

# Employee Volunteer Policy

March 2020



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## Document Control

Publication Date	
Related Documents	▶
Owner (Department)	
Author (Team)	

## Review of Strategy

Review Date	

## Volunteering as an employee of the Council

Employer Supported Volunteering is when organisations actively support and encourage their employees to volunteer.

Employees already volunteer their time within the local community. This policy seeks to set out an overarching approach to how employees will be supported by the Council to get involved and support their local communities.

This commitment sets out:

- ▶ The volunteering opportunities that the Council can support,
- ▶ The time given to employees to undertake their volunteer role,
- ▶ What is expected from employees when provided with the time to volunteer.

### Statement of Commitment

This document sets out South Ribble Borough Council's commitment to promoting and supporting involvement in voluntary activity by its employees. The voluntary activity should be linked to the Council's vision and corporate priorities.

### Aim of the scheme

The Employee Volunteering Scheme aims to increase volunteering opportunities for employees at South Ribble Borough Council.

The Council will do this by releasing employees from normal duties for 3 days per year (pro-rata) to:

- ▶ Undertake current volunteering or new volunteering activities
- ▶ Encourage volunteering to be used for staff development via the appraisal processes
- ▶ Identify possible opportunities for volunteering linked to the Corporate commitment to developing thriving communities

### Policy Scope

The policy applies to all current employees of South Ribble Borough Council. Under the policy employees are able to identify suitable volunteer opportunities and speak with their line manager to discuss how they can be supported. Managers should see volunteering as an opportunity to develop employees and work with individuals to agree an appropriate volunteer experience.

As part of the policy, the question of volunteering and potential for professional and personal development will be integrated into the Personal Development Plan process for employees.

### Why volunteer?

For employees, it can,

- ▶ bring a great sense of personal achievement and self-worth by contributing to the community
- ▶ give a broader outlook and appreciation of diverse communities
- ▶ give others the benefit of experience and skills
- ▶ help to develop new skills and experiences
- ▶ be fun, social and enhance health and wellbeing
- ▶ help adjustment from work to retirement.

For communities, it can:

- ▶ help voluntary organisations to deliver services and improve communities
- ▶ build a more robust and resilient society
- ▶ improve relationships between council staff and residents.

For the council, it can:

- ▶ improve employee job satisfaction, morale, commitment and performance
- ▶ enhance its reputation and profile
- ▶ help it to attract and retain high-performing employees
- ▶ encourage individual and team development
- ▶ help team building through group volunteering
- ▶ strengthen relationships with voluntary, community and faith sectors – creating a ‘one team’ approach
- ▶ help to demonstrate its commitment and support to employees by encouraging them to play a more active role in society.

## Volunteering allowance

### Time allowance and eligibility criteria

This Scheme covers employees who already volunteer and those just starting out. The volunteering allowance can be used flexibly, one day at a time, two together or broken down into hours to fit the needs of the activity and the voluntary organisation or group. This will need to be agreed with the manager to ensure that whichever approach is taken it supports both the volunteering employee and the team's needs.

Staff will be allowed 3 working days (pro-rata) paid time off per year, provided that:

- ▶ The time has been agreed with the line manager at least two weeks in advance of the volunteering activity taking place so that cover arrangements can be made if necessary. As with annual leave, the needs of the service must be considered, and you must obtain agreement to volunteering leave before making any commitments to a voluntary organisation;
- ▶ Time taken to volunteer will not disrupt or adversely affect individual or team activity;
- ▶ There are no conflicts of interest, e.g. political campaigning;
- ▶ Where volunteering days are split over hours and take places regularly, this must be agreed with the manager and formally agreed in writing and HR notified;
- ▶ The 3 days pro-rata are taken within your leave year;
- ▶ The 3 days pro-rata are claimed on days when you would normally be working. Discretion can be exercised by the line manager to allow up to one non-working day to be claimed and the time credited to the employee;
- ▶ Activities undertaken are with organisations which are “not for profit”, this should normally be a constituted group or charity delivering services in South Ribble. Exceptions will be considered for out of borough volunteering, where there is a clear benefit to the council or employee;
- ▶ Any development activities undertaken benefit the role and service (see “additional paid time” below).

Employees will also be able to ‘top-up’ volunteering allowances with annual leave or unpaid leave if necessary. E.g. you could use three days’ annual leave and two days’ volunteering allowance for a week off to work at a summer scheme camp.

### Carrying over volunteering days

Volunteering days cannot be carried over from one year to the next.

### Monitoring

The level of detail required to agree and monitor an employee’s volunteering activity is at the manager’s discretion. The employee should complete a simple application form setting out how the volunteering activity fits in the scheme; the purpose of the activity; what they will do; and how they will do it.

Where the volunteering opportunity is considered as part of professional and personal development, this should be recorded within the appraisal review process.

## Recording volunteering time

Once a volunteering activity is agreed with the manager, the employee will need to record it in the flexi recording system. Any approved volunteering activity should be recorded as volunteering leave.

## Public duties

Duties associated with school governance, duties as a magistrate, support at polling stations, trade union activities are not covered by this policy.

This policy does not impact on the current policy for armed forces and time off for training and active service.

# Appendix 1: Managers and Employees Guidance

## Choosing a volunteering opportunity

Most individual and team volunteering is likely to take place in response to advertised volunteering opportunities either through the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership or Tempo Communities.

Opportunities may also be identified through personal development reviews to support personal development. South Ribble Partnership will provide human resources with a list of partner volunteer opportunities that may be suitable.

