions – volunteering can make people feel better about the area that they live in. These benefits are not restricted to volunteers themselves – simply observing or being aware of local volunteering activities can make people feel more positive about their neighbourhood.

### **3.0 SCOPE**

This Policy overarches and applies to all ADC services wishing to offer volunteer placements within their areas of operation. The Policy provides a single policy framework to govern all services and schemes being delivered directly by the Council or in partnership with other bodies. The Council recognises the importance of working in partnership to enable volunteer opportunities, examples being through Active Ashfield, Ashfield Community Development Group etc with opportunities being advertised locally.

For clarification and examples of regular and ad-hoc volunteers, please refer to the Council's Regular and Ad-hoc Volunteering Flowchart at Appendix 1.

Regular volunteers will be guided through the ADC Regular Volunteer Registration Process shown at Appendix 2.

The Council is enabling local businesses and partners to get involved and this initiative is highlighted at Appendix 3: 'Corporate Volunteer Opportunities - Give and Gain'.

The Council will recognise volunteer contributions and will publicise this on an ongoing basis to demonstrate the value that volunteers provide to local services and the community.

### **4.0 HOW VOLUNTEERING ADDRESSES THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE AIMS**

Volunteering opportunities will be available across all appropriate corporate services with new and existing opportunities reviewed on a regular basis to include the following aims, linked to the Corporate Plan.

Communities and Environment

Health and Wellbeing

Homelessness

Organisational Improvement

Place and Economic Growth

## 5.0 SELECTION AND PLACEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

Our Guiding Principles when selecting and placing volunteers are:

- 5.1 Volunteers are not substitutes for paid employees in accordance with the Volunteering England / TUC Charter at Appendix 5.
- 5.2 Services provided by volunteers should enhance and not replace those provided by paid employees.
- 5.3 Volunteers should not perform tasks or provide services that are the legal responsibility of someone else.
- 5.4 Volunteers will be placed as far as possible in roles that match their original motivation to volunteer as well as their ability and availability linked to the Council's volunteering opportunities.
- 5.5 We welcome volunteer applications from all sections of the community regardless of gender, gender reassignment, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or racial origins, disability, marital status, sexuality, trade union activity, age, political or religious beliefs.
- 5.6 Opportunities for volunteers will be either as a result of a volunteer enquiry by a member of the public or by the Directorate / Service Unit undertaking a recruitment campaign in local press, other public places and by directly targeting schools, partners and other agencies as appropriate. Examples of opportunities within the Council can be seen at Appendix 1 Regular and Ad-hoc Volunteering Flowchart. There are also a number of voluntary and community sector volunteering opportunities available locally.
- 5.7 The registration and induction process is shown in Appendix 2. The volunteer must provide evidence of identity (eg passport, birth certificate and driving licence with photograph) and proof of address. A detailed list of acceptable forms of evidence is available from the Human Resources Section. On occasions references may be required due to the nature of the volunteering opportunity.
- 5.8 On the satisfactory completion of all checks volunteers may be issued with a Volunteer Identity Card which will be signed for and returned at the end of a volunteer placement. Applicants should note that the volunteer opportunities may require volunteers to undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks depending on target groups and placement role / responsibility. ADC will be responsible for carrying out the DBS checks when required if the opportunity is an ADC volunteer placement and operate in accordance with the systems and procedures contained in the Council's policies.

## 5.9 **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks**

DBS checks (either standard or enhanced) will only be carried out for volunteers where the volunteer role has been identified as requiring a DBS check in accordance with the eligibility guidance issued by DBS and with due regard to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Each volunteer role will be considered on an individual basis to ensure any checks carried out are not unlawful.

The suitability of applicants with criminal records will be determined based upon the volunteering role and the circumstances of the conviction. Any assessment will consider the nature of the work, any potential risks to the Council and its customers and whether satisfactory safeguards can be put in place.

