

LOGO TBC

Policy Schedule		
Policy owner and lead	People Services: HR Policy Manager	
Consultation	Trade unions	June 2018
	Employee engagement forum	July 2018
	CMT/SLT	July 2018
	CCF	July 2018
Approving body	Employment & Appeals Committee	
Date of approval		
Date of implementation		
Version number	8 (Sept 2018)	
Related documents	Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure Criminal Records DBS Policy and Procedure	
Review interval	Three yearly	

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POLICY STATEMENT

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

1 Why does Slough Borough Council involve volunteers?

- 1.1 Volunteers have valuable time, skills and experience that they can use to support communities and the town of Slough. Working with volunteers allows the Council to expand and enhance its services and better understand the needs of communities.
- 1.2 Volunteering offers people the opportunity to gain experience, confidence and practical skills, the opportunity to 'try something new' as well as improving mental and physical health and to meet a wide range of people.
- 1.3 Volunteering often enables people to engage with, influence and contribute to the role and responsibility of the Council.
- 1.4 Developing Volunteers allows the local communities to do more for themselves and be more independent.

2. Key Principles

2.1 In applying this policy we will:

- Recognise and reward the invaluable contribution of volunteers to Slough Borough Council.
- Encourage voluntary participation by people from all sections of the community across all sectors and business.
- Foster teamwork between volunteers and staff, and help volunteers and staff grow in their respective roles.
- Ensure a positive volunteering experience for all those involved.
- Ensure the involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff not replace the work of paid staff. The policy supports the charter principles between Volunteering England and the TUC Trades Union Congress - A Charter for Strengthening Relations Between Paid Staff and Volunteers.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all volunteers to Slough Borough Council who donate their time, skills and experience to carry out volunteering roles without financial reward. A volunteer is not an employee of the Council and there is no legally binding contractual relationship between the Council and the Volunteer. It does not apply to people employed by the Council either directly or through an agency on any contractual basis, whether permanent, temporary, short-or long-term.

4. Slough Borough Council's commitment to volunteers

Choice - Volunteering is undertaken as a matter of free choice. Volunteers are not obliged to undertake tasks they are not comfortable with.

Inclusion - Volunteering opportunities will be diverse and wide ranging to support and encourage participation from all residents and communities.

Volunteering will have simple and consistent processes.

Support and development - Volunteers have a role description that outlines activities to be undertaken and are properly introduced to their role and provided with ongoing support and training appropriate to their individual needs, abilities and skills.

Safety - The safety and wellbeing of all volunteers is paramount and appropriate insurance is in place. Volunteers are aware of how to raise concerns and how they will be handled.

Reimbursement - Where relevant and if agreed in advance with their manager, volunteers will be paid back any expenses incurred whilst carrying out their role. The volunteer will need to show their receipts.

Reward - Volunteers will receive appropriate reward and recognition for their efforts and often hear the words ... thank you.

5. The Volunteer Role

5.1 We recognise that:

- There is a wide variety of voluntary roles, varying in formality, location and time commitment.
- Voluntary roles may be carried out by individuals and/or large groups of volunteers.
- Volunteers may come from other organisations.
- There are different types of volunteer work placements and people on work placements may be subject to working agreements, but if they are unpaid they will also be entitled to the provisions of this policy and its associated procedures.
- It applies in situations where a member of the public is looking for a volunteering opportunity with Slough Borough Council.

6 The Volunteering Relationship

6.1 This policy works clearly to the following nature of engagement that underpins the volunteering relationship:

- While volunteers must be treated fairly and in accordance with the expectations which have been agreed at the outset, they are not legally bound to work for the authority and are not subject to the obligations imposed on employees and workers.

6.2 In line with the commitment the Council will always strive to:

- Make volunteering opportunities within the Council meaningful and easy to access.
- Match the time, skills and experience of volunteers to a suitable volunteering opportunity.
- Ensure each Volunteer receives appropriate training, support and tools to perform their role where appropriate, including assessing for and providing reasonable adjustments.
- Resolve any complaints raised by a Volunteer in a timely fashion.
- Foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere for volunteers and make Volunteering a positive experience.
- Reimburse reasonable expenses incurred. These expenses must be agreed in advance with the contact person and are payable against a valid receipt.

