

Isle of Anglesey Volunteering Policy

1. Scope

This policy underpins one of the core principles in the Compact agreement between the Isle of Anglesey County Council and Medrwn Môn in relation to volunteering for the local authority.

2. Policy Statement

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers can make to the organisation. Volunteers bring with them a diversity of experience, backgrounds, skills, ages and outlooks, which can provide added value to the services delivered. This policy will:

- Let volunteers know how we will ensure fairness and consistency
- Offer security in terms of knowing how they will be treated
- Help staff and volunteers understand each other's roles

In addition, this policy sets out the broad principles for working with volunteers within the Council in a fair and equitable manner. Its aim is to ensure that the benefits of volunteering are maximised for both the volunteers and the Council. It is of relevance to all within the Council including volunteers, staff and elected members.

3. Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the Community. Volunteering may be for a limited time (for example, to assist in the completion of a particular project or event), or it may be on an on-going basis (for example, to assist in the day to day delivery of a particular service).

The Council recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Some examples of ways in which volunteers contribute to the work of the Council are given below:

- Sport and the support of sport
- Transport schemes
- Countryside management schemes
- Advocacy (Social Services)

The Council is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

4. Why Have a Policy?

A written policy gives formal recognition to the importance of volunteers and ensures that the following objectives are met:

- Volunteers are involved in appropriate activities through a suitable selection procedure which includes references and, as required, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- Volunteers are welcomed, feel valued and receive a relevant induction from the service in question
- Volunteers' contributions are maximised by providing appropriate training and support
- More people are encouraged to become involved as volunteers
- More volunteers remain involved

This policy will help all staff involved in recruiting and managing volunteers to adhere to good practice and support volunteers in a planned and managed way.

Each school will have their own Volunteer policy.

5. What are the Benefits of Engaging a Volunteer?

- Experiences and skills can be drawn upon and developed to impact positively on a range of services and projects.
- Volunteers can be flexible and innovative in their approach
- Volunteers enhance a sense of Community and help to build an inclusive society
- The Community and the environment benefit from the contribution made by volunteers

6. Principles

6.1 Recruitment and Selection

The Council aims to recruit volunteers from all sections of the community with a wide range of skills, life experiences and knowledge.

The recruitment of volunteers will normally be carried out through the posting of advertisements in leaflets, newsletters and on the corporate website/social media by each service. It may also be done by making informal contact within the existing user community.

An interview/informal discussion will be held with all prospective volunteers to discuss their skills, roles and expectations with recruitment officer within the service. The selection procedure will broadly follow the processes outlined in the Authority's Recruitment and Selection Policy (where appropriate), which will include references and a check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if applicable.

6.2 Status of Volunteers

A volunteer is not an employee or worker and will not have a contract of employment with the Council. All voluntary work undertaken is unpaid. The recruiting officer will agree a role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements and that where available, the Council will provide work for the volunteer. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and the Council is not bound to provide the work.

Note: This policy does not apply to foster carers.

6.3 Volunteering Roles

It is the responsibility of the manager working with the volunteer to draw up an outline of the volunteer role. This will set out the duties of the role and the necessary skills and experience, as well as any training that is required before the voluntary work is undertaken. Voluntary work should complement the work of paid staff and provide added value to the benefit of service users.

Volunteers are not intended as a substitute for paid employees, so care should be taken to ensure that no undue demands are placed on our volunteers, and that they do not undertake work that should normally be carried out by paid staff.

6.4 Supervision and Support

The Council is committed to developing the knowledge, skills and effectiveness of its volunteers.

This will be achieved by providing:

- Meaningful work within the priorities of the service
- Effective supervision
- Recognition of work completed
- Clear targets, priorities and appropriate standards for the work assigned

Provided a volunteer undertakes at least 30 hours of voluntary unpaid work the Authority may provide a reference for that volunteer)

6.5 Confidentiality

Volunteers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement and organised by the recruiting officer in each service.

6.6 Concerns procedure

Volunteers should raise any concerns of problems with their immediate supervisor or Manager.

6.7 Expenses

Where appropriate, volunteers will be offered reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses from their home to place of work. A mileage allowance for those using their own means of transport is set at 22.5 pence per mile. All expenses must be agreed in advance with the volunteer's immediate supervisor or manager.

6.8 Notice

The Council or the volunteer should endeavour to provide as much notice as possible of their intention to end the volunteering arrangement.

7. Compliance with Council policies, procedures and protocols

A number of specific issues are relevant to this volunteering policy:

7.1 Equality and Diversity

The Council is committed to equality and diversity, both in the provision of services and in its role as a major employer, and to the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination in all our policies, procedures and practices. The Council treats all people with equal respect, concern and consideration and recognises the valuable contribution made to the Isle of Anglesey by all individuals. Volunteers will be expected to accept and work in accordance with these principles.

7.2 Welsh Language Scheme

The Council recognises equal status for the Welsh and English languages. Welsh and English will be the official languages of the Council and will enjoy the same status and validity in the Council's administration and work. Volunteers will be expected to be aware of this principle.

7.3 Health & Safety

The Council has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers must be treated the same as paid staff in respect of health and safety. Volunteers should at all times follow the Council's health and safety policies and procedures. A risk assessment specific to each volunteer work area and role must be undertaken by a qualified person and a copy provided to the volunteer. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who could be affected by their actions. Volunteers must not act outside their authorised area of work or duties. Volunteers must report all accidents and near misses to their supervisor.

7.4 Safeguarding Policies

Volunteers need to comply with the Council's Safeguarding policies and protocols in relation to vulnerable people.

7.5 Insurance

7.5.1 General

Volunteers will be indemnified against third party claims under the Council's Public Liability Insurance while carrying out their duties.

7.5.2 Drivers

Any person acting as a volunteer on behalf of the Council requiring the use of a vehicle (private or Council vehicle) must comply with the Council's Fleet and Driver Policy.

7.6 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check

Where the volunteering activity involves children and young people under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults, the volunteer will be advised that an Enhanced DBS must be provided. Guidance will be provided by the relevant Council services.