If the volunteer role is deemed eligible to have a DBS check then the volunteer will not commence the role unless completely supervised until a satisfactory DBS check has been received.

Further advice can be sought from the Human Resources Section as necessary.

- 5.10 Volunteers will be provided with a '**Volunteer Agreement**' during induction which will clarify the volunteer's role and expectations of both parties.

## 6.0 **VOLUNTEER INTRODUCTION AND TRAINING**

- 6.1 The training of volunteers is the responsibility of the host Service Unit. It should be given a high priority by supervisors and needs to start before volunteers have any interaction with, or responsibility for, service users.
- 6.2 An initial meeting with a relevant Officer will identify the scope of volunteering offered and any specific training needs will ensure that the volunteer understands and is able to take on the responsibilities of their voluntary work without direct Council Officer presence and supervision. The meeting would include:
- 6.2.1 An introduction to the Council and its corporate aims and the roles, responsibilities and relationships within the Council as appropriate.
- 6.2.2 Information regarding roles, responsibilities and relationships with outside organisations, as appropriate.
- 6.2.3 Advice and guidance on record keeping and claiming / payment of expenses including all relevant forms.
- 6.2.4 An explanation of the support available to volunteers and the problem solving procedure for reporting information and concerns.
- 6.2.5 An individual's responsibilities under Health, Safety and Insurance legislation as defined within the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy, Risk Assessment Policy, Manual Handling Policy, No Smoking Policy, First Aid and Emergency reporting procedures and any other appropriate Policy documents.
- 6.2.6 The Council's Equalities Policy and training programme.

- 6.2.7 The Nottinghamshire District Councils and Borough - Children and Adults Safeguarding Policy and reporting arrangements.
- 6.2.8 The Council's Corporate Training Programme is available for volunteers provided that it is relevant to the duties that are being undertaken and when spare capacity allows.
- 6.3 Ad-hoc volunteering opportunities are made available periodically and would be subject to briefings on the day eg tree-planting volunteering and litter-picking duties etc.
- 6.4 A Volunteer Induction Pack (VIP) will be issued as part of the process.

## **7.0 SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF VOLUNTEERS**

The line of supervision for all volunteers must be agreed before they start their placements. The Section(s) hosting the volunteer(s) must ensure that support exists, with decisions recorded, where appropriate, and action taken. These arrangements should be an integral part of a volunteer's relationship with the Council.

The line management structure will require setting out for all volunteers, just the same as there is a structure within the Council so will be the case for any volunteer structure and this will vary according to each Section's arrangements. It is not, therefore, expected that the officer in charge of the service will be responsible for the supervision requirements of every volunteer working within that service for capacity reasons. Supervision will be delegated to others operating within the service area and relevant training will be provided to perform this properly, if required.

Effective support must be based on developing good working relationships between the supervisor and the volunteer which will contribute to retention of volunteers. Identifying the motivating factors of an individual is a necessary part of any developmental needs.

Arms-length support and a point of contact for some volunteering roles may be all the support that is required, such as for regular litter pickers.

## **8.0 PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE**

- 8.1 The Council highly values volunteers and a volunteer's involvement is mostly a positive experience, however it is important to bear in mind that sometimes things can go wrong within a volunteer programme. A volunteer could have a complaint about another volunteer, an employee or the organisation itself. Similarly, it is possible that a volunteer's performance has declined, or that someone else has complained about a volunteer's work, attitude or conduct.

While we do not have legal duties towards volunteers and do not wish to create a contractual relationship, we feel that it is important that problems or complaints are dealt with fairly, openly and consistently. There are 3 steps to the problem solving procedure.

- Step 1 – Oral discussion
- Step 2 – Written warning
- Step 3 – Decision and opportunity to appeal

8.2 **If a volunteer has a complaint about ADC, an employee or another volunteer:**

We hope that most problems can be solved informally, but if this is not the case, the volunteer should raise the matter formally with their Volunteer Supervisor.

