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Volunteering Policy

Working together to provide
an excellent service by being

**dedicated
versatile
& creative**

**Chorley
Council**

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Introduction

Volunteers make a significant and valuable contribution to Chorley, helping Chorley Council achieve our goals, and benefitting the local community; be it as part of a community group, befriending service, event support, health and wellbeing activity, environmental clean-up and maintenance, community transport, youth club, and more recently the remarkable response from the local community volunteering to support the Covid-19 response and recovery. Chorley benefits from a vast and diverse volunteer base, and Chorley Council have worked with and alongside volunteers to offer support, recognition and development whilst providing fulfilling and varied internal volunteering and work placement opportunities for many years.

As a Council, we want to help individuals to offer their time, experience, knowledge and skills with us by continuing to expand and develop a wide range of volunteering and work placement opportunities on a one-off or more regular basis. As an ambitious Council, there are always plenty of ways we can be supported to achieve our goals, such as in our parks, as part of our full calendar of public events, supporting community work with our Communities Team and within our arts and leisure venues.

Building Community Resilience

Chorley Council has long recognised the value of community volunteering, the extraordinary potential it has, and contribution it makes to the delivery of key Council priorities. By working with and alongside the community, and community partners, change can be achieved in key areas of health and wellbeing by supporting activity to occur that meets the specific needs of Chorley's residents.

Chorley's communities have an intrinsic wealth of knowledge and assets, which the Council strives to understand and nurture alongside key community stakeholders, with the aim of enabling these communities to respond well to the challenges they face, and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents. Volunteering, be it formal, informal, micro, long-term, one-off, discrete, or part of a wider group, is fundamental to growing thriving and resilient communities.

Volunteering also has the potential to provide a multitude of benefits to the volunteer, by engaging with valuable experiences that equip them well with the skills and attributes to navigate challenges within their own lives. From maintaining good health, relationships and support systems, employment opportunities, supported training and education opportunities, an appreciation for how to navigate and influence public services, and increased confidence to engage in community reciprocity, a volunteer can develop their ability to explore and improve their agency and personal resilience.

Policy Overview

The aim of this policy is to ensure effective, fair, and consistent engagement and management volunteers at Chorley Council, whilst providing a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

Chorley Council defines volunteers as individuals who offer their time, experience, knowledge and skills without financial gain, beyond the reimbursement of approved expenses and the issue of time credits (where the volunteering opportunity is linked to the Council's time credit scheme.).

Volunteers will complement and supplement the work of paid staff and will not be used to displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service. In line with Modern Slavery Act 2015, Chorley Council will continue to act with due diligence to identify potential risks of modern slavery and take actions to minimise these risks.

Chorley Council commit to:

- Place the volunteer at the centre of the volunteering experience, ensuring it is a personalised experience, well suited to the volunteer's personal assets and with an understanding and respect for challenges and changing situations individuals may face.
- Be ethical and inclusive, engaging and encouraging a broad spectrum of volunteers including minorities and those with accessibility issues.

- Maintain a wide scope of volunteering opportunities by building it into the service planning process, requiring service leads to regularly identify and define volunteering and work placement opportunities.
- Provide consistent and timely inductions and appropriate training opportunities for volunteers.
- Provide each volunteer with a Volunteer Supervisor who will be appropriately trained to mentor volunteers and will support the volunteer to follow Chorley Council's policies, procedures, and Code of Conduct.

All volunteers for the Council are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting a representative of the Council. This includes upholding high levels of integrity and commitment to Chorley Council's values:

- **Forward thinking** - we are always ambitious to do better
- **Respect** - responding to the different needs and aspirations of our customers and those we work with
- **Professional** - striving to provide high quality services
- **Pride** - in our jobs, pride in the council, pride in Chorley
- **One Team, One Council**

The council recognises the value of including as diverse a volunteer base as possible, and are committed to supporting individuals into volunteering by endeavoring to adapt opportunities to meet their needs. This could include caring responsibilities, long-term health conditions or disability and may require adapting the role, offering additional support, and working with a volunteer's readiness and availability. Where circumstances change during a volunteer's role, the Council will where possible strive to adapt the role to meet these changing needs or find another more suitable role.

