

Adult Learning Volunteering Policy

2021

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Purpose

This policy is intended to set out clearly how the Service will manage the deployment, support, and training (where applicable) of volunteers within Adult Learning to ensure a safe learning environment.

Scope

The policy applies to volunteers and prospective volunteers across the Service.

Policy statement

Cumbria County Council Adult Learning Service is committed to supporting volunteers who want to give back to the community and support and enhance learning of those who attend Adult Learning provision.

This includes the deployment of volunteers as learning support assistants, assigned to individual learners through the learning support process (where applicable); it will also include the deployment of volunteers to provide general support in large or busy classes where the need has been identified.

Aims

- To give clear guidelines on the ways in which volunteers can support/help/assist in an Adult Learning classroom:
- To provide current and prospective adult helpers with expectations and information on Adult Learning procedures.
- To ensure good communication between Adult Learning staff and volunteers

Status of Volunteer

- A volunteer will not be an employee of Cumbria County Council Adult Learning.
- The volunteer will not be engaged on a contract of employment nor on any type of contract for services. The engagement will be binding in honour only, there being no legal agreement between the organisation and the volunteer.
- Volunteers are unpaid.
- The service is under no obligation to offer or to continue to offer any volunteering opportunity to any person, irrespective of their carrying out volunteering work currently or in the past.
- Similarly, the volunteer is under no obligation to accept any opportunity offered and may withdraw from the agreement at any time.
- Before accepting the role of volunteer, the individual concerned will agree with the service that they can fulfil the volunteer role expectations.
- The service may withdraw the offer at any time, including after the volunteer has started their engagement.
- The volunteer may also withdraw from the agreement at any time. Both parties are encouraged to give the other as much notice as possible, should the agreement be ended.

Volunteer helpers support the service in several ways (list not exhaustive):

- Supporting individual adult learners within classrooms.
- Helping learners with learning materials and activities.
- Helping with supervision /support of learners on external venue trips.
- Helping with group work.

Volunteer helpers are not allowed to do the following activities:

- Take responsibility for all or some of the class.
- Be in the classroom on their own with learners.
- Provide support outside of the classroom or after session delivery hours.

- Supervise learners in specialist activities.
- Request or be given access personal learner information from Pro-Solution.

SAFEGUARDING

All adults working with or on behalf of Adult Learning have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of our learners. There are, however, key people within our service who have specific responsibilities.

- Designated Safeguarding Officer Person: Kraig Reeves-Brown or in his absence
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer Person: Emma Boyd
- Senior Manager: Donna StClaire

All staff and volunteers in Adult Learning have a responsibility to report any concerns they have, or any disclosures that are made to them, to the designated safeguarding Officer. If their concern is about a member of Adult Learning staff, then they should also refer this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. If the concern is regarding the Designated safeguarding Officer, then the person should report their concern to the Senior Manager.

If a volunteer helper has had any criminal convictions or allegations made against them, these must be disclosed to the Senior Manager prior to volunteering in the service.

If the volunteer is cautioned, questioned, or arrested by the police whilst a volunteer at the service, they should bring this to the attention of the appropriate Centre Manager and the Senior Manager immediately. This will be dealt with in strictest confidence. The Senior Manager has the authority not to accept the help of volunteers if they believe that it is not in the best interests of the learners and the service.

All volunteers will be required to complete the service safeguarding e-learning before being able to support/assist in class.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We also ask that confidentiality be maintained in respect of learners and staff within Adult Learning.

Under NO circumstances should volunteers share information about a learner or member of staff with anyone outside the service and if approached by other learners or external parties from Adult Learning, they should refer their concerns to the Centre Manager immediately.

SECURITY

For security reasons, please sign yourself where applicable in any premises.

'In' (and later, when you leave, 'Out') in the signing in folder register which is situated in the reception area. This enables us to know who is on the premises in case of fire or another emergency. Please also wear a visitor badge.

Operational processes

- All volunteers are subject to a DBS (Enhanced where applicable).
- All volunteers will have an awareness from the outset of Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Prevent, Safeguarding and GDPR and /or will be need to complete e-learning provided by Adult Learning.
- All volunteers are required to complete and sign the volunteer agreement as this charter (Appendix 1) which sets out the expectations of the Council in terms of the role of volunteers to supplement and complement the delivery of council services, how they will be supported and the responsibilities of all parties.
- All volunteers work to a locally agreed 'roles and responsibilities' specification.

- The volunteer will be given a named contact person (Centre Manager) who will review the work undertaken by the volunteer and will assist the volunteer generally and, particularly, in the event of any problems occurring.
- Regular supervision of the volunteer will be provided as appropriate to the task undertaken and the needs of the volunteer.
- The volunteer's role, including status with pupils, will be made clear and learners will be informed prior to the volunteer attending classes.
- Volunteers will be given opportunities to contribute their ideas and opinions about the work that they are engaged in.
- Each volunteer is attached to a class, in which the tutor will be responsible for their supervision and support.
- The volunteer should aim to stay with the same learners throughout the duration of the program to maximise continuity for the learner.
- No volunteer must take personal details from learners.
- Volunteers should understand the need for confidentiality regarding the needs of all learners within the groups they have contact with.
- Volunteers must not transport their learners to and from their class in their cars at any time.

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Appendix 1

Volunteering Charter

Version Control	Changes Made	Author
Version 2 May 2018	Updated in line with the implementation of GDPR 2016.	People Management

Introduction

This charter sets out the County Council's approach to the recruitment of volunteers and our commitment to both them and the professional staff within the service. This charter also sets out the expectations of the Council in terms of the role of volunteers to supplement and complement the delivery of council services, how they will be supported and the responsibilities of all parties.

