

Bridgend County Borough Council

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

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Bridgend County Borough Council

Volunteer Policy



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1. Introduction

The Council recognises the significant contribution that volunteers make to the lives of our residents and the vibrancy of our communities. We also recognise that for the Council to support and work effectively with volunteers it is important that appropriate support and a consistent approach is in place to engage with volunteers. This policy aims to ensure that all Council officers can apply such a consistent approach when planning directly engaging volunteers in our work. It is recognised that third sector partners who may or may not be commissioned by the Council also play a hugely valuable role in engaging volunteers in accordance with their own policies and procedures.

The Council recognizes the expertise and role of Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), the County Voluntary Council and its Bridgend County Volunteer Centre (CVC) and will seek guidance and advice wherever appropriate to ensure it is up to date with the latest best practice policies and procedures in supporting volunteers. The Council is committed to working in partnership with the CVC as well as the wider third sector to promote the importance and effectiveness of volunteering within the Council.

2. Policy Statement

The policy provides a framework for how the Council will manage volunteers and what volunteers can expect from the Council. The policy applies to all Council departments utilising volunteers.

The Council acknowledge the significant role that volunteers play both in supporting service delivery and in promoting community wellbeing. Volunteers must comply with Council policies whilst engaged in volunteering with the Council. An induction checklist will be provided to all volunteers to ensure they are aware of the Council expectations in this respect.

3. Scope

It is important when considering volunteer roles that a distinction is made from paid staff roles, to ensure that there is no risk of job substitution or unrealistic expectations.

4. Definition of a Volunteer

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship. It provides valuable work experience for people which may support their future employed careers. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain. The volunteer relationship is binding in honor, trust, and mutual understanding.

4.1 Vision for Volunteering

The Council is committed to making the county borough a great place to live, work and visit. We have a vision of thriving communities where volunteers play an active

role in:

- shaping local service delivery
- promoting cohesion
- positively influencing decision making

We will work with local communities and partners to develop a diverse range of suitable volunteering activities that are relevant for all people in the Council. We want to support volunteering opportunities that develop skills within our communities to help individuals to enter the workplace and increase their employability prospects.

4.2 Our Volunteering Principles

When assigning volunteers, the Council will adhere to the following principles:

- volunteers will not be engaged in work which facilitates the loss of an existing employee's post, nor on any tasks or projects which were done by paid employees whose posts have since been deleted.
- volunteers will not be used to provide cover for paid staff (for example where paid staff are on leave due to sickness, holiday, maternity, or industrial action).

4.3 What opportunities can the Council offer volunteers?

There is a wide range of volunteering opportunities the Council can offer add value to service provision such as:

- Environmental work
- Assisting with delivery of the Councils' projects,
- Assisting with provision of lessons and services such as reading to children in schools and supporting road safety
- helping to maintain and promote our green and open spaces and social care visiting schemes.

This list is not exhaustive, and officers will be willing to consider other options for volunteering with the Council. However, officers need to take a balanced view on this regarding the potential benefit for the Council, the volunteer, the resources required/available to support any work; and any potential issues that this may cause.

4.4 Raising Awareness of Volunteering Opportunities

The Council will, where appropriate, promote volunteering and local opportunities by working in partnership with BAVO and utilising the BAVO 'Volunteering Wales' recruitment portal. The Council will also use events such as employability fairs to raise the profile of volunteering as a route to develop work skills. The Council will also signpost potential volunteers to BAVO and other relevant external partners where appropriate placements within the Council are not available.

5. CONTACT DETAILS

Below are the main contact details that a volunteer will need in the case of any

queries or problems that may arise.