Scope and Framework

This policy provides the volunteering and work placement framework for any team providing a volunteering or work placement role within Chorley Council; from defining the role, to recruitment, induction and training, time credits, and legal responsibilities and requirements.

Central to the volunteer pathways is the Employability and Volunteering Coordinator, who will be the first point of contact for all volunteering roles within the council, maintaining an accurate record of all volunteers within the council and where they are deployed. As each volunteering role comes to an end, the Employment and Volunteering Coordinator will request all volunteers and services complete an evaluation process. This will enable ongoing monitoring to measure of impact that volunteering has for both the individual and the organisation.

Service Area Commitment

The Employability and Volunteering Coordinator will manage the initial stages of volunteer recruitment and placement, and work with each service area to ensure volunteers are allocated to roles that suit the volunteer's individual needs and the needs of the service. They will also be available to support service areas and volunteers throughout the volunteer pathway. Service areas will have distinct responsibilities throughout the volunteer pathway:

- Using the business planning process to determine how many volunteer and work placement opportunities the service area can commit to in the coming business year.
- Completing Volunteer Role Profiles for each volunteering role identified in the business planning process which are forwarded to the Employability and Volunteering Coordinator.
- Allocating funds to undertake DBS checks (see page 9), training (see page 9) and agreed expenses (see page 12) for each volunteering role.
- Allocating a Volunteer Supervisor for each volunteer, with appropriate experience and/or training in mentorship.

Types of Volunteering

There are many reasons an individual would want to volunteer with Chorley Council; they may wish to contribute to an issue they are passionate about, engage socially with likeminded individuals, improve their

skills in a specific area, give their time to help others, or improve their health and wellbeing. Individuals will also possess different availability and commitment levels, traits, and capabilities. There are three distinctly different volunteering pathways available to cater to a volunteers' needs:

Regular Volunteering – an individual may wish to engage in consistent and regular volunteering (of 2 occurrences or more) within a council service such as maintaining a local green space, or a council led activity such as a youth group.

Adhoc Volunteering – The Adhoc Volunteering pathway is to be used for one-off volunteering opportunities only (inclusive of events that take place over 2-3 days). Volunteers for these events may not be required to complete an expression of interest form if it is deemed inappropriate, e.g. a community clear up day, however for larger-scale events this may be useful e.g. Chorley Flower Show.

Work Placements – For school-based work placements please contact HR. This policy covers work placements for adults only, and are arranged by the Employment and Volunteering Coordinator and in partnership with service areas as a tool to improve an individual's employability skills.

Work Placement volunteering opportunities form a useful tool in promoting and developing employability skills, and as such, services are encouraged to consider work placement opportunities that will develop key aspects of employability such as:

- Time management
- Attention to detail
- Information gathering
- Willingness to learn
- Teamwork
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Customer focus

Work Placement volunteering roles should be defined using the Volunteer Role Profile (please see Volunteer Starter Pack) and will be assigned by the Employability and Volunteering Coordinator in partnership with service areas and in line with the needs of those engaging with the Employability Service.

For external placements with local employers, individuals will need to make contact with the Employability and Volunteering Officer

Community Volunteering Referral – an individual may approach the council but wish to be signposted to an approved community partner group or organisation.

Internal Volunteering – Internal volunteering forms part of the [leave policy](#) and makes allowances for individuals to spend time each year volunteering at a Chorley based organisation

Volunteering Pathway

Employability and Volunteering Coordinator (E&VC)

Individual contacts council about volunteering via email or phone and is forwarded to the E&VC

Individual completes Volunteer Expression of Interest form

E&VC completes Occupational Health and Customer Needs and Risk Assessment. E&VC matches volunteer to existing Volunteer Role Profile and contacts relevant Volunteer Supervisor to discuss.