Benefits of Volunteering

The County Council has a long-established practice of working with volunteers across many of its services, both as individuals and also community groups. It is the council's experience that this activity provides mutual benefit to volunteers and to the service.

Our volunteers have told us that:

- They learn new skills and gain confidence in their abilities
- Volunteering has helped people gain employment or access to higher education opportunities
- They enjoy being part of a stimulating work and social atmosphere
- They gain a sense of purpose and satisfaction from achieving goals by being able to enhance services for the community or deliver something additional
- Volunteering has helped people regain strength and confidence after a period of ill health

For Community Services, volunteers bring a different perspective as they are able to contribute new ideas and try out new ways to reach service users, supplementing the professionally delivered services.

Volunteering is a commitment for the individual volunteer, the organisation and the staff who lead volunteering projects and so it is important that the responsibilities of all involved are defined clearly.

Our Responsibilities to Volunteers

- We will endeavour to match skills to the service area
- An induction to the work of the service will be provided
- A clearly defined outline of the tasks we would like volunteers to undertake will be provided
- Effective supervisory structures will be put in place to support and develop volunteers and the activities they undertake
- Volunteers will have access to appropriate training and development to be able to carry out their activities
- Volunteers, like professional staff, can expect to carry out their activities in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination
- Volunteers will have access to a complaints/dissatisfaction procedure and will have a clear process for the resolution of any problems
- While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards for their activities, they should receive reasonable out-of-pocket expenses
- We will comply with the Data Protection Act's rules on the processing of volunteers personal data

Our Responsibilities to Professional Staff in relation to Volunteers

- The involvement of volunteers will complement and supplement the work of professional staff, and will not be used to displace staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service
- Volunteers will not be used to undertake the work of professional staff during industrial disputes
- Volunteers will not be used to cover the work of professional staff during sickness absence
- Professional staff will not be expected to engage in volunteer activities within the service area as a form of unpaid overtime
- Any proposed new volunteer roles will be introduced in consultation with trade union representatives

Responsibilities of Volunteers

We will expect that our volunteers will:

- Complete an application to enable us to match skills to opportunities
- Undergo a DBS check where the service requires
- Attend an induction session and training
- Work within the defined volunteer task profile
- Recognise and contribute to the Council's aims and objectives
- Be reliable and committed to the Council
- Show honesty and integrity
- Raise any issues or problems immediately with the volunteer supervisor
- Notify us of any medical conditions that may affect their ability to perform certain volunteer activities

- Abide by the County Council's Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct and Confidentiality policies
- Respect the supervisors and other volunteers and strive to develop effective working relationships
- Provide reasonable notice of their intention to stop volunteering with us

Agreeing Terms

When considering the use of volunteers to supplement or complement a council service, the following further points need to be considered and incorporated into the terms of the volunteering opportunity:

- Establish a process to resolve any disputes between professional staff and volunteers
- During any contracting out process, bidders will be required to quantify any intended use of volunteers and the selection process will take account of the bidder's position on whether they intend to utilise volunteers for roles currently delivered by paid staff.
- In relation to the above, an Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted to ensure that the protected groups within society are not disadvantaged through the use of volunteers.
- Volunteers will be subject to DBS checks if they are to work with or alongside children or vulnerable adults
- Termination of a volunteer opportunity and the notice period required

Volunteer Agreement Document

It is important that a Volunteer Agreement is drafted and signed by both parties, as this clarifies the commitments both the volunteer and the Council can expect from each other. It is not intended to be a legally binding document but should be used as guidelines for both parties. Below is an example which can be adapted for each service area:

SAMPLE

Community Services - Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are an important and valued part of the work of Cumbria County Council's Community Services. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a valued part of our team.

This agreement, in conjunction with the Volunteer Charter, tells you what you can expect from us and what we can expect from you.

We, Community Services, will:

- Endeavour to match your skills to an appropriate service area
- Introduce you to how the organisation works and provide an induction to the activity you will be undertaking
- Provide you with a task profile and work with you to determine the days/times when you will be available to volunteer

- Explain the supervisory structures in place to support you and provide a named person you will liaise with
- Provide you with access to appropriate training and development to be able to carry out your activities
- Provide a safe environment, ensuring you are subject to the Council's insurance cover while volunteering
- Have access to a complaints/dissatisfaction procedure and will have a clear process for the resolution of any problems. This is available via the Council's website at the following link <http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/council-democracy/accesstoinformation/internalreviewscomplaints.asp>
- Meet any out-of-pocket expenses incurred while volunteering (not including substituting salary payments)
- Comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016 on the processing of your personal data

All volunteers working within Cumbria County Council's Community Services, are encouraged to work to high standards and contribute to the delivery of the Council's aims and objectives. Volunteers are required to be aware of and adopt Cumbria County Council's policies in relation to:

- Health and Safety
- Equal Opportunities
- Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality

We will provide you with copies of the document listed above.

I,, am familiar with the above policies and agree to adhere to them at all times. I accept the responsibilities outlined in my Volunteer Task Profile and the expectations required of me. I understand that this Volunteer Agreement is not a contract of employment and may be terminated by either party should any of the above not be satisfactorily met.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

- Please note that you should expect a two week turn around to identify volunteers.
- We will endeavour to give volunteers at least a week's notice of the start of a class, or the cancellation of a class. However, a week's notice of cancellation may not always be possible due to operational factors such as tutor sickness, bad weather or the unexpected closure of a building through factors outside our control. All efforts will be made to minimise such occurrences.

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