

Volunteering Guidance

Carlisle City Council recognises the immense benefits that volunteers bring to the authority, and the bridges that they build between the authority and the local community. In return, the Council hopes to give its volunteers an opportunity to exercise their skills in a different environment and to undertake new experiences.

Who is considered a Volunteer?

Volunteering can take many forms. A volunteer is a person who gives freely of their time, skills and experience without expectation of financial reward. A volunteer is not an employee or a worker and will not have a contract of employment with the Council.

Volunteers may also include students over 18 years of age and not in full time education who have requested work experience placements with the Council but does not include internships. For those under 18 years of age please refer to the guidance notes on work experience / placements and contact HR.

What can people volunteer to do?

Volunteering may be for a limited time to complete a particular project or may be on an ongoing basis. Some tasks require particular skills whereas others require none. More details about potential volunteering opportunities can be found on our website [here](#).

Once we agree a role with the volunteer, we ask that the volunteer endeavours to meet the role's requirements and in turn we will endeavour to fulfil our obligations by providing ongoing activities for the volunteer. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the role and the Council is not bound to provide the activities. The Council will try to give as much notice as possible if they are unable to meet these expectations, and we ask that the volunteer try to do the same.

What training is provided to Volunteers?

A supervisor will be appointed to support and manage the volunteer. The supervisor will review the arrangements after three to six months and thereafter on a regular basis. If the volunteer has any queries or would like to change their role this should be discussed with their supervisor.

The Council will also provide appropriate training for the role, including necessary Health and Safety training and this will usually be provided free.

The Council has a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers should at all times follow the Council's health and safety policies and procedures. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions. Volunteers should not act outside their authorised area or work. Volunteers should report all accidents to their supervisor.

What records do we keep for Volunteers?

On commencing their volunteer work, the volunteer will be given a pack containing:

- general information about the Council;
- a copy of this volunteering guidance;
- a standard volunteering agreement;
- details of where to access the Council's policies and procedures; and
- information on other volunteering opportunities within the Council.

Volunteers who do not have access to the intranet to access the relevant Councils policies should be provided with hard copies that are readily available to them.

All volunteers will be required to sign a volunteer agreement to say they understand their role and will undertake activities within the scope of their agreed volunteer activities and will not be used as substitutes for employees. 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;
- who will supervise the volunteer; and

Volunteers are likely to become aware of confidential information about the Council, its staff, customers and suppliers. Volunteers in this situation will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, preventing the disclosure of information or use it for their own or another's benefit without the consent of the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless it has been made public as a result of the volunteer's breach of confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires disclosure.

All documents created to facilitate a volunteer's engagement will be stored confidentially in line with normal Personnel procedures and processed in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679). Full details of the City Council's Individual Privacy Notice are available on the intranet or upon request from the Human Resources Department (Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG).

Can Volunteers get any form of payment?

Volunteers are unpaid. However, the Council will reimburse volunteers for expenses as agreed in the Volunteer Agreement, against receipts.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to establish whether volunteering is going to affect their entitlement to any social security benefits. Further advice should be obtained from the Department of Work and Pension (DWP), Job Centre Plus, or Citizens Advice.

What happens when there is a dispute?

As volunteers are not employees or workers the grievance and disciplinary policy does not apply. Volunteers will be introduced to relevant Council policies which relate to their activities.

The supervisor will normally try to solve any problems informally, but if this is not possible the Corporate Complaints system will come into operation.

If the volunteer wishes to make a formal complaint they should put the complaint in writing following the Corporate Complaints procedure, of which further details can be found by [clicking here](#) and going to the Council's website.

If a complaint is made about a volunteer, this will be notified to them in writing and the supervisor will decide whether any action should be taken. If the volunteer is dissatisfied with the decision, they may raise it with the supervisor's manager.

Are Volunteers allowed to drive as part of their duties?

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 their own vehicle, they must provide a copy of the vehicle's insurance policy and, if appropriate, the MOT certificate. The Council will also require seeing the volunteers' driving licence and a copy of all documents provided will be held by the Council.

The volunteer must report any accidents to the Council. They must also report any motoring offences or police cautions to the Council. The Council will not pay any fines in relation to motoring offences accumulated by the volunteer.

The Council will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury. The Council will also ensure that volunteers are provided with professional and public liability insurance. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the Volunteering Agreement.

What to do if the Volunteering is coming to an end.

Either the volunteer or the Council can terminate this agreement with immediate effect or with prior warning to cause minimal disruption, at any time.

The Council would be willing to give any volunteer a reference, during their volunteering or after they have left the Council. We would like to thank all our volunteers for their participation in any activities.

An exit interview will be offered to all volunteers leaving the Council. This will provide the volunteer with an opportunity to give valuable feedback on their time, which will be taken into consideration by looking for ways in which the experience quality or performance can be improved. As such this will also help us to develop the volunteer experience for future volunteers.