8.3 **If there is a problem with a volunteer's behaviour:**

Many 'problems' are simply due to training needs, a lack of support, inappropriate roles and so on. Where informal measures are not enough, the Volunteer Supervisor will raise the issue in a formal meeting with the volunteer.

Please refer further to Appendix 4 for the Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure.

**9.0 DECISION MAKING**

Volunteers occupy unique roles in service delivery which should be used to inform future development. Formal recognition of this and the creation of a process whereby they can articulate their views about services, such as a volunteer consultation group or at team meetings, will contribute to a more effective relationship between volunteers and the Council.

**10.0 OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES FOR ADC VOLUNTEERS**

10.1 Although voluntary work is freely given with no expectation of payment, the Council will pay for any eligible expenditure incurred as a direct result of their voluntary work. A corporate budget has been allocated for certain specific expenses.

10.2 **General Guidelines**

Volunteers should seek approval from their Volunteer Supervisor before any out of pocket expenditure is incurred.

Volunteers should complete a '**Volunteer Expenses Claim form**' attaching original receipts. The Council will endeavour to pay the due amount within one calendar month from the date of submission. In some circumstances this may not always be possible.

10.3 **Allowances, Ex Gratia Payments, Pocket Money and Honoraria**

Any payments made in excess of the actual cost incurred are classed as earnings. This immediately changes the person's status from volunteer to effectively a paid employee and, therefore, will not be allowed. Disregarding the good practice issue, this could create problems for unemployed volunteers with the Benefits Agency and could have a tax and national minimum wage implication for both the volunteer and the Council. The same applies to ex gratia payments, pocket money and honoraria, all of which change the status of volunteers to paid employees as they are regarded as types of remuneration.

10.4 **Examples of Refundable Expenses**

- Travel expenses from the place of volunteering to another place of voluntary work. Volunteers should use public transport whenever or wherever it is available: travel expenses to and from the place of

- volunteering from home, by reimbursing the cost of public transport.
- Meal expenses, where the volunteer attends for more than 3.5 hours in a day, or is required to work through a mealtime, the volunteer is expected to take a packed lunch unless stated otherwise. The Council's subsistence forms will be used and will be reimbursed according to current rates and receipted, where authorised in advance.
- Other expenditure incurred through voluntary work, for example, equipment needs, where authorised in advance.
- ADC volunteers requiring reasonable adjustments to be made in order to volunteer would be supported to do so, if reasonably practicable. (Access to Work provides funding for any reasonable adjustments only if people are in paid work. Adjustments can range from no cost to thousands of pounds dependant upon what is required).

#### 10.4.1 **Travel Expenses Rates**

For the Council the guiding principles of the payment of travel expenses should be that they do not reimburse expenses that exceed the costs of the journey undertaken and that the journey is made in the cheapest practicable way ie travel claims are restricted to cover the District boundaries. Volunteers should use public transport whenever or wherever it is available. All reimbursement of travel costs will be based on the production of the appropriate tickets and / or a claim form.

#### 10.4.2 **Other Expenditure**

There may be other items that could be considered legitimate expenditure; however these should be agreed in advance in writing by the Volunteer Supervisor (if authorised to do so) or the Service Unit Manager with clear limits on the amount of money available.

### 11.0 **HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES**

Volunteers should ensure that the health, safety and welfare of themselves, customers, other members of the public and employees is considered at all times and to be aware of the requirements of the Health and Safety Act 1974, which sets out responsibilities for health and safety at work. Volunteers under the age of 18 will be strictly supervised at all times.

### 12.0 **VOLUNTEER CONDUCT**

Volunteers are expected to display the highest levels of courtesy, conduct, integrity and behaviour towards employees, customers, members of the public and other volunteers at all times. They must not do anything which may bring the Council's or any employee's reputation into disrepute.

### 13.0 **INSURANCE**

ADC Insurance will provide full cover for all volunteers provided that they are volunteering directly on behalf of and are under the instruction of ADC and they meet the Council's criteria when accepted as a volunteer.

