

Assistant Chief Executive's Human Resources

Valuing Volunteers Policy

1. Introduction

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough 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.

This policy will provide clear guidance so that volunteers and other stakeholders can understand volunteering and ensure that the Council has a cohesive and consistent approach in this area which demonstrates good practice. This policy does not apply to people who wish to obtain work experience placements.

2. Scope

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. Volunteers may have a range of motivations for volunteering, some of which may be:

- Giving back to our communities
- Enjoyment of the voluntary activity
- Bringing new and diverse perspectives, expertise and skills to our work
- To improve their wellbeing, gain confidence and self esteem
- The develop new or existing skills, knowledge and experience

We respect our volunteers by building trust and understanding with them to develop a two-way commitment which benefits both the volunteer and the Council. The relationship is not legally binding and does not have mutuality of obligation

Date Revised	Date Approved	Summary of Changes	Author
		New	Ian Henderson

3. Approval Process for Volunteers

Where new arrangements for the introduction of volunteers are proposed, the matter must be reported to the relevant Directorate Leadership Team with a clear definition of their role, a risk assessment, and the number of volunteers to be recruited.

Trade Unions and employees in the area concerned should be consulted on the matter.

It will also be necessary to check with the Council's Insurance Officer that the volunteer(s) are covered by the Authority's policies.

4. Equality & Diversity

The Council is committed to equality and to making fair and equitable treatment an integral part of everything it does.

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or background where there is no safeguarding risk to vulnerable groups.

The recruitment and engagement of volunteers for a particular volunteer role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out the voluntary role.

The practical application of the guidance should be considered in respect of reasonable adjustment requirements to allow equitable access to volunteering opportunities.

5. Recruitment Process

It is recommended that any employee involved in the recruitment and selection of volunteers completes the Council's Recruitment and Selection training course and familiarises themselves with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policies and Procedures to ensure best practice is followed.

Advertising volunteer opportunities

The role of the volunteer will be clearly and concisely described in a written form, similar to a job description. The description of activities to be undertaken by the volunteer will form the basis of identifying the skills, experience, knowledge, and qualifications that are required to undertake the voluntary opportunity (Appendix A for details).

Roles should be advertised externally using appropriate channels to encourage a diverse, qualified and experienced range of potential volunteers to express an interest such as via the Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) website.

Volunteers may be attracted through a variety of other channels e.g. self-presenting in person or in writing; referral from schools, colleges and universities; referral through Volunteer Centres or community networks.

Selection of volunteers

Potential volunteers will be asked to complete an application (see Appendix B) which should be returned to the recruiting manager/supervisor.

The Council welcomes volunteers of all ages and backgrounds where appropriate. Where a volunteer is under 18, parental or guardian consent must be obtained. Children under 14 years of age are not able to volunteer.

An informal interview about the volunteer role must be held between the recruiting manager/supervisor and those expressing an interest in volunteering with the Council. The written description of the volunteer role should be provided.

Given that there is no mutuality of obligation, it may be appropriate for recruiting managers/supervisors to recruit more volunteers than required.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular role will either be signposted to alternative voluntary opportunities within the Council or externally.

Volunteer pre-engagement checks

The following checks must be performed (where needed) prior to any voluntary work being performed on behalf of the Council:

- ID Check – The identity of the volunteer must be verified by examination of trusted documentary evidence showing a photo of them, their name, registered address and date of birth. This must show they have the legal right to volunteer within the UK.
- DBS/Security Checks – To ease the movement of volunteers throughout RMBC all volunteers will be asked to complete a basic DBS check. There will be an opt out option for this. However, this will limit the roles that the volunteer will be able to carry out. There will be some roles that require an enhanced DBS check. These roles normally involve regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of children and specified activities with adults in receipt of health care or social care services. Whether or not a role requires an enhanced DBS check should be determined as part of the role risk assessment. For further information - <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding/checklists-training-and-other-support/specialist-guides/getting-started-with-criminal-records-checks>
- References – There must be two written references for volunteers. These references must be verbally checked by phoning each referee
- Qualifications – Where qualifications are required, the relevant certificates must be checked e.g. driving license.

6. Volunteer Supervisor

A named supervisor must be allocated to oversee and be responsible for each volunteer. The supervisor is responsible for instructing the volunteer and managing their activities on a day-to-day basis, as well as providing support and feedback on progress.

7. Induction

All volunteers are required to complete an induction process so that essential information about the volunteer role, as well as relevant Council policies & procedures can be explained. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure a suitable induction process takes place with new volunteers.

The induction will cover mandatory items such as general welcome to RMBC, information relating to the building the volunteer will be based in (if required) and training which should be completed prior to volunteering. If additional items need to be included these can be added to the induction checklist (Appendix C).

