

POLICY TITLE

South Holland District Council's Volunteer Policy

REVISION DATE

Policy first introduced February 2007. Revision due February 2009

REPLACES POLICY

Not applicable

POLICY NUMBER

POLICY AIM

This policy gives guidance and direction to South Holland District Council (SHDC) staff that may be recruiting, working with or supervising volunteers. It also provides guidelines for people engaged in voluntary activities with the Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The policy applies to all volunteers in all programmes and projects carried out by or on behalf of the Council at all sites of operation. It will

- highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers
- reflect the purpose, values, standards and strategies of SHDC in its involvement of volunteers
- recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers and the Council
- confirm SHDC's commitment to involving volunteers in its work
- establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers
- clarify the roles of volunteers and address the relationship between volunteers, those who engage them and those who receive their services
- commit SHDC to take account of the interests of those who benefit from the work of our volunteers
- help to provide the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by our volunteers
- acknowledge the current areas of volunteer involvement.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A volunteer is anyone who without reward or expectation of reward performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 This policy does not apply to work placements from schools or other academic institutions. Nor does it apply to people on other government programmes that may have a compulsory work experience element such as court orders for community service.

2. Principles

- 2.1 Achieving the Council's aims may be assured by the widest possible public consent to, participation in and engagement with the work of SHDC. Through volunteering the wider community is able to:
- demonstrate its support for the Council's objectives by the contribution of time and expertise
 - have a deeper appreciation of the Council's work
 - develop new skills and knowledge in rewarding and educative ways
- 2.2 Therefore, the involvement of volunteers in the work of the Council is encouraged and the recruitment of volunteers will be carried out regardless of the person's gender, age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, nationality, religious/political belief or disability
- 2.3 SHDC believes that our relationship with our volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment, within which the Council and our volunteers both have rights and responsibilities. We hope that volunteers will enjoy their involvement and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives. The Council recognises that volunteers offer their services for many different reasons and we hope that it will be a mutually beneficial relationship.
- 2.4 The relationship between volunteers and the Council is one of trust and mutual understanding. It does not create a legally binding contract either expressly or by implication. SHDC reserves the exclusive right to change any aspect of this policy at any time and to expect the changed policy to be followed. The Council accepts the services of volunteers on the understanding that their services are received at its sole discretion and that any volunteer's relationship with SHDC may be terminated at any time for whatever reason by either party.
- 2.5 Every effort will be made to make sure that the volunteer's role is appropriate to the skills and abilities of the individual concerned.

3. Recruitment, selection and support

- 3.1 SHDC's equalities and diversity policy will be followed when recruiting and selecting volunteers.
- 3.2 Volunteers will be required to complete a volunteer's application/registration form (see appendix one).
- 3.3 Written task descriptions will state time, commitment, necessary skills and actual duties.
- 3.4 We will request references for volunteers where this is seen to be appropriate.
- 3.5 Volunteers will be subject to a compulsory Criminal Records Bureau check if engaged to undertake duties in a role designated by SHCD to require one. These roles will link to those detailed in the Council's Child Protection Policy. Volunteers requiring a CRB check will not be allowed to undertake any duties with SHDC until such time as a satisfactory CRB check is received.

- 3.6 People who offer to volunteer will have their offers dealt with as quickly as possible.
- 3.7 Once placed, we will expect volunteers to comply with all SHDC's existing policies and procedures.
- 3.8 Where appropriate, we will provide an induction period and a review session for volunteers to assess the progress of their placements and to resolve any problems at an early stage.
- 3.9 The Council has written procedures for the insurance of its volunteers. All volunteers will be subject to the terms, conditions, exceptions, limits and warranties applying under our Employers' liability and Public Liability insurance, as if they were an employee of the Council.
- 3.10 Volunteers will be given information on other legislation or policies which may affect them for example Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities. In these respects volunteers will be treated in the same way as paid staff for liability purposes.
- 3.11 All volunteers will be offered access to appropriate training to enable them to develop their capabilities and personal competence appropriate to their volunteering role.
- 3.12 Volunteers may use the Council's complaints procedure as a means of resolving grievances about their volunteering role.
- 3.13 The volunteer's manager has responsibility for dealing with complaints about a volunteers' conduct.