#### **REGISTRATION**

It is imperative that all volunteers have been registered as this will confirm that they have been accepted as an ADC volunteer.

In the case of volunteers under 18 years of age, they could be treated as "vulnerable" from a Health and Safety point of view regarding supervision etc and if under 16 years of age, the 'Permit to Work' rules relating to work experience and parental consent recommended by the Health and Safety Executive may also apply in liaison with Nottinghamshire County Council. Nottinghamshire County Council regarding Permit for Child to Work – one off occurrence is acceptable but regular volunteers under 16 years of age will need to check with them on each occasion and be included as a Policy addition.

13.1 The Council arranges insurance contracts under two main headings: Employer's Liability and Public Liability. The following is a summary of these headings:

13.1.1 **Employer's Liability:** "Indemnifying" the Council against claims for employees for injury, death, illness or disease during the course of their employment. The contract is based on legal liability; any claimant must demonstrate that the Council has acted negligently.

By definition "volunteers" are included within the term employees for insurance purposes. Any employee (and therefore volunteer) must act within the terms and conditions of their volunteer agreement in line with Council operating procedures, policies and guidelines.

13.1.2 **Public Liability:** Public Liability insurance protects the Council should a member of the public or any other third party suffer damage to property or injury to their person due to the negligence of any member or volunteer of the organisation. This covers the legal liability of the Council.

13.1.3 **Driving as part of volunteer duties**

Any volunteer who will be using their own vehicle to purchase supplies and / or transport equipment / people must have a valid driving licence and an insurance certificate with a "Business User's Clause" and provide a copy of the Policy document, MOT and road tax certificates as appropriate to their Volunteer Supervisor.

The volunteer must report any accidents and report any motoring offences or police cautions to the Council. The Council will not pay any parking fines incurred by the volunteer.

#### **Volunteers entitled to drive the Council's vehicles**

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that the volunteers are trained, properly equipped, licensed and adequately covered by the Council's insurance whilst driving.

Volunteer Supervisors must ensure that volunteers are trained on the driving and / or operation of each piece of equipment / vehicle they use. Volunteers are required to sign a training log sheet to this effect.

Volunteer Supervisors are responsible for checking that the volunteer driving holds a licence to drive the vehicle, that such licence has not been revoked, that the volunteer has held and is not disqualified from holding or obtaining such a licence and that the volunteer is driving on the order of or with the permission of ADC under the direction or control of, ADC.

13.2 ADC Insurance Policy cover levels and limits apply to all volunteers provided that:

- a) The Volunteer is “working on behalf of, and under the direction or control of, the insured (ADC) at the time of suffering an injury”
- b) “If the insured has a duty of care to these people whether volunteer workers or otherwise, and injury is suffered as a result of breach of such duty, the Policy will respond under the Employer's Liability or Public Liability as appropriate”
- c) The insurance Policy does not provide a definition of what a volunteer is, other than “Volunteer workers or persons co-opted to assist the insured whilst working directly for the Named Insurance in connection with the Business”
- d) There is a “grey area” on “shared projects with other organisations where it may be unclear for whose organisation a volunteer is working”. ADC Insurance “will only cover those working directly on behalf of ADC and under the direction or control of, ADC and cover ADC’s legal liability”. The Council's risk assessment will need to scrutinise and challenge all models of outsourced delivery to seek assurances that service providers are competent, adequately insured and that standards of service are regularly monitored and reviewed by the Council.

13.3 Volunteer roles and tasks have been risk assessed and control measures implemented. High risk activities in which volunteers are likely to be engaged, for example, tasks involving the use of power tools, working at height or work with service users with known violent behaviour the manager must seek advice from the insurer as to whether it is acceptable and cover can be authorised prior to any activity taking place. Each case is to be determined on its own merit and is the responsibility of the Section concerned to make all necessary checks.

