



Volunteer Policy

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DELIVERED BY



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HARTLEPOOL
COMMUNITY HUBS

 **HARTLEPOOL**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hartlepool Borough Council's Community Hubs are within the Preventative & Community Based Services Department. The Service recognises the significant and valuable role that volunteers can play in supporting our activities and enhancing our local community within Hartlepool.

Volunteering is '*an unpaid activity where someone freely gives their time to help an organisation or an individual*'. It is recognised that people volunteer for a variety of reasons, including: -

- To socialise/meet new people;
- Give back to the community;
- Enhance their Health and Well-being;
- Gain training, experience or qualifications;
- Improve employment prospects or;
- To occupy their time.

Volunteers bring a range of skills, knowledge and experience which is vital, and the Service is committed to engaging with volunteers alongside offering opportunities that complement our offer within Hartlepool.

2. PURPOSE

Hartlepool Community Hubs aims to promote personal growth and make a difference in the lives of our residents and communities across Hartlepool.

The purpose of the Volunteer Policy, in conjunction with the Handbook for Managers of Volunteers, is to develop and promote best practices in the involvement and support of volunteers within the Service.

This policy aims to:

- Encourage the development of volunteer opportunities within all areas of the Community Hubs.
- Recognise and promote the importance of volunteering to our work whilst ensuring volunteering is accessible to all through the Community Hubs.
- Ensure support, training, and guidance is available to all individuals who volunteer within the Service.
- Identify the standards to which volunteers are expected to adhere, which is the same as our Staff Members.
- Ensure that volunteering with the Community Hubs is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.
- Promote volunteering across local communities and to our partners so that we can develop a diverse range of opportunities for the people of Hartlepool.

3. PRINCIPLES

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity supported and encouraged by the Council's Community Hubs. The role of volunteers complements our existing activities and that of our Paid Employees. We regard all paid employees and unpaid volunteers as valued Staff Members within the Community Hubs Team.

Community Hubs relies on our Staff Members' commitment, hard work and enthusiasm. All volunteers can expect us to adhere to the following principles: -

- Volunteers will only undertake roles that add value to our workforce across the Community Hubs.
- Any individual who is volunteering will be encouraged to develop in the role through training, one-to-one supervision and support from the Hubs Team.
- The Service will reimburse the main expenses a volunteer incurs through the delivery of their role, such as Travel Costs.
- All volunteers will undertake an induction before commencing their role, highlighting key policies and procedures such as Health & Safety, Safeguarding etc. They will also be issued a Role Overview and provided with a copy of the Volunteer Handbook.
- If necessary for their role, volunteers will complete a Disclosure & Barring Check before their role commences with any costs being met by the Council.
- Volunteers will be treated with respect and regarded as a member of the Community Hub Team.
- The Service will only give volunteers tasks or responsibilities appropriate to their role, and volunteers can stop anytime.
- All volunteers will work in conditions which are safe, healthy and meet all legislative requirements in line with policies within the Council.
- Hartlepool Community Hubs is non-discriminatory and, where practical, will make volunteering available to all across Hartlepool.

No obligations are imposed on our volunteers to give a set amount of time for their activities within Community Hubs.

4. EXPECTATIONS

Community Hubs will provide support to all of our volunteers alongside opportunities for new people to become a volunteer. There are expectations and, as a minimum, all of our volunteers will receive the following:

- A suitable role within a supportive environment with a range of opportunities across the Community Hubs.
- Relevant hands-on experience and the opportunity to undertake a range of duties linked to our activities.
- Access to impartial Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance if any volunteers want to enhance their prospects of Employment.
- The opportunity to increase confidence and self-esteem through meeting new people within the Community Hubs.
- Access to specific training and development opportunities alongside regular Volunteer Celebration Events.

In return, there are expectations for all our volunteers who have a role within the Community Hubs. It is expected that you will:

- Undertake volunteering within the terms agreed, as well as the policies and procedures of the Community Hubs.
- Adhered to the behaviours expected by all staff members, both paid and unpaid, as shown in the Volunteer Handbook.
- Show courtesy to individuals, staff and other volunteers, and respect confidentiality.
- Undertake work at agreed times and give advance notice of any variations or if you cannot attend your role within Community Hubs.
- Carry out activities in a way which supports the vision and values in place within the Community Hubs.

5. RECRUITMENT

The Council's Community Hubs is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all. Accepting volunteers for a particular role depends on their suitability for the agreed tasks. Volunteers considered unsuitable for a particular role will be offered alternative opportunities within the Community Hubs or with partners such as Voluntary & Community Groups.

Information about current volunteer opportunities will be actively promoted and widely accessible through appropriate methods, including the Hartlepool Now Website. This will clearly explain what the role involves, and further information is available from a member of the Volunteer Hartlepool Team.