Volunteer does not match with

Informal chat with E&VC, VS and volunteer to assess suitability of role, training needs and additional support.

Service Lead / Volunteer Supervisor

Service Lead defines volunteering opportunity in Business Planning stage and appoints Volunteer Supervisor(s) (VS)

VS completes Volunteer Role Profile for each individual volunteering role and submits to E&VC, including training required as part of the role.

VS completes volunteer management training if needed and completes activity risk assessment.

Volunteer matches with role

Regular Volunteers and Work Placements

Adhoc Volunteers

- VS completes Starter Notification form on The Loop
- VS creates secure digital file for volunteer to store all paperwork within service area digital filing system
- VS uses Customer Risk Assessment to update event/activity

VS uses Customer Risk Assessment to update event/activity risk assessment as necessary, and collects Volunteer emergency information (available in the

Complete induction and mandatory training and document on Volunteer's Induction, Training and Skills Record

Complete induction or briefing and any mandatory training.

Complete regular informal 1:1 meetings throughout volunteering opportunity

DBS

In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) a DBS check will only be necessary for a regulated activity as defined in the Act as:

- Regulated activity with children and other activities which involve working closely with children such as caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of children under 18 (including day care and childminding)
- Regulated activity and other activities which involve caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of other people in vulnerable circumstances (including social work and advocacy services).

If a DBS check is required please arrange with the Employment and Volunteering Coordinator at least 1 month prior to the commencement of the volunteering opportunity.

Induction and Training

If the volunteer will require access to the council computer systems, a Starter Notification form should be completed on The Loop a minimum of 2 weeks prior to commencement of the volunteering opportunity.

The volunteer induction will primarily be accessed via The Learning Hub using either the volunteer's login details generated from the New Starter form or using the generic login for volunteers:

Login: (to be determined)

Password: (to be determined)

Here you will find mandatory and optional modules to build a bespoke induction for your volunteers depending on the scope of their role and their existing experience and skills. There may be additional service specific induction modules you wish to deliver face to face. All induction modules and training should be recorded in the volunteer's digital file using the Volunteer Induction, Training and Skills Record (please see Volunteer Starter Pack).

Mandatory training will have been clearly outlined within the Volunteer Role Profile form (please see Volunteer Starter Pack) and be carried out before the commencement of the volunteering role. There may be other training opportunities identified within the role profile, by the Employability and Volunteering Coordinator or by the volunteer themselves, which may be undertaken during the volunteering opportunity.

For regular or work placement volunteers, emerging training needs should be regularly discussed with the volunteer at their 1:1 meetings.

Adhoc volunteers may only require an informal induction process, which should be clearly identified within the activity's risk assessment. There should be a mandatory health and safety briefing that all volunteers assisting the activity are required to attend.

Supervision

All teams will be required to appoint a Volunteer Supervisor(s) to manage their own volunteers. Their appointed supervisor will be responsible for conducting an induction and introduction to the team and workspace, and for regular and work placement volunteers, meeting regularly with the volunteer to discuss:

- Any emerging training or equipment needs
- If the volunteer still feels motivated within the role
- If they can see any opportunity to improve how their role is performed
- Discuss any issues that may have arisen
- Safeguarding, Health and Safety and wellbeing
- How they see their role progressing (i.e. work placement, employment support, education support, working within other teams in the Council, etc.)

This does not have to be conducted as a formal 1:1 but should not be overlooked, as it is important in sustaining volunteer motivation and ensuring the volunteer is equipped to perform their role safely and to a high standard.

For Adhoc volunteers, supervision should form part of the activity or event's risk assessment, with due consideration to protect the safety of the volunteer and those they will be working with. The volunteer's Occupational Health and Customer Needs and Risk Assessment should feed into this.

