

## **VOLUNTEER LEAVE POLICY**



### **Introduction**

We actively encourage and support employees who wish to do voluntary work.

We recognise the positive difference that volunteers can make to our local communities. We also recognise how an employee volunteering scheme can provide a number of benefits to staff including:

- Increased staff engagement, satisfaction with their employer and enhanced retention
- Skills and team development opportunities
- Improved understanding of the voluntary and community sector and the needs of the communities PCC serves
- A sense of 'giving back' to their community

Good quality volunteering opportunities can also provide the local voluntary and community sector with:

- Additional resources to deliver their services and carry out fundraising
- Support and recognition from local employers
- Organisational development through professional volunteers sharing their skills and knowledge in leadership, governance and problem solving

This policy sets out our commitment to supporting employees who want to volunteer during working hours.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees employed by us. It does not apply to staff on a fixed-term contract of less than one year, workers, contractors, volunteers or interns working for the organisation.

### **Types of volunteering that we support**

We understand that volunteering opportunities are diverse. We support any activity that positively impacts the community, helps vulnerable people in our society and/or helps to improve the environment. We want you to be involved in something that you genuinely care about.

## APPENDIX 1

Organisations that you can volunteer for are likely to be registered charities, not-for-profit organisations, educational institutions (such as schools and colleges) or hospitals.

All volunteering activities should support a voluntary, community or charitable organisation that is recognised by the Council and supports the Council's Corporate Strategy and Key Priorities

### **Volunteer leave**

All employees are entitled to a maximum of two days paid volunteer leave per year, or a pro rata equivalent if you work part-time.

Volunteer leave may be taken as full days, half days, or blocks of at least one hour.

Any unused volunteer leave may not be carried over from one year to the next.

### **Volunteering opportunities**

While you can use your volunteer leave for voluntary activities of your choice, volunteer options within the Peterborough area can be found on [the PCVS website](#), an organisation that run a variety of services aimed at improving health and wellbeing, building the capacity of individuals and groups to help some of the most excluded members of society, and providing the skills and support needed for many charities and community groups, big and small, to thrive.

Some examples of valuable volunteering activities include working with the homeless, supporting residents with mental health issues, reading buddies in schools to help build literacy, and mentoring of looked-after children.

[The Do-It website](#), a national organisation which shows individual local opportunities may also be useful to find volunteering opportunities for employees that do not live in the Peterborough area.

### **Requesting volunteer leave**

If you wish to get involved in any volunteering opportunities, you should submit your request in writing to your line manager by completing the Volunteering Application Form. Your request must state the volunteering programme that you are interested in and each day and number of hours that you are requesting as volunteer leave.

You must give at least three weeks' notice when booking volunteer leave.

All volunteer leave must be approved in advance by your line manager and be recorded on the Absence Management System by the employee or manager as 'Volunteer Leave'.

Every effort will be made to meet your request for volunteer leave. However, there may be circumstances where your line manager may turn down your request due to operational needs, where there is insufficient capacity within the team to accommodate high levels of leave or they consider that a conflict of interest may arise.

If your line manager considers that your absence could cause difficulties for the organisation, they will ask you to take your volunteer leave at a different time or on a different programme.

## APPENDIX 1

### **Insurance**

If the charity/community group with whom the member of staff is volunteering holds insurance that covers volunteers, PCC's insurers would expect the charity's insurers to cover the volunteering. However, if the charity does not hold suitable insurance, the Council's insurance would cover any liabilities of the Council, so long as a risk assessment has been undertaken.

When volunteering for a charity, the charity is responsible for providing the appropriate public liability insurance, safety briefings and risk assessments specific to your activity. The PCC employee organising the volunteer day is responsible for ensuring this is in place.

### **Safeguarding**

If the volunteering activity requires any contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, and a DBS is essential, it is the responsibility of the organisation receiving the volunteer to ensure that the appropriate and correct DBS checks are in place, before any volunteering activity takes place.

### **Expenses**

The volunteer leave policy allows PCC to provide employee time; however, expenses cannot be claimed for volunteer leave unless the activity is already being delivered as part of a PCC business initiative.

### **Standard of behaviour**

During any period of volunteer leave, you are representing the council and you must behave in an appropriate, mature and responsible manner. You must not behave in a way that could cause reputational damage to the council or do or say anything that risks breaching confidential business information.

### **Suggestions for new volunteering opportunities**

We encourage you to make suggestions for developing new partnerships with organisations, or other volunteering opportunities that could be initiated under this policy. You can do this by making suggestions to your line manager or HR Business Partner.

### **Data protection**

When dealing with volunteer leave, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with the council's [Corporate Privacy Notice](#). In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

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