

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Staffing Committee – 16 February 2022

**Report Title**

Valuing Volunteers Policy

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

None

**Report Summary**

Replacement of the current 'Use of Volunteers' Policy with a new Valuing Volunteers policy and supporting guidance. This will ensure a consistency of approach when recruiting and managing volunteers across all services.

**Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

1. Support the introduction of a new Valuing Volunteers Policy to replace the Use of Volunteers Policy (2016)

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Proposed Valuing Volunteers Policy  
Appendix 2 Use of Volunteers Policy (2016)  
Appendix 3 RMBC Volunteers (as of June 2021)

**Background Papers**

Rotherham Heroes Evaluation

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Valuing Volunteers

### 1. Background

1.1 The Local Government Association suggests a number of benefits to volunteering. These include, but are not limited to:

- less reliance on frontline council services
- decreased demand for social care and/or low-level support
- people can become role models within their community
- people feel empowered through learning new skills
- reduced social isolation or loneliness
- higher levels of employment
- training and skills opportunities
- an increase in volunteering and the development of skills among volunteers
- better understanding of the social assets within the local community
- making use of under-utilised community facilities or resources

1.2 The National Council for Voluntary Organisations defines volunteering as:  
*Any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.*

Volunteers are people who perform activities on behalf of the Council out of their own choice, and do not receive any financial benefit. The Council respect volunteers by building trust and understanding with them to develop a two-way commitment which benefits both the volunteer and the Council.

1.3 The Council greatly values the time and effort which volunteers give freely and recognises that volunteers contribute in many ways. Volunteering provides unique benefits to our service users, local communities and to the volunteers themselves. Volunteers are excellent ambassadors, supporters, advocates and champions for the Council's services.

1.4 The Rotherham Council Plan 2022-25 commits to expand and promote a range of volunteering opportunities.

1.5 Volunteering and Community Action will provide further opportunities for people to get involved in their local area and help deliver the key theme in the Council Plan; Every Neighbourhood Thriving.

1.6 One of the positive outcomes of the Coronavirus Pandemic was the increase in volunteering and social action across communities to support neighbours in need. This included the establishment of the Council's Rotherham Heroes programme in March 2020.

1.7 An evaluation of the Rotherham Heroes programme was completed in April 2021. It included a recommendation to develop a new fit for purpose Corporate

Volunteering policy to replace the existing 'Use of Volunteers' policy, which was last updated in September 2016 (see Appendix 2).

## **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Council manages approximately 550 volunteers across a range of services (See Appendix 3).
- 2.2 The Council currently has a 'Use of Volunteers' policy that was last updated in September 2016. During the Rotherham Heroes evaluation, it was noted that the policy has very little visibility across council services and those services that recruit and manage volunteers tend to operate their own systems and practices.
- 2.3 The proposed 'Valuing Volunteers' policy was produced by the Council's Volunteer Co-ordinators and HR officers in consultation with a range of services that currently recruit and manage volunteers and drew upon examples of good practice from the public and voluntary sector (See Appendix 1)
- 2.4 The proposed Valuing Volunteers policy will ensure that standardised processes are being followed by each service, regardless of volunteer role. Guidelines clearly set out what constitutes a volunteer role and how they should be subsequently recruited, managed and supported. Those services that currently have volunteers will be supported to adopt and adapt to the new policy and guidelines by Human Resources.
- 2.5 The proposed Valuing Volunteers policy will expand on the current Use of Volunteers policy. The new policy covers in more detail –
  - Approval process for Volunteers – including the need to consult with Trades Unions and employees in the area concerned
  - Equality & Diversity
  - Recruitment Process
  - Role of the Volunteer Supervisor
  - Induction
  - Training & Support
  - Expenses
  - Conduct and Behaviour
  - Insurance, Health & Safety
  - Records & Confidentiality
  - Problems & Complaints
  - Review & Monitoring
- 2.6 To increase visibility the new policy will be promoted internally via e-bulletins and the Wider Leadership Team. It is hoped that the policy will inspire teams to focus on treating volunteers well and that it will assist in the delivery of their services.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 There are two options available –

- i. Retain the existing 'Use of Volunteers' policy
- ii. Replace the current policy with the new Valuing Volunteers policy

Option 2 is recommended

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 The proposed 'Valuing Volunteers' policy was produced in consultation with a range of services that currently recruit and manage volunteers and drew upon examples of good practice from the public and voluntary sector

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 If agreed, the policy will be published and promoted internally from March 2022.

### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

6.1 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

6.2 There are no additional financial impacts on the Councils budget as a result of the recommendations within this report, whilst the policy allows for the claiming of expenses, these are expected to be minimal. The introduction of the policy may see potential savings made as a result of less reliance on frontline Council services and decreased demand for Council services in areas such as Adult Social Care.

### **7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

7.1 Volunteers do not have the rights of employees or workers. However, RMBC needs to ensure when using volunteers, they have relevant health and safety procedures and data protection policies in place.

### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 The HR implications are in the main body of the report.

### **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 Volunteering opportunities within CYPS and ASC may have a positive impact on the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults.

## 10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 In making any decision the Council is required to have due regard to its equalities duties and in particular with respect to the Equality Act 2010, section 149, part 11 of the public sector duty:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and eliminate any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act,
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who are a protected characteristics and persons who do not share it and to
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

10.2 The recommendation will not have any adverse impact on anyone with one or more protected characteristics, namely age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

## 11. Implications for Partners

11.1 There are no implications for partners, other than the requirement for Voluntary Action Rotherham to advertise any Council volunteering opportunities.

## 12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 There is a risk that services will continue to use their own systems and practises. To mitigate the new policy has been developed in consultation with key council services and will be promoted internally via e-bulletins and the Wider Leadership Team

## 13. Accountable Officer(s)

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive		Click here to enter a date.
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Choose an item.	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Choose an item.	Click here to enter a date.
Assistant Director of Human Resources (if appropriate)		
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)		Click here to enter a date.

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