4 Rights and responsibilities of volunteers

4.1 In engaging volunteers, SHDC recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is expected of them and to be given clear information and an induction into the organisation
- have clearly specified lines of support and supervision including regular reviews
- be shown appreciation
- have safe working conditions
- be reimbursed for pre-agreed "out of pocket" expenses
- be insured in the event that its alleged they cause the death or an injury to a Third Party or damage to their property,
- know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
- be trained and receive ongoing opportunities for learning and development
- be free from discrimination
- experience personal development through their participation as volunteers
- ask for a reference
- be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do
- withdraw from voluntary work and receive an exit interview if they request one

5. Rights of the Council

5.1 In recruiting volunteers, SHDC can reasonably expect each volunteer to:

- carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds with the aims and values of South Holland District Council
- work within agreed guidelines and remits
- be reliable
- complete timesheets on a regular basis so that their hours of working can be recorded
- Claim pre-agreed “out of pocket” expenses in a timely manner
- respect confidentiality
- attend training and support sessions where agreed.
- Declare any interests that may be relevant to the volunteering role.
- Not act in a manner that may bring the Council into disrepute

6. Contracts and service agreements

- 6.1 In entering into contracts or service agreements which involve volunteers we will make sure that:
- the role of volunteers is made clear and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management
 - the contract or service agreement provides for the necessary resources for involving volunteers
 - arrangements are made to set out the roles and commitments of the volunteers
 - the impact of volunteering and its benefits are promoted and acknowledged.

IMPLEMENTATION

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and its procedures lies collectively with those SHDC staff who manage volunteers.

The Manager recruiting and enabling volunteers to work in their service area, is responsible for the implementation of this policy into practice.

The Manager will use a volunteer recruitment form (Appendix 1) when selecting volunteers and monitoring who has applied. The Manager will also complete and issue the Volunteers Agreement (Appendix 2) when a volunteer begins their duties.

The Manager responsible for the line management of the volunteer is also responsible for reporting information regarding the use of volunteers in their service area to their Head of Service.

Opportunities for volunteering with South Holland District Council will be marketed via the Council’s website and a leaflet designed and distributed for the purpose. The opportunities will also be marketed through the South Lincolnshire Council for Voluntary Service which will help ensure that the Council is recognised as an accredited provider of volunteering opportunities.

Those who volunteer will have their contact details and other relevant information recorded on a database.

The relationship of volunteers with paid staff:

- Steps will be taken to make sure that paid staff at all levels are clear about the role of our volunteers, and that good working relationships are fostered between paid staff and volunteers.
- The roles of volunteers and paid staff will be complementary and mutually supportive.
- Appropriate training, support and resources will be provided for all those who work alongside volunteers and for those who have a managerial role in relation to volunteers.
- Volunteers will also be given clear information about the roles undertaken by paid staff.
- Volunteers will not be engaged in times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue with their regular work, but will not be asked to undertake additional duties.

This policy was first introduced in 2007. It will be due for review in 2009. At that time the views of managers, staff and volunteers will be gained in order to judge how effective the policy has proved to be in practice.

MONITORING

The policy will be monitored in the following ways

MONITORING ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Overall responsibility for updating the policy	Head of Economic and Community Development
This policy needs to be updated in 2009	
Responsibility for monitoring the policy and reviewing its effectiveness	Manager recruiting volunteers reporting information to the Head of E&CD
Appropriate recruitment practices and ordering CRB checks	Head of Organisational Development
Appropriate advertising procedures in place	Communications Manager
Breaches of the Policy	Heads of Relevant Services

POLICY CONSULTATION

The draft Policy was Equality Impact Assessed on 13th November 2006
 Consultation on the draft Policy was undertaken with HoS during December 2006 and with staff and volunteers during February 2007.

POLICY APPROVAL

Policy approved by SMT 12th February 2007

RELATED POLICIES & STRATEGIES

Health and Safety Policy
 Child Protection Policy
 Customer Feedback Procedures
 Equality and Diversity Policy
 Complaints procedure

Volunteer Application Form



Your Details

Title.....Full Name

Address (including post code)
.....
.....
.....

Telephone numbers Work
Home
Mobile

Email address

Your preferred method of contact

Volunteering Opportunities:

What Volunteering opportunities are you interested in being considered for?
.....
.....
.....

What skills, knowledge or abilities do you have that will help you to undertake this opportunity?
.....
.....
.....

Dependant on the nature of the volunteering opportunity we may need to undertake a criminal records bureau check before you can begin to undertake your volunteer duties. (You can find out more information about what this means on <http://www.crb.gov.uk>)

Do you agree to this? Yes No

Referees

For some volunteering opportunities the Council may wish to obtain a written reference. This might be your current employer. Alternatively, (and if you are a student, school leaver, or currently not working) please provide us with contact details of a character referee (not a relative). We will only contact your referee if you are offered a volunteering opportunity.

Name..... Telephone number.....

Address

How is this person known to you?

General Information

How did you first find out about this volunteering opportunity? Please tick one box only.

SHDC website SHDC notice board Word of mouth

Local press please name.....

Other website please name.....

Other please specify.....

If there is an emergency who would you like us to contact for you?

Name Telephone No

Relationship to you (e.g. husband, parent, friend etc)

Declaration I confirm that the information given in this application is correct and accept that if I give any false information I will not be allowed to continue to volunteer for SHDC.