Prior to starting the volunteer should be sent a Volunteer Written Agreement (Appendix D). They should attend the induction with as much information completed on this form as possible. The form will then be discussed and finalised during the induction.

8. Training and Supporting Volunteers

If needed, personal protective equipment must be issued to the volunteer and training provided in its use.

Unless carrying out a one-off role volunteers should receive regular, formal/semi-formal supervision sessions.

All volunteers should receive adequate training and support. A mandatory package of online training for volunteers is available through Directions, this package includes Health & Safety, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace, Safeguarding, GDPR & Cyber Awareness and Display Screen Equipment training, this should be completed prior to the volunteering commencing their role. Additional modules can be added as necessary. The supervisor responsible for the volunteer should regularly review their training requirements.

9. Volunteer Expenses

Although volunteering is unpaid, it should not cost the volunteer anything. Any reasonable expenses incurred while volunteering should be reimbursed. This includes but is not limited to:

- travel, including to and from the place of volunteering
- parking
- administration costs, eg postage, phone calls, stationery.

Mileage reimbursement rates should be paid at 45p per mile. Administration costs should be agreed in advance with the volunteer supervisor.

Process for Claiming

Supervisors should assess any claims for expenses in line with the Council's Travel and Subsistence Policy - [TravelandSubsistencePolicyOctober2021.docx](#). Any payments should be authorised by the supervisor and receipts kept for audit purposes. It is important that any expenses paid only cover actual and directly related costs. For example, if the person buys a one-week travel pass and the person performs voluntary work for one day that week you should pay 1/7 of the cost of the pass. (See Appendix E for more information).

10. Volunteer Conduct and Behaviour

Volunteers are expected to adhere to the same code of conduct as paid employees and are responsible for promoting a good image to customers, staff and the community. For example, volunteers should dress appropriately and maintain confidentiality and work in accordance with the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation.

Volunteers will be expected to wear a Rotherham Council ID badge so that they can be identified as representing the Council. The badge must be returned at the end of each volunteering session to the supervisor. Badges will be branded 'RMBC Volunteer'.

Volunteers working with young people or vulnerable adults are in a position of great trust and must follow the Council's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Agreed voluntary activities whilst acting on behalf of the Council are covered by the Council's Public Liability Insurance.

11. Volunteer Insurance, Health & Safety

Volunteers using their own transport for fulfilling their role should ensure they have the appropriate driving licence, that they are fit to drive as per the laws of the road, that they have a valid MOT (where applicable), and the appropriate motor insurance which covers use of the vehicle for volunteering purposes (the supervisor should check this during the induction process)

Volunteers have the same responsibilities and assurances as paid staff under the Council's Health & Safety Policy.

If a volunteer has a health condition which affects their ability to perform the voluntary role, they should raise this with the supervisor as soon as possible so that any necessary action can be taken.

12. Volunteer Records and Confidentiality

The personal details and references of volunteers should be recorded and stored securely using either password protection or some form of encryption. To comply with GDPR legislation it is essential that staff who do not require this information DO NOT have access to it. Any volunteers not engaged in voluntary work after 6 months should be anonymised so they can still be used for statistical and reporting purposes. If a volunteer has not engaged in voluntary work for a period of 12 months, then their data should be destroyed.

Any personal information collected by the Council from volunteers will comply with relevant General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Council's Information Governance Policy.

13. Problems and Complaints

If a volunteer has any concern about their volunteering role, they should in the first instance discuss this with their supervisor. The supervisor should try to resolve the matter as effectively as possible. If an acceptable solution cannot be reached, the problem will be referred to the Head of Service where the voluntary work is being performed.

If a staff member has any concerns about a volunteer, they should first discuss this with their line manager.

14. Reviewing Volunteer Engagement

The operation of any volunteer schemes, programme or engagement within the Council's services should be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the requirements of the Council.

Appendix A: Volunteer Role

Role title:	
-------------	--

Purpose of role:	Include a brief overview of the role
------------------	--------------------------------------

What does the role involve:	Include what the volunteer would be asked to do
-----------------------------	---

Who would be suitable for this role:	Include any experience, skills or qualifications needed.
--------------------------------------	--

When:	Days and times you wish somebody to volunteer and how flexible these are.
-------	---

Where:	Location of the role.
--------	-----------------------

Appendix B: Volunteer Application Form

Volunteer Application Form

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for RMBC. If you need assistance with completing this form, please email us at (recruiting staff members e-mail address)

The information you provide on this form is confidential and will not be passed on to a third party. RMBC complies fully with Current Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

Volunteer role applying for:	
-------------------------------------	--

Where did you see this role advertised?	
--	--

Please tell us about yourself

Title		Forename(s)	
Surname			
Address			
Post code			
Telephone			
Email			
Emergency contact: (Name, relationship to you & contact number)			

Please tell us a little more about you and what skills and qualities you feel make you suitable for this volunteer role *(please note if we receive a number of applications for a role, we will use this information to shortlist for the volunteer interview. Please refer to the volunteer role description, in particular the skills and experience required for the role)*

--

Have you checked the role specification for when we require someone for the role and can you meet this requirement? **Y/N (delete as applicable)**

Which days/ times are you available to volunteer? *Please tick all that apply.*

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Volunteering status

The right to volunteer in the UK can be dependent on your citizenship and UK immigration status so please make sure that you are allowed to volunteer on your visa.