7 Volunteer Support

7.1 Each volunteer will be nominated a named person who will:

- Agree expectations with the volunteer.
- Arrange a personal induction plan and any additional training or checks needed.
- Share all the relevant Council policies, including those relating to confidentiality, safeguarding and expected conduct for Volunteers (see section 8 below) and support the Volunteer to understand and apply them.
- Make sure that there are no barriers which would make it difficult for a volunteer to undertake the agreed activity. This should be done before volunteers start.
- Support Volunteers to positively represent the Council at all times.
- Make sure volunteers understand the Council's accident and incident reporting procedure.
- Agree any expenses at the start of the volunteering relationship and ensure the volunteer knows they need to provide receipts so expenses can be paid promptly.
- Offer ongoing support, guidance and advice where needed.
- Confirm arrangements for the volunteer if required to drive on behalf of the Council in their volunteering role.

8 Volunteer Conduct

8.1 All volunteers will be asked to sign up to the requests below:

- Ensure they have a clear understanding of the volunteering role and responsibilities.
- Treat the people they work with (other volunteers, staff and service users) respectfully and fairly.
- Be honest about the level of their volunteering commitment, it may be better to start small and build up to more.
- Attend induction and other training to ensure they are safe and informed.

- Treat any information obtained while volunteering as confidential and don't disclose it to any third party.
- Comply with relevant data protection and IT security guidelines.
- Represent the Council positively/appropriately at all times.
- Try to be reliable as people may be depending on them.
- If unable to make a volunteer session or wish to stop volunteering give as much notice as possible so alternative arrangements can be made.
- Adhere to the Council's health and safety policy and raise any concerns with the named worker immediately.
- Report any accidents or incidents, whether it concerns themselves or another person.
- Attend meetings with the contact person when able to do so.
- Ask for help if there is anything they are unsure about.
- Notify the contact person of any health issues that impact on their volunteering role so that reasonable adjustments may be considered.
- If the volunteer role includes driving on behalf of the council, ensure the volunteer understands the arrangements for this.
- Agree any expenses in advance with the contact person so the volunteer can be reimbursed in an appropriate timeframe.

9 Process for Recruiting a Volunteer

- 9.1 The Manager with the volunteering opportunity must complete the Volunteer Checklist and obtain authorisation from their Director/Service Lead prior to engaging volunteers. [\(Checklist available on Insite\) Insert link](#)
- 9.2 The Manager must complete a Volunteers Information Pack [\(available on Insite\) insert link](#) which consists of:
- Role Description of Volunteer Placement which will highlight the key duties and basic experience, skills and abilities that are required.
 - Advert.
 - Departmental information - specific to the department offering a voluntary placement, e.g. nature of the service; successes/achievements; current & future projects/ developments; what the placement involves; how a new volunteer can make a difference to the service; benefits to the volunteer of being involved with the team; what will be required from the volunteer, e.g. time commitments, etc.
 - Information about the Council.
- 9.3 Managers should consider what facilities and technology the volunteer may need access to and make the necessary arrangements.

10 Advertising a Volunteer Opportunity

- 10.1 Available volunteering opportunities will be advertised on the SBC website and the Slough Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS) website [Link to web pages](#). All volunteering opportunities will have a **named person** to contact should the prospective volunteer require further information. This is usually the Manager with the volunteering opportunity.

- 10.2 The Manager will manage the application enquiry process by sending out details to volunteers who express an interest in the voluntary placement. Volunteers will be required to complete a simple application form [\(add link\)](#) and return this to the manager.
- 10.3 The Council does not guarantee to provide volunteering opportunities and reserves its right to withdraw a volunteering opportunity at any time, including during a volunteer placement, where it considers that doing so is necessary for safeguarding purposes or for any other reason.