Signed Date

**Please send your completed application form to:
Economic and Community Development Service, South Holland District Council,
Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 2XE**

**Telephone: 01775 761161 Fax: 01775 711054 Website:
www.sholland.gov.uk**

Volunteer Applicants: Equality and Diversity Monitoring



The Council's policy on equal opportunities makes sure all volunteer applicants receive fair and equal treatment. Applicants are judged only on their ability to do the duties of the volunteering role. To help the Council check whether it's policy is working we need to record some of your personal information. For this and no other reason, we would be grateful if you would complete the details below. The information you provide will in no way affect the consideration of your application.

1. **Are you male or female?** Female..... Male.....
2. **What was your age on your last birthday?** (Years)
3. **Do you consider that you have a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act definition?*** Yes..... No.....

If yes, please complete the section below, and tick all that apply

*The definition of disability according to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is, "A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities". (Long-term in this definition is taken to mean more than 12 months). This definition would cover long-term illnesses such as cancer and HIV, or mental health.

- Visual impairment.....
- Hearing impairment.....
- Speech impairment.....
- Restricted mobility.....
- Wheelchair user.....
- Learning disability.....
- Mental health difficulties.....
- Hidden impairment.....
- Other please state.....

4. To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?

Do not wish to answer.....

Asian or Asian British

- Indian.....
- Pakistani.....
- Bangladeshi.....
- Any other Asian background.....

Black or Black British

- Caribbean.....
- African.....
- Any other Black background...

Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean.....
- White and Black African.....
- White and Asian.....
- Any other mixed background.....

White

- White British.....
- White Irish.....
- Any other White background_____

- Irish Traveler.....
- Traveler.....
- Gypsy/Romany.....
- Other.....

5. **What is your nationality?**

6. **What is your first language?**

7. **What is your religion or belief?**

- Do not wish to answer.....
- No religion.....
- Buddist.....
- Christian*.....
- Hindu.....
- Jewish.....
- Muslim.....
- Sikh.....
- Any other religion.....

*Includes Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and any other Christian denominations.

8. **What is your sexual orientation?**

- Do not wish to answer.....
- Bisexual.....
- Gay.....
- Heterosexual.....
- Lesbian.....
- Transgender.....
- Other.....

South Holland District Council Volunteer Agreement:



This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between South Holland District Council and you. We appreciate you volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if you would like to make any changes and we will do our best to assist.

Your role as a volunteer is to

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your role begins on

Your work is designed to

.....

.....

.....

Your supervisor's name is

Part one

South Holland District Council commits to the following:

1. Induction and training

- to provide a thorough induction on the work of the Council and its staff, your volunteering role, and the induction and/or training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role.

2. Supervision, support and flexibility

- to respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them
- 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 (see above) 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
- to consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes

3. Health and safety

- to provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy.

4. Insurance

- to provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by us.
- The Council will continue to purchase Employers Liability and Public Liability insurance which will include Volunteers within the definition of “Employee” for the purpose of such insurance.

5. Equal opportunities

- to make sure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with South Holland District Council’s Equality and Diversity policy.

6. 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 Council’s complaints procedure

Part two

I,, agree:

- to help South Holland District Council fulfil its purpose and not to bring the Council into disrepute
- to perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability
- to follow the Council’s procedures and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its paid staff, other volunteers and visitors
- to maintain the confidential information of the Council and of its visitors
- to meet time commitments and standards agreed to except in exceptional circumstances, and to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made
- to provide referees as agreed who may be contacted if thought appropriate by the Council’s management,
- to declare any interests that may be relevant to the volunteering role
- to agree to a Criminal Records Bureau check being carried out prior to me starting to volunteer in a role which requires one.

My agreed regular voluntary time commitment is

.....

..... Or

I understand that I am volunteering for a role that requires flexible hours. Due to this I also understand that I will need to remain in contact with my manager to take advantage of the volunteering opportunities offered.

This agreement is binding in honour only; it 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 intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

Signed for the Council

Date.....

Volunteer’s signature.....

Date.....

South Holland District Council Volunteer Charter:



South Holland District Council greatly appreciates our volunteers. The time and effort they freely give provides an enhanced experience for all. South Holland District Council therefore pledges that:

1. We regard our volunteers as a vital and distinctive part of our organisation.
2. We will try, wherever possible, to match the talents and interests of individual volunteers to roles that suit them
3. We will provide volunteers with induction (including health & safety) training so that they will be able to work safely and competently; we will also offer them appropriate specialist training where required
4. We make sure that each volunteer knows the paid or volunteer member of staff he or she is responsible to, and should inform them if for any reason an agreement to work on a given day or at a given time cannot be kept
5. We have insurance to cover every volunteer against injury while at work and any claim by a member of the public
6. We will inform volunteers about our policies, plans and programmes that affect them, and invite them to contribute to our decision-making processes through existing management channels

Signed.....

On behalf of South Holland District Council

Date.....