Misconduct Escalation Process

If there are concerns about the behaviour of a volunteer, their supervisor should arrange a meeting(s) to find out what has happened. This should include talking to the volunteer involved.

The Volunteer Supervisor(s) may wish to adhere to the following procedure to manage the volunteer's behaviour, depending on the severity of the issues identified:

Stage 1 – Minor or First-Time Concerns

Meet with the volunteer privately to discuss the concerns and give them an opportunity to explain their behaviour. The volunteer supervisor should offer support and guidance, and clearly state the expected standards of behaviour. It must be made clear that further concerns may be escalated to Stage 2. Records of this discussion must be kept by the volunteer supervisor.

Stage 2 – Serious or Repeated Concerns

Meet with the volunteer to discuss the concerns and explain that these concerns are serious. The volunteer should be given the opportunity to explain their behaviour and any other relevant information. The volunteer supervisor should discuss the situation with their senior manager to decide on whether to terminate the volunteering opportunity. Records of all discussions must be maintained by the volunteer supervisor.

Termination of Volunteering Opportunity

If the volunteer supervisor and their senior manager agree to terminate the volunteer opportunity, this should be done in person where possible and the decision explained to the volunteer. A record should be maintained centrally as to why the volunteering opportunity was terminated, and this reviewed should the individual reapply.

Expenses

Expenses must be explained and agreed prior to the commencement of the volunteering opportunity. Expenses will cover the volunteer's public transport costs, and parking costs (where free parking provision is not available). Volunteers will be required to provide their travel tickets or parking receipts as proof of their expenses to their Volunteer Supervisor. Where the volunteer requires a carer present, travel or parking expenses will be extended to the carer.

Where an individual is facing significant financial barriers to volunteering, other expenses may be considered, such as for food and drink, and must be pre-agreed.

The maximum an individual can claim in expenses per day is £10.

Where possible, Volunteer Supervisors should issue volunteers with dated parking permits for use on council owned car parks. These can be procured from the Market Walk, Markets and Town Centre Team. Volunteers must read and agree to the parking agreement in the Volunteer Welcome Pack which outlines their responsibility to follow the guidelines of the parking permits.

The Volunteer Supervisor will be responsible for completing a petty cash slip in a timely manner for the volunteer to present alongside relevant receipts to reception at Town Hall or Union Street where they can collect their expenses in cash from petty cash.

Car mileage is not currently available for a volunteer to claim, and volunteers should not be expected to drive their vehicles as part of their volunteering role.

Young People

Young people (defined as anyone aged under 18) are welcome and encouraged to take part in volunteering opportunities with the council. We place the Young Person's safety as paramount and will require any individual under the age of 18 to either be:

- Accompanied by their legal parent/primary caregiver, or
- Volunteering as part of a constituted group that works with children, has DBS checked group leaders present and with relevant risk assessments and safeguarding policies in place.

Where these requirements are met, beyond the Council advising the responsible adult(s) about the suitability of the activity for the Young Person, all responsibility for the Young Person's health, safety and safeguarding lies with their responsible adult(s).

Any requests for Young People to undertake a work placement opportunity should be submitted to the Council's HR department.

Time Credits

Chorley Council work with Time Credits to provide recognition to volunteers for their valuable contribution to our borough. Time Credits are being used widely to facilitate community engagement, wider involvement and to build active and resilient communities in Chorley.

Volunteers receive Time Credits as a thank you for contributing time to their community or service. They can then 'spend' Time Credits with a network of partners for days out at local and national attractions, classes at local facilities or even for vouchers for shopping and entertainment. Tempo Time Credits new online platform also allows people to use Tempo Time Credits for a range of exclusive online offers.

Time Credits act as an incentive to encourage people to get more involved in their local community by giving their time. Ways that people can earn in Chorley Council will be very varied and the types of activities will depend on individual service objectives.