Position	Name	Telephone	Email
Health & Wellbeing	To access some of our health and wellbeing resources through the team manager. https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/residents/social-care-and-wellbeing/prevention-and-wellbeing/		
Lead officers for safeguarding	Safeguarding for children Safeguarding early help	Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Team (Children) Phone: 01656 642320	Email: mashcentra@bridgend.gov.uk
Safeguarding and Quality Manager/ Adult Safeguarding services manager	Safeguarding for adults	Safeguarding Adults Team Phone: 01656 642477	Email: referrals only to AdultsafeguardingMASH@bridgend.gov.uk
Emergency Services	Emergency Services	Phone: 999	
Non-urgent advice from the Police or to log a concern		Phone: 101	

6. Engaging Volunteers

Should the Council wish to engage a volunteer they will need approval from a senior manager and adopt a process that is fair and equitable and adhere to safe recruitment principles. They must follow the Council's and Recruitment and Selection Protocol and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy. All managers must ensure that volunteers are aware of and have access to the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy. The manager is responsible for ensuring that no volunteer commences their role unless they have been safely engaged. This includes undertaking a DBS check if operating in a role which is undertaking regulated activity.

6.1 Regulated Activity

Regulated activity is defined as unsupervised activity with the opportunity for contact with children and young people or adults at risk. If the task sits within a regulated activity area, then a DBS check will apply in accordance with the Council's DBS Policy.

6.2 One-off volunteering

Unless a volunteer is involved, or will be involved, in regulated activity with children or with vulnerable adults generally there is no legal requirement for a volunteer to have a DBS check for a one off event. This will be monitored by team managers within each directorate.

6.3 Specific Requirements for Volunteers who are under 16.

Volunteering work requires a DBS check if the volunteering activity involves regular contact with under 18s – even if the volunteer is also under 18 (but over 16). Before engaging a volunteer under the age of 16, the consent of a parent / carer must be obtained. Clear information regarding the activities involved must be provided to the parent/ carer and the volunteer.

7. Equal Opportunities

The Council is an equal opportunity employer further information can be found here: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Statement.

7.1 Responsibility for coordinating use of volunteers.

The manager will:

- Asses the role requirements of all volunteers
- Ensure the volunteer is safely recruited
- Provide appropriate induction, supervision and monitor performance
- Keep a record of all volunteers engaged by in their service area, ensuring they understand where the volunteer is deployed and that all recruitment checks have been undertaken.

The manager will determine the requirement for a DBS on the assessment of the role and the eligibility of the role under DBS legislation and in accordance with the Council's DBS Policy.

The role of the manager is to:

- Provide advice and assistance regarding engaging of volunteers.
- Ensure consistent application of this policy and related procedures.
- Respond to any issues arising while volunteering relationship.

8. Communicating Safeguarding Issues or Concerns

Safeguarding children and adults at risk from abuse is everybody's responsibility. The Council is committed to ensuring that people living in the County are safe and protected and that its statutory duties to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults at risk are discharged. The Council workforce shares a responsibility, both collectively and individually, to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from harm. For further information please link with the Council's Corporate [safeguarding policy](#).

9. Induction

The Council will provide all volunteers with an appropriate induction to the service and tasks that they will undertake. Information could include:

- A document outlining tasks and expectations.
- A volunteering agreement to be signed by both parties on start date.

- Access to relevant Council policies will be via the manager.

10. Insurance

Volunteers operating on behalf and under the control of the Council are regarded as Employees for insurance purposes, and are automatically included within the Local Authority insurance policies whilst carrying out their volunteering activities.

11. Reimbursement

Volunteers are unpaid. However, in certain circumstances, the Council will reimburse volunteers for approved out of pocket expenses, which are appropriately receipted in accordance with [the Intranet petty cash system](#) this is to be operated by the team manager.

11.1 ID Cards

All volunteers, as a minimum, will be issued with a volunteer's badge found at reception. These should be signed for when they are given to volunteers and when they are then handed back after their visit. The volunteer must return all such items when the volunteering placement comes to an end.

11.2 Confidentiality and Data Protection

During their volunteering opportunity with the Council, a volunteer may become aware of personal data and / or confidential information about the Council, its employees, customers /clients/ and / or suppliers. Volunteers should not disclose this information or use it for their own or another's benefit without the explicit consent of the Council or the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless it has been made public by the volunteer's breach of confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires disclosure. In addition, information, and management (storing, handling and use) of personal data needs to comply with data protection law.