13.4 All claims are subject to the terms and conditions of the appropriate insurance policies.

## **14.0 CONFIDENTIALITY**

In the course of providing volunteering services, volunteers may have access to confidential information relating to this Service Unit or the Council’s customers. The Council expects the volunteer not to use or disclose this information to any person either during the volunteer’s volunteering experience with this Service Unit or at any time afterwards. Any breach of this requirement may lead to the volunteer being asked to leave. Volunteers agree to maintain confidentiality regardless of whether or not they know the individual, their associates and / or family. If the individual is known to the volunteer they should inform their volunteer supervisor immediately.

## **15.0 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

- 15.1 The Council is required to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act"), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("the EIR"), any subordinate legislation made under the FOI Act / EIR and any guidance issued by the Information Commissioner. The Council is required to provide the information it holds unless an exemption applies.
- 15.2 Volunteers agree to assist and co-operate with the Council to enable the Council to comply with its obligations under FOIA and EIR whenever a request is made for information.

## **16.0 DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

- 16.1 Data Protection Legislation means (i) unless and until the General Data Protection Regulations is no longer directly applicable in the UK, the General Data Protection Regulations ((EU) 2016 / 679) and any national implementing law, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in the UK and then (ii) any successor legislation to the GDPR or the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 16.2 To process the volunteer's application, the Council will hold personal data about the volunteer. The Council will hold this data securely and process it in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation.
- 16.3 The Council may need to share personal information for the purposes of processing the volunteer's application, recruitment, management, payment (expenses) and for the collation of statistical information. The sharing of the information will be on this basis and will not be made public by the Council. The Council may need to share the personal information provided by the volunteer with relevant partnership organisations such as government departments, other local authorities and voluntary and community and private sector organisations such as Active Ashfield and Ashfield Community Development Group partners, Department for Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, etc.
- 16.4 The Council is not able to preserve confidentiality where disclosure is required by other legislation.
- 16.5 The Council will also use the personal information provided for reasons in connection with Protecting Public Funds, preventing or detecting Crime and Disorder, Data Matching Initiatives with the Audit Commission and for other Government led initiatives.
- 16.6 Applicant volunteers are able to request / obtain copies of the information the Council holds about them by making a request in writing to the Information Officer or by completing the appropriate form on the Council's website. There is a fee of £10.00 payable for the provision of the information.
- 16.7 If an individual is dissatisfied by how their personal information is held or disclosed a complaint can be made to the Senior Solicitor based at Ashfield District Council, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, NG17 8DA.
- 16.8 Volunteers are required to comply with their obligations under the Data Protection Legislation and agree that in providing any other Party with personal information will not be, in breach of the Data Protection Legislation and all subordinate legislation relating thereto including the protection principles.

## **17.0 EQUALITIES**

Volunteers should familiarise themselves with the contents of the Council's Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy and be aware of its requirements insofar as it is relevant to their own placements and the work of the Section(s) in which they are volunteering. Volunteers have a responsibility to act in a manner appropriate with the Equality Act 2010 as outlined within the Policy and have a duty to report any discrimination.