Usually, the ratio of Time Credit earning is for every hour a person gives at an activity they receive one Time Credit. The event or activity should be agreed to be a Time Credited activity in advance as Time Credits cannot be backdated or allocated retrospectively. It should be known in advance what sort of activities people will be doing to ensure the principles of an hour for an hour are met and that the activity genuinely supports council objectives, operations or the community in some way. Where partial hours are earned, they should be rounded up.

Volunteers wishing to earn Time Credits should be directed [here](#) to register for a Tempo Time Credits account, where they will be responsible for requesting the number of Time Credits they have earned via Tempo's digital platform. An identified Volunteer lead within each service will be responsible for verifying and allocating the requested Time Credits.

Any questions about Time Credits should in the first instance be directed to the Communities Team.

Legal

We will apply our Equal Opportunity Policy to the selection and management of volunteers.

We will take particular care in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults following Chorley Council's Safeguarding Policies.

We will provide appropriate public liability cover for all volunteers whilst engaged in volunteer activity at Chorley Council.

All volunteers are covered under the council's insurance policies whilst assisting in the business of the council and whilst under the council's direct control or supervision, unless stated otherwise.

In some circumstances volunteers will be required to complete an emergency contact details form and volunteer expression of interest form, and a training record will be maintained on their behalf. This will be stored digitally by the Employability and Volunteering Coordinator and/or their Volunteer Supervisor and will be protected under the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). Officers having access to volunteer personal information, must store it securely, destroying all paper copies, and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). Information may be shared with volunteer referral partners and with South Ribble Borough Council as the council's IT services move towards full integration. A full copy of the council's general privacy policy can be viewed using the following link:

[Privacy Notice - Chorley Council](#)

The Community Volunteer Referral Agreement requires groups and organisations to accept responsibility for the health, safety and safeguarding of all volunteers referred to them and individuals the volunteers work with, by ensuring volunteers receive a DBS check where necessary, have a risk assessment in place for all volunteer activity which covers health, safety and safeguarding, receive all necessary training and inductions prior to the commencement of their volunteering activity, with training needs being assessed regularly and follow General Data Protection Regulation (2018). Chorley Council does not accept any liability for the health, safety, wellbeing or actions of any volunteers referred to Community Volunteer Referral Partners to the extent permissible by law.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Volunteers who are claiming benefits may not be aware that they need to declare any volunteering to their benefits office. The Employability and & Volunteering Coordinator will advise potential volunteers to liaise with their local benefits office before they are signposted to an internal opportunity or community group and volunteer organization. For further information on DWPs volunteering guidance please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/volunteering-and-claiming-benefits>.

Community Volunteer Referral Partners

Chorley Council work closely with and support many community groups and volunteer organisations in the borough. Our trusted position within the community encourages potential volunteers to approach us about volunteering opportunities. We are therefore ideally placed to refer individuals to community volunteering opportunities for the benefit of the individual and the community.

This role requires the council to uphold and encourage the highest levels of integrity and best practice amongst community volunteer groups and organisations in order to safeguard their volunteers and those they work with. We must ask community volunteer groups and organisations who wish to receive volunteer referrals from the council to adopt our Community Volunteer Referral Agreement (Appendix A). The Community Volunteer Referral Agreement states the standards we require community groups and organisations to meet in order to become referral partners.

Any groups or organisations wishing to apply to become Community Volunteer Referral Partners should contact the Employability and Volunteering Coordinator in the first instance.

Appendix 1

Community Volunteer Referral Agreement

As part of Chorley Council's ongoing commitment to supporting volunteering groups and organisations to thrive, and supporting individuals into regular volunteering opportunities, we have created the Community Volunteer Referral Partnership. The aim of the partnership is to establish a network of consistently high-quality volunteering opportunities for Chorley Council to refer volunteers into. Chorley Council's close work with community groups and volunteer organisations in the borough, and our trusted and prominent position within the community, ideally places to refer individuals to community volunteering opportunities.