## Types of Volunteering Permitted

***The list below is not exhaustive but is illustrative to both managers and employees of the type of volunteering opportunities the Council is looking to support.***

You can volunteer for any not for profit organisation, but where the organisation is not constituted you may be required to provide further evidence that the activity is legitimate

### ***For example:***

- ▶ Trustee for a charity
- ▶ Outdoor activities e.g. environmental clean ups, recycling initiatives (this may include specific volunteering opportunities expressly promoted by the council to employees).
- ▶ Sponsoring charities e.g. through fund-raising
- ▶ Club leader, treasurer or secretary, e.g. at youth clubs, Scouts, Guides or similar groups
- ▶ Organising sports activities or events
- ▶ Decorating a community centre or doing gardening as a staff team

You could discuss with your manager:

- ▶ Taking up a volunteering opportunity, as an individual, that you have an interest in and might wish to continue doing.
- ▶ Giving a one-off contribution to a voluntary organisation, whether individually or as part of a team activity or project.
- ▶ Exploring activities that have the potential for longer-term volunteering, for example, spending time with a charity or job-shadowing another volunteer to gain experience and knowledge that benefits your work.
- ▶ Undertaking specific training linked to a new or current volunteering activity, such as charity law training for trustees or treasurers.

## Making an Application

Employees interested in volunteering must complete the Employer Supported Volunteer Application Form.

Before submitting a request it must be discussed with the line manager. Once this has been agreed the application form should be completed and passed to the line manager for approval.

Reasonable requests for a volunteer placement, that meet the criteria, will be approved, however, requests could be declined if:

- ▶ The criteria are not clearly met e.g. no apparent benefit to the individual or organisation
- ▶ There are concerns for the impact on the delivery of team/service objectives
- ▶ There is a potential conflict of interest with your role or the Council's interests

## Review of refusal

If a manager does not approve the proposed volunteering activity, you have the right to a review of the refusal through the line manager's manager. The manager will need to evidence the reason for their decision. The appeal decision is final.

## Recording Voluntary work

As well as providing much needed support to the local community, volunteering allows employees to develop new skills both for personal development and for the benefit of the council.

It is important to ensure that volunteers are given the opportunity to feed back on their experience, to enable the Council to refine and improve the volunteering programme, or activity. Recording and reporting volunteering creates an understanding of uptake and the impact it has made, both within the Council and the community.

As part of the agreement with the line manager, employees may be required to feedback regarding their volunteering work, for example as part of a performance review or one-to-one meeting.

### **As an Employee**

After completing a volunteer placement, the employee

1. Must log their time via the Flexi system to record their volunteer hours.
2. Feedback to their manager on the experience, learning and outcomes.

### **As a Manager**

1. Undertake through the regular 1-1 feedback on what was achieved and the outcomes from the volunteering.
2. Where the volunteering opportunity contributes to personal development, ensure that this is recorded through the appraisal review process.
3. Provide to HR a summary of outcomes and impact on the volunteering provision made and accommodated.

## Employees Responsibilities and Obligations

### Responsibilities

Employees are trusted to use this time for its intended purpose, any suspected instances of misuse will be investigated in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedures.

Council resources/equipment should be not be used when volunteering, unless they are of low value and you have written permission from your line manager and approval from insurance services.

### Insurance & Health and Safety

Whilst the Council may endorse the chosen volunteering activities of staff, it is the duty of the employee to ensure that the organisation or group they are volunteering with have appropriate insurance and policies such as but not limited to health and safety.

Employees will not be covered by the Council's own insurance.

### DBS Checks

Some external organisations, for example those working with children or vulnerable adults, may require their volunteers to undergo Disclosure Barring Checks. The volunteer organisation is responsible for ensuring that they have the relevant safeguarding policies in place prior to the start of the volunteering activity.

**Employee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the following detail	Comments
<p><b>The name of the voluntary organisation, duration, frequency and commitment required</b></p>	
<p><b>Where the activity will be carried out</b></p>	
<p><b>Any risks e.g. conflicts of interest, contravention of political restrictions or political campaigning</b></p>	

**Tell us what outcomes and impact you are looking to achieve by undertaking a volunteer role:**

The employee acknowledges that

- ▶ Employees are trusted to use their volunteer days allocation for its intended purpose, any suspected instances of misuse will be investigated in accordance with the Council’s disciplinary procedures.
- ▶ The organisation for which you volunteer is responsible for providing any induction or other training to allow you to perform your volunteering role and remain safe.
- ▶ It is the duty of the employee to ensure that the organisation or group they are volunteering with have appropriate insurance and policies such as but not limited to health and safety.
- ▶ Employees will not be covered by the Council’s own insurance.
- ▶ If you are involved in volunteering using your own car, you will need to check that your own motor policy is suitable.
- ▶ If the volunteering activity requires specialist clothing or equipment, this will need to be provided by the organisation or by the volunteer.
- ▶ The council will not be liable for any expenses incurred by staff as part of the Employee Volunteering Scheme.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 3: Managers Checklist

Employee:

Manager:

## Employee Volunteer Hours Record

Allowance	Completed	Balance

Please tick the relevant box	Yes	N/A	Comments
The volunteer opportunity meets the Council's criteria as set down in the policy			
Benefits of the activity, both to the employee and the voluntary organisation are clear			
It has been established that there are no conflicts of interest, contravention of political restrictions or political campaigning			
Can the volunteering time be given and the impact on the team and service requirements managed			
Does the volunteer opportunity fall into the personal development plan?			

Conditions/agreement with the Manager to undertake the volunteer time should be detailed here including what will be reported back by the employee in terms of outcomes and impact .

### Manager

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Employee

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_