Are you legally entitled to stay in the UK? Y/N

References

Please provide us with the details of two people whom we may contact as referees, to comment on your suitability for volunteering. These can be friends or colleagues but not family members, and must have known you for six months or more,

	Referee 1	Referee 2
Name:		
E-mail:		
Telephone No:		
Relationship:		

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this application is a true and complete statement. I understand that any offer of appointment and subsequent volunteering is subject to satisfactory references and satisfactory disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland at the appropriate level, where this is a requirement of the role (if stated in the volunteer role description).

Signature:

Date:

Appendix C: Volunteer Induction Checklist

	Tick when completed
General Welcome	
Meet & greet new volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduce to staff/volunteers they will be working with	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss security procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Systems Access and Permissions (if required)	
Ensure volunteer is set up on relevant systems and has any passwords required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure volunteer is confident to use any required systems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building Facilities	
Fire Alarm Testing and drills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire evacuation process, ask if volunteer would need any assistance in the even of a fire, if they do complete a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify kitchen areas, toilets etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify and demonstrate how to use equipment needed i.e. printer, phone etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify first aid facilities including the names of first aiders	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policies and Procedures	
Ensure Volunteer Written Agreement is completed (Appendix D)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide Volunteer with a copy of the Valuing Volunteers Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain how expenses are claimed and will be paid	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer Duties and Role	
Provide Volunteer with a copy of the Volunteer Role Description	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure they understand what their duties and responsibilities will be	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure Volunteer is clear on who will be there supervisor and how they can be contacted	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX D: VOLUNTEER WRITTEN AGREEMENT

The role of volunteers is extremely valued by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. We hope that you enjoy and find your volunteering activity with us beneficial and that you feel a full part of our team. This Volunteer Written Agreement describes the arrangement between Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and you.

Your role as a volunteer is **[volunteer role]** and starts on **[date]**. RMBC commits to the following:

1. Induction and training

- To provide a thorough induction and any training you may require to ensure you The Volunteer Handbook provides more details about RMBC.

2. Supervision, support and flexibility

- To explain the standards we expect for our services and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them;
- To provide a named person who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any successes and problems;
- To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.

3. Expenses

To repay these expenses following procedures in the Volunteer Handbook:

- Travel to and from home to the site where you volunteer, as agreed with your supervisor/champion and during your volunteering
- Meal allowance to a maximum of £4.00 per day with a receipt (To be eligible you must work around meal times or for at least 4 or 6 hours a day).

4. Health and safety

- To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is in the Volunteer Handbook.

5. Insurance

- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by us

6. Equal opportunities

- To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

7. Problems

- To try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us;
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the procedures set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteer

I agree:

- To help [***name of team/service/directorate***] fulfil its services;
- To perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability;
- To follow the organisation's procedures and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients;
- To maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients;
- To meet time commitments and standards agreed to and to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made when this is not possible;
- To provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to a police check being carried out where necessary.

This agreement is binding in honour only, is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

RMBC

Volunteers are an important and valued part of RMBC. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a full part of our team.

This agreement tells you what you can expect from us, and what we hope from you. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if you would like to make any changes or have any queries so we can discuss them further.

We, RMBC, will do our best:

- to introduce you to how the organisation works and your role in it and to provide any training you need. Your induction date will be [...] during this you will be notified of what training you will need to complete and how this can be done.
- to provide regular meetings with your supervisor/champion so that you can tell us if you are happy with how your work is organised and get feedback from us. Your supervisor's name is [...].
- to respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them.
- to pay your reasonable expenses up to our current maximum*.
- to consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes.
- to insure you against injury you suffer or cause due to negligence*.
- to provide a safe workplace*.
- to apply our equal opportunities policy
- to apply our complaints procedure if there is any problem

I, [name of volunteer], agree to do my best:

- to work reliably to the best of my ability, and to give as much warning as possible whenever I cannot work when expected
- to follow RMBC's rules and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality.

Note: this agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.

