



East Ayrshire
COUNCIL

POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERING

April 2000

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EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DRAFT POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERING

1. DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering was defined in Circular 15/1995 (Voluntary Issues Unit, Scottish Office) as:-

“The commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment or individuals outside one’s immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.”

Circular 15/1995 noted that the term “volunteering sector” is used to denote voluntary activity in the statutory and private sectors as well as in the voluntary sector.

2. A STATEMENT OF UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The Council:

- recognises that the role of volunteers in Council services, compliments but cannot replace that of professional staff and others who are required to provide the Council’s statutory service;
- acknowledges the unique contribution made by volunteers to the life of communities, service users, paid staff of the authority and to the volunteers themselves;
- gives commitment to volunteering and will implement measures to support volunteering through funding and other forms of help;
- will develop a model of good practice with regard to the involvement of volunteers;
- will ensure that its policies will not adversely affect volunteering;
- recognises the valuable contribution made by volunteers to the fabric of the local community in many areas of life and the important role played by volunteers in the work of its departments, including social and community care, community development, the dissemination of information, environmental improvement, education and advocacy;
- will encourage the establishment of a Local Volunteer Development Agency (LVDA) as a key co-ordinating and development body for volunteering in the area, and as an “open door” recruitment centre for volunteers;
- will designate a volunteer liaison officer to monitor the policy, who will ensure consistency of approach across departments and will keep staff informed of the work of volunteers;
- will establish a mechanism by which it can monitor the value and effectiveness of its policy on volunteering; and

- will use its volunteering policy to inform and support other policies including those on the Voluntary Sector, Decentralisation and Social Inclusion.

3. STATEMENT OF AIMS OF THE POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERING

This policy statement aims to:-

- recognise the importance of volunteering to the communities in the local authority area;
- actively promote the importance, effectiveness and value of volunteering;
- secure greater recognition and appreciation for the contribution of volunteers in society;
- mobilise more people to volunteer and improve the ease with which people may participate in volunteering;
- improve the accessibility of volunteering to include under-represented groups such as young people, older people, people with disabilities and people from black and ethnic minority groups;
- ensure the application of policies of equal opportunities in relation to volunteering;
- improve the quality of volunteering throughout all sectors and in all areas of the Council's work and within its local area;
- provide volunteers with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and address the relation between volunteers, those who engage volunteers and those who receive their services;
- set up consultation with the local volunteering sector, to monitor volunteering within the Council;
- clarify the key areas of the Council's responsibility and practice in relation to volunteering in its area; and
- set standards of good practice in working with volunteers.

4. A STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

4.1 The Council, in engaging volunteers, will accept the following principles:

4.1.1 General

It is the responsibility of paid staff to identify ways in which the work of the Council can be extended by the involvement of volunteers, and to ensure that these opportunities complement rather than replace the work of paid staff.

Opportunities will be given for volunteers to represent their views within the appropriate management structure.

The tasks to be performed by volunteers will be clearly defined, so that all concerned with their activities are sure of their respective responsibilities.

4.1.2 Relationship with Paid Staff

Volunteers will not be asked to take on tasks formerly undertaken by paid workers whose posts have been removed, or to work in ways which facilitate a decrease in paid employment.

Volunteers will not be deployed in times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue with their regular work but should not be asked to undertake additional duties.

As far as possible, volunteers will have responsibility for carrying out particular pieces of work and will not be used simply to assist paid workers.

Steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff at all levels are clear about the role of volunteers, and that good working relationships are fostered between paid staff and volunteers.

4.1.3 Recruitment, Interview and Selection

All volunteering opportunities will be advertised widely, in ways that are accessible to all sections of the community. Such advertising will specify the task to be undertaken and will draw attention to the benefits and experience to be gained from participation in volunteering.

Written profiles will delineate duration, commitment, necessary skills and actual duties.

The Council's Equal Opportunities statement will be adhered to in relation to appointing volunteers.

Volunteers will be placed in accordance with appropriate volunteer recruitment and selection procedures. Which include:

Application Form	SCRO checks
Interview	Matching with individuals/groups
References	Induction period

This will be in line with the Council Equal Opportunities Policy and Recruitment Procedures.

Volunteers who offer their services to the Council will have their applications dealt with as quickly as possible.

Placements will match the volunteer's skills, talents and interests with the Council's needs.

Once placed, the Council will expect volunteers to comply with existing policies and procedures.

4.1.2 Support for Council Volunteers

The Council will invest personnel resources for the adequate management of volunteers as part of the recruitment and induction procedures.

Where appropriate the Council will provide an induction period and a review session to assess the progress of the placement and to resolve any problems at an early stage.

Supervision will be offered on a regular basis to volunteers to monitor the progress of volunteering for both parties.

The Council will provide funding for payment of expenses. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

The Council will ensure adequate provision of insurance for volunteers where appropriate. Volunteers will be given information on other legislation or policies, eg Health and Safety, which may affect them.

Training will be provided for volunteers to assist in the understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the volunteer and the Council Department.

4.2 The Council, in engaging volunteers, recognises the rights of volunteers:

- To know what is expected of them
- To have clear specified lines of support and supervision
- To be shown appreciation
- To have safe working conditions
- To be insured
- To know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
- To be paid expenses
- To be trained
- To be free from discrimination
- To experience personal development through participation

and expects that volunteers will:

- Be reliable
- Be honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Attend training and support sessions where agreed
- Carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of the authority
- Work within agreed guidelines and remits.

4.3 The Council, in purchasing services involving volunteers, will ensure that:

- The role of volunteers is made clear and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management.
- Information, advice and assistance will be available to voluntary management committees about the handling of the contractual arrangements.
- Consideration will be given to utilising agreements with service partners to set out the roles and commitments of the volunteers.

4.4 The Council, in funding services involving volunteers, will ensure that:

- Funded voluntary organisations adopt similar commitments to good practice where appropriate.

4.5 **The Council, in its encouragement of employer-supported volunteering, will:**

- Increase employees' awareness of the opportunities for volunteering through advertising in Council bulletins, pre-retirement courses etc.
- Support, promote and encourage the involvement of employees in volunteering.

4.6 **The Council will develop its relationship with the local volunteering sector on the following principles:**

- The Council recognises the benefits of the involvement of the local Council of Voluntary Organisations (East Ayrshire) and other umbrella groups in consulting volunteers and will establish recognised mechanisms to ensure that the voluntary sector is consulted on the wide range of issues which affect volunteers.
- The Council recognises the need for a strategic approach to the development of volunteering and will support the work of a LVDA in providing leadership in the volunteering sector.
- The Council will provide resources to support the work of the LVDA.
- The Council will encourage networking to co-ordinate work, promote good practice and ensure quality of service to the customer.

7 June 2000

AGENDA