

City of York Council

Volunteering Policy

Statement of intent

City of York Council has a long history of engaging with residents of York to offer volunteering opportunities that benefit the individual and the corporate aims of the council. Many departments offer a broad range of opportunities from help with looking after green areas, to stewarding at events, to mentoring.

As a signatory of the York Charter for Volunteering we make every effort to apply its principles and deliver high quality volunteering experience. The Charter is a locally devised set of standards that provides a framework for developing and improving volunteering programmes.

Charter principles:

Contribution	Volunteers are able to contribute to genuine achievements
Quality	The volunteer experience is of a high quality
Safety	Volunteers have a safe experience
Enjoyment	Volunteers are able to enjoy their experience
Value	Volunteers are valued and their contribution is properly recognised
Voice	Volunteers have a voice and all parties listen to one another
Equality	Volunteers are treated fairly, barriers to volunteering are removed and diversity is welcomed
Proportionality	Volunteer paperwork and procedures are kept to the minimum necessary for the role

We aim to increase volunteering to develop community involvement and resident skills. We want to remove barriers that residents and employees may have to volunteering.

Policy and Procedure

Purpose

For reasons of administration, safety and courtesy the council produces this volunteering policy and set of guidance procedures to enable a smooth relationship with volunteers.

This policy covers 'in-bound', i.e. people volunteering for positions within the council. For 'out-bound', i.e. council employees offering their time to other organisations (see the council's Employer Supported Volunteering commitment statement available on the intranet). For the purpose of this policy the Charter definition of volunteering has been adopted.

The definition:

'Volunteering is an act of freewill that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that benefits both the individual undertaking the act and the people, organisations, or environment of York.'

This policy does not refer to anyone on work experience placement or/and university students undertaking an internship.

City of York council recognises the immense benefits that volunteers bring to the organisation and the links that volunteers can build between the organisation and the local community. In return the council hopes to give volunteers and opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences.

The council offers a range of volunteering opportunities which are detailed on the council website or appropriate media.

Identification of volunteering opportunities

When identifying volunteering opportunities a, needs assessment, will be carried out prior to establishing the volunteering role with consideration given to costs, resources required to facilitate it along with appropriate risk assessments.

All volunteering experiences will have a clear role description which will outline the expectations in terms of the volunteering experience for both the Council and the volunteer.

A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment with the Council. The Council is not under any obligation to provide a volunteering opportunity nor is the volunteer under any obligation to take part in the council's volunteering opportunities.

Council employees managing volunteers will receive the necessary training to support them in their role as volunteer managers to ensure that volunteers have a quality experience.

Recruitment of volunteers

To ensure that the volunteering experience is appropriate for the volunteer, all volunteers are asked to complete a volunteer application form and will have an 'interview' appropriate to the role they propose to undertake.

Volunteer managers will ensure when recruiting volunteers:

- That the council's equal opportunities policies are followed;
- DBS checks (where applicable) are undertaken and references sought prior to the volunteer starting in the volunteering role;
- Where a match is deemed to be not suitable for either the volunteer or the council feedback will be offered and the volunteer will be signposted to other volunteering opportunities that may be more appropriate.

Expectations

Both parties will have expectations around the volunteering experience.

The council may expect volunteers to:

- be reliable and punctual;
- comply with relevant policies and procedures;
- follow the council's health and safety policies and procedures with a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions and not act outside their authorised area or work;
- report any accidents to the volunteer manager;
- be willing to participate in training relevant to the volunteering experience;
- inform their volunteer manager as soon as possible if they are unable to attend their volunteering session;
- inform their volunteer manager if they are unable to continue as a volunteer;
- raise any issues or concerns relating to their volunteer role;
- retain and produce evidence of agreed out of pocket expenses incurred whilst volunteering.

The volunteers may expect:

- to be assigned a named volunteer manager;
- an induction and training appropriate to the role;

- if they wish, supervision and informal appraisal for personal development;
- clarification of what is expected of them when undertaking the volunteering role;
- to be treated with respect and care;
- to be made aware of any policies applicable to the area that they are volunteering in;
- re-imburement of reasonable expenses agreed in advance which are incurred when undertaking the volunteering opportunity;
- to be given a copy of the council's volunteering handbook at the commencement of any volunteering experience. This handbook outlines for the volunteer key policies, procedures, and expectations around their volunteering experiences.

Responsibilities

All volunteer managers will be responsible for providing the volunteer with:

- guidance and training appropriate to the volunteering role including any specific instructions to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the volunteer;
- the necessary tools to carry out their role during the induction, or soon after;
- a trial period to allow both parties to assess whether the experience is a suitable opportunity or match.

Volunteer agreement

Where appropriate the volunteer manager may invite the volunteer to enter into a volunteering agreement.

The agreement will identify:

- the volunteer's role;
- the training that the volunteer is expected to undertake;
- the expenses that the council will pay to the volunteer;
- the insurance cover that will be provided for the volunteer; and
- who will supervise the volunteer

It is at the discretion of the volunteer manager to decide whether or not a volunteering agreement is necessary.

Insurance

The council will ensure that volunteers are covered by the appropriate liability insurance, cover for the agreed volunteering role. The volunteer manager will ensure that the insurance section has been notified prior to the volunteer starting in the role.

If driving as a volunteer

Any volunteers who will be transporting equipment or people using a vehicle provided by the council must have a valid driving licence. They will be covered by the council's insurance policy. Where the volunteer will be using his/ her vehicle, he/she must provide a copy of the vehicle's insurance policy. The volunteer must report any accidents through the course of their volunteering work to the volunteering manager. He / she must also report any motoring offences or police cautions to the council. The council will not pay any parking fines acquired by the volunteer.

Expenses

Service areas should set aside budget for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred by the volunteer when undertaking the volunteering opportunity.

References

Volunteers may request the council provides an appropriate reference in relation to the volunteering role they undertook with the council.

Complaints

If a volunteer experiences any issues during the course of volunteering, he/she should raise those concerns with the volunteering manager. Should the volunteer wish to raise a formal complaint the council's complaints procedure should be followed.

Equal opportunities statement

The council is committed to equality and aims to ensure that no volunteer involved in the council's volunteering projects receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic. The council welcomes and values the diversity (of age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation etc.) present in York and is committed to making volunteering opportunities accessible and responsive to the people and communities of York. Volunteer managers will endeavour to obtain equality monitoring information from their volunteers in order for the council to establish if people involved in its corporate volunteering projects are representative of York's communities. Knowing the volunteer's equality profile will enable the council to focus efforts on engaging under-represented groups that will lead to a more diverse volunteer pool.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the council's Volunteer Managers Network.