APPENDIX E

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL VOLUNTEER TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE POLICY

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Travel by Car
3. Travel by Public Transport
4. Travel by Bicycle
5. Mileage Rates
6. Car Parking Charges
7. Mileage and Travel Claims
8. Other Expenses Claims
9. Method of Payment
10. Eye Tests & Spectacles for DSE Users

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

VOLUNTEER TRAVEL AND EXPENSES POLICY

1 Introduction

The aim of the volunteer travel and expenses policy is to ensure that conditions of service relating to the reimbursement of travel and expenses expenditure is consistently applied across all volunteering roles within the Council.

The Council supports the principle that volunteers must be fully reimbursed for properly authorised travelling and expenses incurred whilst on Council business. Individuals have a responsibility to ensure that claims are reasonable and that they are reimbursed actual expenditure incurred. Individuals should not be out of pocket but situations which warrant payment of expenses are not intended to result in a profit for the volunteer.

This policy applies to all volunteers of the Council and sets out what approved expenses are, how to qualify for them and how to claim reimbursement.

2 Travel by Car

Responsibility primarily rests with the volunteer to ensure that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition and has a current MOT certificate and is appropriately taxed and insured before using the vehicle on Council business.

However, prior to the first claim, the volunteer must produce a copy of their valid driving licence, car insurance policy (generally volunteers do not require business use, however, we would recommend that you notify your insurer that you are using your car to volunteer), MOT Certificate and proof of tax to their supervisor/volunteer coordinator. These documents should be checked annually thereafter.

3 Travel by Public Transport

In the case of bus travel, it is advisable to purchase a day ticket, either for a single operator or a multi-operator ticket depending on route coverage.

4 Travel by Bicycle

Volunteers wishing to use their own cycle on Council business may claim a mileage rate of 20p per mile. Claims for bicycle allowance should be claimed on the car allowance claim form.

Theft, loss or damage to cycle equipment or personal effects is not covered by the Council's insurance. Volunteers therefore must ensure that such risks are covered by their personal household insurance or other personal policy.

Volunteers must ensure that their cycle is in a safe and roadworthy condition, and that they themselves wear both the necessary and appropriate clothing as a reasonable health and safety requirement when using cycles for official purposes.

It is the volunteers responsibility to ensure the security of their bicycle. Secure storage facilities are available free at some Council Offices e.g. Riverside House.

5. Mileage Rates

Mileage Rates		
	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Motor cars and vans	45p	25p
Motor cycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

6. Car Parking Charges

Volunteers on official business will be reimbursed car parking charges, subject to the provision of receipts. Charges up to a maximum town centre standard charge of £34.

7. Mileage and Travel Claims

Claims for all mileage and public transport costs in lieu of mileage should be submitted using the Mileage Claim form. This will be sent electronically, where possible, to volunteers as part of the induction process.

Claim forms should generally be submitted and authorised on a monthly basis. Failure to do so may result in delayed payment. It is advisable not to submit a number of months claim, particularly where this is near the financial year end as this may delay payment. Claims should not generally span 2 calendar months.

In order to be re-imbursed in the same month for expenses, claims should be authorised by 5pm on the 6th of the month.

8. Other Expense Claims (all other expenses including meals, taxis, car parking, public transport)

Claimants must obtain receipts for all expenditure incurred. These receipts should be attached to the expense claim form and submitted to their Supervisor for verification. The Supervisor will then authorise the claim and send the receipts and claim form for processing and payment.

9. Method of Payment

All expenses claims submitted and authorised by 5pm of the 5th of the month will be overseen by the Volunteer Supervisor. Claims authorised after the deadline may not be processed until the following month.

10. Eye Tests and Spectacles – not sure if volunteers would be included in this scheme

Volunteers who are designated DSE (Display Screen Equipment) users are entitled to a free eye screening every 3 years. The Council has a contract with Specsavers under their Corporate Eye Care Plan.

A full eye examination will be carried out by SpecSavers if the optometrist judges it necessary following the eye examination. Basic corrective spectacles will be prescribed only for vision defects at the intermediate distance related to display screen work. Corrections for other vision defects are the responsibility of the individual concerned.

Appointments and vouchers

Following agreement with the Supervisor, an eye care voucher must be obtained from the Emergency and Safety Team. At the time of the request for a voucher an employee number and a recharge code must be supplied. A voucher must be obtained prior to any appointment being made with SpecSavers.

The eye care voucher will entitle the individual to a full eye test and the supply of single vision lenses from the £45 range. If the employee wishes to select spectacles from the £99 range they will be allowed a further £20 towards the cost.

DSE spectacles will be supplied when required **solely for DSE use**.

Further details can be found within the Display Screen Equipment at Work Guidance – [click here to view](#)