11. Interviewing Volunteers

- 11.1 When the Manager receives a completed application form, they will undertake an initial screening. If they deem a volunteer to be suitable for the placement they will contact the volunteer to arrange an interview. This interview will take place with at least two members of staff (interview panel) and at least the Chair of the panel must have undertaken Recruitment and Selection training in the last 3 years. Any panel recruiting a volunteer to a position where they will be working with children and vulnerable groups must also have undertaken safer recruitment training.
- 11.2 The interview panel must consider the relevance of experience and skills provided in the application form against the requirements of the voluntary placement as described under the Role Description of Volunteer Duties. The panel must be clear on the decisions taken for selecting Volunteers.
- 11.3 The interview panel must complete a record of the interview, in order to provide feedback at a later stage if required.
- 11.4 Further advice and guidance in respect of interviewing can be found in the Councils [Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure \(add link\)](#).
- 11.5 At the end of the recruitment exercise, if the decision is to engage the Volunteer, the manager must arrange for all checks to be completed and for an offer letter to be produced. See paragraph 12.4 below.
- 11.6 In the event a Volunteer turns down the volunteering opportunity then the Manager should ask for feedback as to their reasons and act on any improvements to the process that may be made as a result.

12. Safeguarding, References and other checks

- 12.1 The Manager must complete a Volunteer Details Form [\(add link\)](#) for the volunteer and send to Arvato for processing.
- 12.2 In order to ensure everyone is safe, where the volunteering opportunity involves contact with children or vulnerable adults, an enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check **will** be required. [Link to Criminal Records \(DBS\) Policy and Procedure.](#)

- 12.3 A volunteer will be asked to provide the names of two referee(s) who have agreed to provide a reference on behalf of the volunteer. One reference must be from their current or last employer. References from relatives/partner are not permitted.
- 12.4 In order to support volunteers, the Council may need to understand any impairment or health condition in order to assess how to make reasonable adjustments. Volunteers are therefore requested to complete a Declaration of Health Status Questionnaire ([insert link](#)).
- 12.5 All References and checks (Identity, Qualifications, Employment History) must be completed before the volunteer may start any induction or training or volunteering activity in line with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.

13 Engagement, Induction and Training

- 13.1 All volunteers are engaged initially for a one month/four week session introductory period, depending on the frequency of volunteering. This is to ensure the volunteer and activity are properly matched and either side may decide to end the placement at this stage.
- 13.2 Volunteers and activities are reviewed regularly and volunteers are encouraged to take an active role in these reviews. Reviews are important to ensure that the activities fulfil the needs of both volunteers and the Council.
- 13.3 The Council will provide all volunteers with an introduction to the organisation as well as an induction and any specific training needed for the volunteering opportunity.
- 13.4 All Volunteers are required to undertake safeguarding training at least at level 1. Where Volunteers are directly engaging with children, young people, families and the wider community, enhanced safeguarding training will be required.

14. Ongoing support

- 14.1 Each volunteer will be supported by a named person.
- 14.2 The Council acknowledges the importance of volunteers and will provide appropriate supervision and support during the course of the volunteering opportunity.

15. Health and safety

- 15.1 The Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers and has a health and safety policy in place. [Link to Health and Safety Policy](#).
- 15.2 Volunteers will be made aware of this policy during their induction and must be supported to understand and be familiar with it before undertaking any

volunteering activity.

15.3 Volunteers must report any accidents, incidents or other dangerous circumstances immediately using the appropriate process.

16 Insurance

16.1 Volunteers are covered by the Council's insurance cover when undertaking voluntary activities which have been approved and authorised by us. Further information can be provided upon request.

17. Complaints

17.1 Should a volunteer wish to make a complaint this should be made to their named worker who will investigate the complaint or escalate it to their manager if necessary and appropriate.

18. Benefits and tax

18.1 Volunteers who are in receipt of jobseeker's allowance (JSA) may be entitled to undertake voluntary work provided that they meet the conditions for eligibility for JSA, namely being available for work and actively seeking work.

18.2 Volunteering does not usually affect entitlement to social security however the recruiting manager needs to advise any prospective volunteers to check with the DWP, Jobcentre Plus or a Citizen's Advice Bureau.

19. Other policies

19.1 All volunteers must be supported by their **named worker** to access, understand and implement any other relevant council policies or guidance.

20. Data Protection

20.1 The information provided will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Act 2018 and any subsequent legislation.