It is a criminal offence under data protection legislation to knowingly or recklessly obtain, retain (which may have been lawfully obtained) or disclose personal data without the consent of Council as the data controller.

12. Volunteering in schools

Volunteers can play a valuable role in supporting schools. The governing bodies of schools who engage volunteers should ensure there is a clear policy for the engagement of volunteers which aligns with the standards in this Council policy and the requirements of Keeping Learners Safe, statutory Welsh Government guidance on safeguarding in school settings.

13. Key Policies

The Council have several key policies which can be accessed via the team manager, examples of policies include:

Social media: We expect all volunteers comply with the principles of the Council's [social media policy](#).

Whistleblowing: Although volunteers are not protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which covers whistleblowing as part of employment law, volunteers can access and use the Council's [Whistleblowing policy](#) where they feel necessary to do so; but they will not receive statutory protection or compensation, as they are not Council employees. If a volunteer has a concern about the running of a project or the organisation, the team manager should be notified in the first instance but the disclosure routes in the Whistleblowing Policy may be followed if this is not resolved.

Alcohol and substance misuse: The Council operates a zero alcohol and drugs protocol in which the consumption of alcohol immediately prior to or during the working day is not permitted on health and safety grounds. All volunteers will be expected to comply with this protocol and should be made aware of this as part of their volunteer induction. More information can be found on the Council's [Alcohol and substance misuse protocol](#).

Health and Safety: The Council have a responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers. Volunteers must, always, follow the Council's health and safety policies and procedures. Team Managers must make volunteers aware of health and safety arrangements as part of their induction / initial training and as necessary thereafter. Appropriate equipment will be provided for reasons of health and safety when undertaking their volunteering role. More information can be found on the Council's [Health and safety policy](#).

14. Evaluation and Review: This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

15. Volunteer checklist

- The Volunteering Policy
- Risk assessment
- Mandatory training including Safeguarding training
- The volunteering agreement
- List of tasks and expectations
- A named contact officer.

INDUCTION

ACTION	COMMENT / DATE	DONE	INITIAL
Team manager to create volunteer form which could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description of tasks - Personal details and relevant experience. - References if appropriate - Copy of completed induction checklist. 			
Stage 1 – Pre-Induction Checklist Stage 2 – Relevant induction Essential Information			

16. Volunteer Agreement Form (containing confidentiality clause and Data Protection clause)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Effective date: _____

Authorised Signature: _____

Full name:

Telephone:

Email address:

On behalf of the Council above [delete if individual], I understand that in connection with volunteering work with Bridgend County Borough Council (“the Council”) I may from time to time have access to, or be required to process, or be made aware of, personal data and / or confidential information processed by or on behalf of the Council.

I hereby undertake, agree, and acknowledge as follows:

That all information of whatsoever nature (whether oral, written or held on any information system), containing or consisting of material of a personal, technical, operational, administrative, economic, planning, business or financial nature and relating to the Council or any of its clients or partners (such information together referred to herein as “confidential information”) shall be treated as strictly confidential and shall not, without the specific written approval of a Head of Service of the Council, be disclosed to any persons, other than those authorised to receive it.

That no 'confidential information' shall be used by me for any purpose other than in connection with the business for the Council.

That the obligations herein contained to maintain the confidentiality of the 'confidential information', and not to use the same, shall continue after the termination of the business. That in the event of any confidential information being removed from the offices of the Council for the purpose of the business or for any other reason, I undertake to keep the said information secure.

That at the termination of the business with the Council I will return to the Council immediately all the 'confidential information' in my possession or control as far as the same shall be in tangible form. This shall not apply to any confidential information which is already in the public domain, other than because of unauthorised disclosure by me, or any other person.

I acknowledge that it is a criminal offence under data protection legislation to knowingly or recklessly obtain, retain (which may have been lawfully obtained) or disclose personal data without the consent of the Council as the data controller.