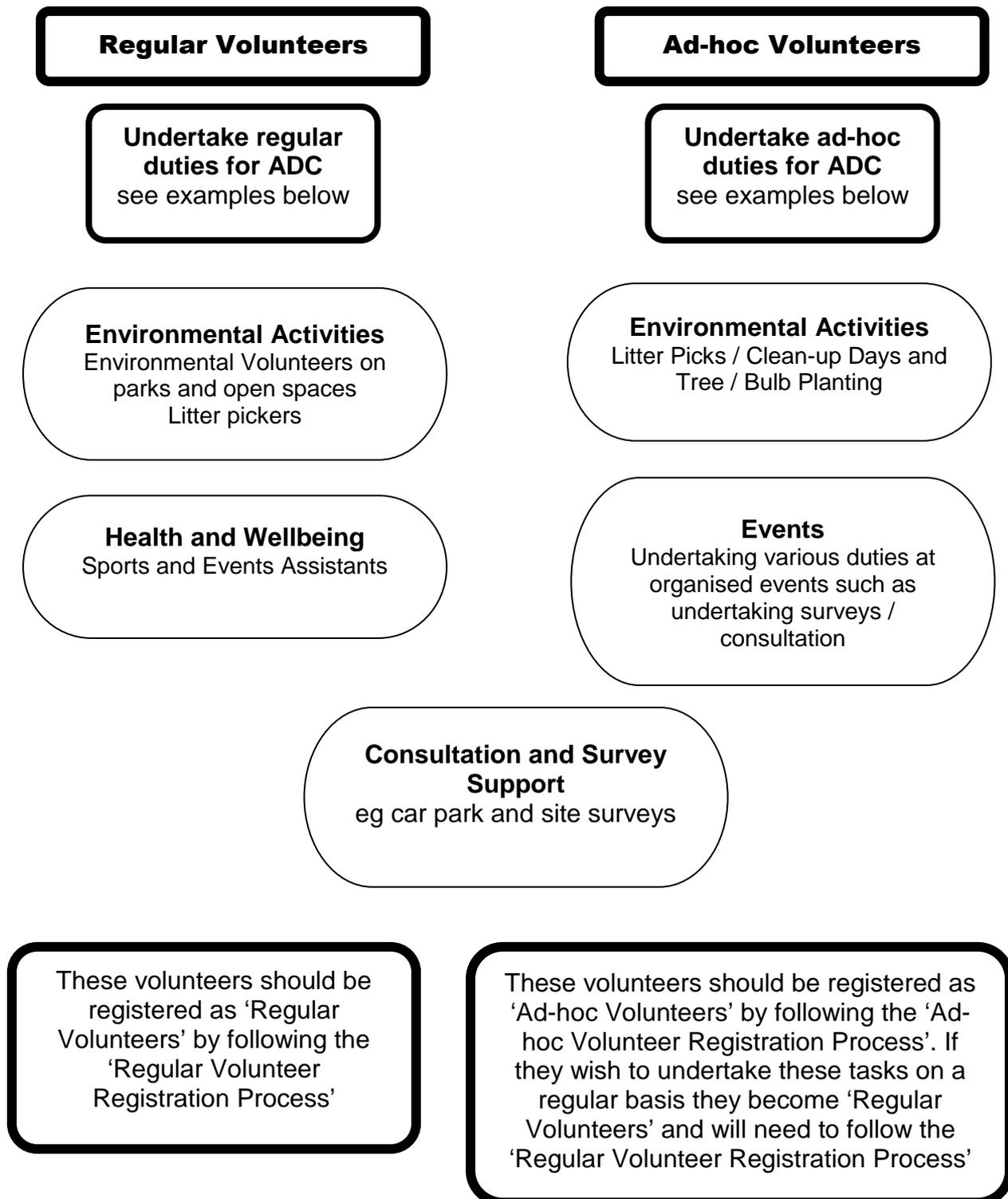
## **18.0 NOTIFICATION OF SICKNESS OR NON-ATTENDANCE**

Although a volunteer's time is given freely they are asked to agree what level of commitment they are able to give so that Sections can manage volunteer placements more effectively. If volunteers are unable to attend any agreed periods they should notify their Volunteer Supervisor in advance (giving as much notice as possible). If volunteers wish to increase or decrease their level of voluntary activity then their Volunteer Supervisor should be notified of this in advance.

## **19.0 POLICY REVIEW**

The Council will review this Policy as required, or whenever there is a major change in legislation or relevant changes to Human Resource policies and practices.