Community groups and volunteer organisations wishing to become members of the Chorley Volunteer Referral Partnership should read the following agreement and ensure they can evidence compliance with the requirements, which represent the standards we must encourage all volunteer groups should adopt. If required, support is available in meeting these standards, and becoming a Community Volunteer Referral Partner can be used as a hallmark to promote the standards you are committed to offering your volunteers.

1. **Safeguarding Policy** – Groups and organisations who work with children, young people and/or adults at risk must have safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Your safeguarding policy must reflect your commitment to promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults, and how you will respond to welfare or protection concerns, including for your volunteers. It is crucial that employees and volunteers in your group/organisation know what to do if they are concerned about a child or adult at risk.
2. **Data Protection** – When considering the safety and wellbeing of volunteers, the security of their personal data is a vital consideration. The General Data Protection Regulation (2018) stipulates how data should be collected, handled, stored and shared. More information is available [here](#)
3. **Public Liability Insurance** – This is a minimum requirement for any group and protects your employees, volunteers, service users, bystanders and the general public.
4. **Risk Assessments** – Your group has a responsibility to take steps to minimize the risk for all activities you do. This requires you to complete risk assessments that consider all risks involved with the activity and planning ways to preemptively mitigate or remove those risks. It is a live document that should be updated regularly and shared with all staff and volunteers involved with the activity to help everyone stay safe. You can find a risk assessment template [here](#)
5. **DBS checks in line with Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)** - In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) a DBS check will only be necessary for a regulated activity as defined in the Act as:
 - Regulated activity with children and other activities which involve working closely with children such as caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of children under 18 (including day care and childminding)
 - Regulated activity and other activities which involve caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of other people in vulnerable circumstances (including social work and advocacy services).

Where these conditions apply, a DBS check **must** be conducted **before** the commencement of the volunteering role.

6. **Defined Volunteer Role Profiles** – It is important that the scope of the role is well defined and discussed with the volunteer before commencement of the role. This discussion should include:
 - The key activities and responsibilities of the role
 - The location
 - Time commitment
 - Travel arrangements and any expenses

Any significant changes to the role should be discussed with the volunteer prior to the changes being implemented. Volunteer Role Profiles should be submitted to Chorley Council's Employability and Volunteering Coordinator (proforma can be provided).

7. **Defined Volunteer Code of Conduct** – It is important that volunteers know what is expected of them, and it is vital to maintaining core values within your group. These should include anything that is considered important to the culture of your group, but could include:
 - Showing respect and consideration for the needs of others
 - Informing the group in a timely manner if volunteering commitments cannot be met

A Code of Conduct, or something similar, should be available to share and discuss with volunteers.

8. **Consistent Induction and Regular Supervision** – When managing the health, safety, safeguarding and quality of experience of your volunteers, consistency is important. It is crucial to make sure all volunteers receive the same key messages in their induction – it may be useful to have a checklist to manage this. Regular supervision of volunteers not only ensures that they are consistently able to perform their volunteering role well, it also a chance to identify opportunities for development, proactively address concerns or changing personal circumstances and increase volunteer motivation, meaning your volunteer retention rates should improve.
9. **Time Credits Offer** – while not mandatory, we strongly encourage you to consider offering your volunteers the opportunity to earn time credits. Not only is it a great way to show appreciation to your volunteers for offering their time, skills and experience for free, it presents the volunteer with opportunities to engage with some activities that promote good health and wellbeing. If you are not already signed up for time credits, please contact/visit _____
10. **Define Complaints and Escalation Process** – A well defined complaints and escalation process provides the group with essential tools to manage misconduct and undesirable behaviours amongst volunteers. It may also, on rare occasions, be necessary to terminate a volunteering opportunity. Having a set procedure to use in these circumstances is important and encourages fairness and consistency, and provides the necessary tools to ensure your group is able to perform at a consistently high standard. Ensure that you share this process with volunteers.

To apply to become a member of the Community Volunteer Referral Partnership please contact Communities@chorley.gov.uk