

# Volunteering Policy



2016 - 2017



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## Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Flintshire County Council. People volunteer for a number of reasons, for example:

- To socialise
- To put something back into society
- To regain or learn new employment skills
- To occupy their time

Flintshire County Council acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways and that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. Flintshire County Council values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

## Aims

The overall aims of the volunteering policy is to develop and promote best practice in the involvement and support of volunteers in the work of Flintshire County Council. This policy aims to:

- Encourage the development of volunteering in all areas of the Council.
- Recognise and promote the importance of volunteering to the work of the Council.
- Ensure support, training and supervision for Council volunteers
- Identify the standards to which Council employees and volunteers are expected to adhere.
- Provide guidance and best practice to Council staff in working with volunteers and ensure the application of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy to volunteering.
- Ensure that volunteering with the council is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

The Council aims to work with local communities and partners to develop a diverse range of suitable volunteering activities that are relevant for the people of Flintshire.

## What is Volunteering

Flintshire County Council regards volunteering as an unpaid activity where someone freely gives their time to help an organisation or an individual who they are not related to. In other

words, volunteers are not paid staff and do not have a legally binding contractual relationship with the Council.

## Statement of Values and Principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Flintshire County Council and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise Flintshire County Council, cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

## Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

Volunteer role descriptions, application forms, policies and other documents will be available from the Council Website, or via partner volunteer organisations such as the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC).

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all. The acceptance of a volunteer to a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out the agreed tasks. Any person must be aged 16 or over to volunteer with the Council.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement within the Council or referred to the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC), which coordinates volunteering opportunities across Flintshire.

All volunteers will be asked to provide two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults), other safer recruitment procedures may be carried out, including the completion an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check.

Recruitment of volunteers within Social Care is governed by regulations set out by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW).

## Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC)



The Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) is the umbrella and support organisation for 1000 voluntary and community groups in the County. They provide help with setting up and running voluntary groups, attract funding, give advice on governance, and recruit volunteers as well as providing practical support on a number of issues.

The Volunteer Centre is a key part of FLVC and links people who want to volunteer to groups and organisations who need help to run their activities.

Registered Office: CORLAN, Unit 3, Mold Business Park, Wrexham Road, Mold, Flintshire, CH7 1XP.

Tel: 01352 744000

Email: [info@flvc.org.uk](mailto:info@flvc.org.uk)

Website: [www.flvc.org.uk](http://www.flvc.org.uk)

[facebook.com/flvcpage](https://facebook.com/flvcpage)

## Induction and Training

The Council will provide all volunteers with an introduction to the organisation as well as induction and training tailored to the volunteering opportunity.

## Health and Safety

The Council has a duty of care to avoid exposing our volunteers to health and safety risks. All volunteers will be made aware of the Council's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and any practical safety concerns as part of their induction. Volunteers are expected to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Procedures. All volunteer roles will be risk assessed, covering both the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. In

addition, where a volunteer makes us aware of a pre-existing medical condition or disability, an individual risk assessment may also be necessary.

## Confidentiality and Data Protection

All supervisors must ensure that during induction volunteers are aware of the Councils confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. If their role requires, volunteers must receive appropriate training.

## Safeguarding

All supervisors must ensure that volunteers are aware of, and have received the appropriate training in the Councils Safeguarding Policy on Children and Adults. Basic safe guarding training can be offered from the FLVC, and Volunteer Supervisors can contact them for further advice and support if required (see section on FLVC for contact details).

Flintshire County Council follows the procedures outlined by the Disclosure and Barring Service to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults. A volunteer wishing to participate in an activity that is outlined in the DBS Criteria cannot participate in the Volunteering Activity until the Council has received a cleared DBS.

## Ongoing support

All volunteers will receive appropriate support and supervision in their activity. The level of supervision will match the nature of the role and the experience of the volunteer. All volunteers will have a nominated volunteer supervisor, someone they can have regular access to if problems arise or when help or support is needed.

## Expenses

The Council is committed to paying *reasonable* 'out of pocket' expenses ensuring that potential volunteers are not excluded due to financial reasons. However, these need to be agreed with the relevant manager **before** the volunteer commences their activity. Where expenses are not agreed, volunteers must be made aware of this at their first opportunity in the recruitment process. Expenses can be claimed using the "Non Flintshire Staff Claim Form", which are issued from the Customer Services Department. Any mileage claimed will be paid at the HRMC rate only. All receipts must be provided alongside the expenses claim form.

## Volunteers in Receipt of Benefits

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 Pensions (DWP), Job Centre Plus, or Citizens Advice Bureau.

## Insurance

Flintshire County Council's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

Where volunteers drive as part of their voluntary activity, and use their own vehicle, they must ensure they possess the relevant class of insurance. Further guidance should be sought from the volunteer's own insurance company. Supervisors must check and record this documentation if required.

## Complaints

As volunteers are not employees, they are unable to use the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure. However, they are entitled to use the Council's Complaints procedure.

Complaints by volunteers should be raised in the first instance with their Volunteer Supervisor, and dealt with informally where possible. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the Supervisor, or if the complaint is against their own Supervisor, by another Volunteer Supervisor or line manager.

If a complaint is made against a volunteer, this will be investigated by the relevant supervisor. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and informally as possible. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the volunteer may be told their services are no longer required with immediate effect

## Moving On

Flintshire County Council welcomes feedback and encourages volunteers to offer ideas for improvements. Volunteers who choose to stop volunteering at any time will also be invited to provide feedback before they move on.



Volunteers who are leaving the Council and who have made a regular commitment, should also be offered an exit interview, reference and/or statement of their achievements to ensure that their services are properly and formally appreciated