## Regular and Ad-hoc Volunteers Flowchart



## Becoming a Regular Ashfield District Council Volunteer

**Enquiry:** Talk / email a member of staff to discuss why you want to be a volunteer and what you hope to gain from volunteering



**Getting to Know You, Registration and Induction:** You attend a Volunteer Session where we will go through the registration process for your Volunteering Role

You will complete a Registration Form and bring in documents to prove your identity

If appropriate to the role then the reference / Disclosure and Barring (DBS) procedure should be followed



**References:** we will write to the person you have named on your registration form asking them to provide a reference for you



**DBS checks:** If appropriate, you will complete a Disclosure and Barring (DBS) form  
We send your DBS form off – this could take a few weeks to clear



**Return of Satisfactory References / DBS, if appropriate**



**Introduction:** We issue you with a Volunteer Induction Pack (VIP Pack) containing the Volunteer Policy and provide other guidance about ADC and Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity and Child / Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding information. We may take a photograph of you, with your permission, to produce an identity badge to use when carrying out your volunteering activity



**Health and Safety:** We will do risk assessments, arrange training if necessary and issue you with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



**Congratulations,** you are now an Ashfield District Council Volunteer and can begin your volunteering placement



### **Recording Activities and Ongoing Support:**

- If you need to, the Volunteer Activity Record can be completed each time that you undertake any volunteering activities so that you are able to monitor the valuable contribution that you are making
- Contact will be made to ensure that you are getting the most from your placement



**Leaving your Volunteer Role:** If you decide to leave your Volunteering role we would welcome your feedback through completion of our '**Volunteer Leaver's Survey**'

*If appropriate to the role, the section highlighted in red above must be completed prior to full induction taking place.*

## **CORPORATE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES - GIVE AND GAIN** – local businesses and partners supporting volunteering

**Corporate Social Responsibility**, often abbreviated as "CSR," refers to business practices involving initiatives that benefit society. CSR can encompass a wide variety of initiatives, from giving away a portion of a company's proceeds to charity, to implementing "greener" business operations.

There are a few broad categories of social responsibility that many businesses are practising and supporting in partnership with Ashfield District Council:

1. **Environmental efforts:** One primary focus of corporate social responsibility is the environment. Businesses regardless of size can have a large carbon footprint. Any steps they can take to reduce their footprint are considered both good for the company and society as a whole. Businesses have been involved with litter campaigns, bulb and tree planting and project development across the District.
2. **Philanthropy:** Businesses practise social responsibility by donating to national and local charities. Businesses have resources that can benefit charities and local community programmes. Businesses have given financially and in kind to local community groups and charities such as donations to events and food banks.
3. **Ethical labour practices:** By treating employees fairly and ethically, companies have demonstrated their commitment to national initiatives such as health and wellbeing at work and breast feeding friendly businesses.
4. **Volunteering:** By doing good deeds without expecting anything in return, companies are able to express their concern for specific issues and support for certain organisations. Clean-up days in communities and support to charitable activities at local churches and community centres in the District.

The Council has developed a list of environmental and event opportunities across the District that may enable company workforces to engage with local communities whilst contributing to projects and initiatives.

## Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure

A volunteer's involvement is mostly a positive experience, it is important to bear in mind that sometimes things can go wrong within a volunteer programme, and you may find that a volunteer has a complaint about another volunteer, a member of staff or the organisation itself. Similarly, you may find that a volunteer's performance has declined, or that someone else has complained about a volunteer's work, attitude or conduct.

The problem solving procedure will ensure that you know how to deal with problems if they arise. It can help you to find the most appropriate solution to the problem, without necessarily resorting to asking a volunteer to leave.

### Problem solving

Whilst we do not have legal duties towards volunteers and do not wish to create a contractual relationship, we feel that it is important that problems or complaints are dealt with fairly, openly and consistently. To help with this we have put in place the following procedures.

#### **If a volunteer has a complaint about Ashfield District Council, a member of staff or another volunteer:**

We hope that most problems can be solved informally. But if this is not the case the volunteer should raise the matter formally with their Volunteer Supervisor.

If the complaint is against the Volunteer Supervisor, then the volunteer should request a meeting with the appropriate Service Unit Manager.

If the issue is not resolved then it should be put in writing to the appropriate section manager. The matter should be dealt with within 14 days.

#### **If a volunteer makes a complaint**

This part of the problem solving procedure gives the volunteer the **opportunity to complain** if they have been unfairly treated or if they have an issue or a cause for concern within the organisation.

##### **Step 1 - Oral complaint**

Initial complaints, whether against a member of staff, the organisation or another volunteer, should be discussed with the volunteer. If the complaint is about the Volunteer Supervisor, then the matter should be referred to another manager.

If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage then the volunteer should proceed to stage 2.

##### **Step 2 - In writing**

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome of the oral complaint, they should make a formal complaint in writing to a more senior member of staff.

### **Step 3 –Decision and the opportunity to appeal**

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome, then they can appeal to a member of the management team. The organisation will agree with the volunteer a timeframe in which it will provide a decision. This decision is final. Unfortunately, volunteers have no legal rights unless they can prove that the organisation has been negligent in its duty of care towards the volunteer.

### **If there is a problem with a volunteer's behaviour:**

Many 'problems' are simply due to training needs, a lack of support, inappropriate roles and so on. Where such measures are not enough the Volunteer Supervisor will raise the issue in a meeting with the volunteer. The volunteer will be entitled to put their case. If it is felt necessary an informal warning may be issued, with steps agreed to improve conduct.

If the issue is still not resolved a meeting involving the volunteer, Volunteer Supervisor and the appropriate Service Unit Manager will be called. This may result in a formal warning, with the understanding that following another warning the volunteer will be asked to leave.

If a volunteer is believed to have behaved in a manner that has or could have seriously affected the organisation – for example theft, bullying, or violence – they will be required to immediately cease their volunteer duties while the matter is investigated by the Volunteer Supervisor and the appropriate Service Unit Manager. The volunteer will be able to put their case and a decision will be made within 14 days. If the complaint against the volunteer is upheld the volunteer will be asked to leave.

Volunteers can appeal decisions to the Service Unit management team and will receive a response within 14 days.

### **If someone complains about a volunteer**

This part of the problem solving procedure gives the volunteer the opportunity to be told why a complaint has arisen, the opportunity to **state their case** and the chance to **appeal**.

Sometimes minor issues can arise during the course of volunteering, such as a volunteer not fitting into the team as well as was expected, not meeting the required standards when undertaking tasks or being unreliable.

Such issues may be detected if regular **supervision** takes place, and may be quite easy to resolve without resorting to formal procedures.

Remember, always aim to find the best solution for the volunteer. If the issue is not resolved through regular supervision, or if a complaint is raised by a third party, then the problem will need to be dealt with on a more formal basis.

### **Step 1 – Oral discussion**

The first step is to discuss the complaint with the volunteer. There could be external factors influencing their ability to carry out tasks, their behaviour or their attitude. Identify goals that will help the volunteer to fulfil their role, and offer extra support, supervision and training where necessary. Agree a deadline for reviewing the situation with the volunteer.

If the complaint was raised by someone else, keep them informed of the measures you are taking to rectify the situation.

## **Step 2 – Written warning**

If the issue hasn't been resolved by the oral discussion or the review, then the Service Unit Manager can issue the volunteer with a written warning outlining the reason for the complaint. The volunteer should be given the opportunity to **state their case**, which could be to either the Volunteer Supervisor or a Service Unit Manager. Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set and help offered to the volunteer. However, if the organisation decides to ask the volunteer to leave, then the volunteer should be given the opportunity to **appeal**. The decision to ask a volunteer to leave should be a last resort.

## **Step 3 – Decision and opportunity to appeal**

If a volunteer has been asked to leave and they do not agree with the decision reached at this stage, then the volunteer has the right of appeal to the Service Unit Manager. They will need to respond within a specified time, and their decision is final.

## 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.



**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 grant-making 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 involvement 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)**