Community Hubs always aim to match a volunteer's skills, talents and interests with the work to be carried out. However, it may not always be possible, which is why we promote roles across other organisations within Hartlepool.

We will process every request to volunteer as promptly and professionally as possible. The recruitment process is outlined below:

- Initial Enquiry to a member of the Team;
- Completion of Volunteer Application Form;

- Informal Discussion with Volunteer Advisor;
- Agreement and completion of relevant documentation for Volunteer Role;
- If appropriate, completion of DBS Check/References and;
- Induction within the role of Community Hubs.

In following this process, we aim to ensure that volunteers will have their skills matched to the needs of the Community Hubs. Please note that the Service will carry out safer recruitment checks on all volunteers who meet the requirements for DBS Check.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Council is a Disability Confident Employer committed to equal opportunities and fair treatment for all. Whilst volunteers are not employees, it is unacceptable to discriminate against them. The Service will ensure that volunteering opportunities are inclusive and available to all. Volunteers still have a right not to be discriminated against, in the same way, a customer or service user has this right when accessing the Council's Community Hubs.

The Council has an established Equality & Diversity Policy, and any decisions about a volunteer's suitability for tasks or their ongoing volunteering within the Council will be made fairly and in line with Equality Legislation.

All our volunteers are expected to adhere to the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy, ensuring that their conduct when carrying out volunteering tasks does not discriminate against others. Volunteers are advised to read their Volunteer Handbook and, if they have any questions, can speak to any staff member within Community Hubs.

7. SAFEGUARDING

The Council has Safeguarding Policies and Procedures covering Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. This forms part of Hartlepool & Stockton Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Tees Safeguarding Adults Board.

This will be highlighted as part of the induction so that it is understood by all volunteers and, if necessary, they know who they can speak to for further guidance within Community Hubs. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks will be carried out on all volunteers who have unsupervised contact with Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults. If appropriate for the role, the volunteer will not commence until a DBS Check has been completed and notification received by the Council.

8. INDUCTION

All volunteers will receive an induction for the Community Hubs as well as information tailored to the role. This will include, as a minimum:

- Overview of Community Hubs;
- Introduction to the Role, including a Role Description;
- Summary of Key Policies, Procedures and Standards;
- Tour of their Building;
- Information on Health & Safety, Insurance and Risk Assessment;
- Access to further Training and Qualifications, and;
- Overview of Expense Policy.

9. FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

All volunteers will receive appropriate support, including access to One to One supervision when requested by the Volunteer/Supervision.

All volunteers will have a nominated Supervisor/Mentor to whom they can have regular access if problems arise or when help and support are needed. There will also be regular Celebration Events which will allow volunteers to meet each other and thank those who are supporting Community Hubs.

All volunteers must have the opportunity to provide feedback on their role and any improvements that can be made to the Community Hubs. This feedback can be made at any time, including to their Supervisor/Mentor or by speaking to a staff member within Community Hubs. This aims to encourage volunteers to stay with us, recognise their efforts and maximise their contribution alongside Community Hubs.

10. TRAINING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

All volunteers will receive a Role Description stating the key duties and the required knowledge and skills. The Community Hubs will ensure that all volunteers can develop through undertaking their role. Each volunteer will receive access to One to One supervision when requested by the Volunteer/Supervision, which can identify future training requirements alongside support to meet their goals for volunteering within Community Hubs.

All of the development and training opportunities will be communicated to ensure that all volunteers are supported, which may include:

- Qualifications
- Online and Distance Learning
- English, Maths and Digital Skills Training
- Workshops, Meetings and Events

11. EXPENSES

The Council's Community Hubs is committed to paying reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses, ensuring that potential volunteers are not excluded from volunteering within the Service due to financial reasons.

However, these need to be agreed upon with relevant managers before the volunteer commences their activity. The expenses will be tailored depending on the needs of the individual, and this expense procedure will be reviewed annually alongside that of the Volunteer Policy.

Volunteers must submit expenses alongside receipts/evidence to their Supervisor/Mentor or designated person within Community Hubs.

12. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Council's Community Hubs have a duty of care to avoid exposing our volunteers to health and safety risks in line with Health & Safety Legislation.

All volunteers will be informed of the Council's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and any practical safety concerns during their induction. Volunteers are expected to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Procedures. If they have any concerns, then these should be reported to their Supervisor/Mentor or any relevant Manager.

All volunteer roles are assessed for risk as part of their development and on an ongoing basis as part of Health & Safety. This covers the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. In addition, where a volunteer makes us aware of a pre-existing medical condition, disability or support requirement, an individual risk assessment may also be necessary by Community Hubs.

For Health & Safety, volunteers will be treated in the same regard as all paid employees within Community Hubs.

13. INSURANCE

The Council holds Employers' and Public Liability Insurance, which covers all buildings alongside those of the Community Hubs. Volunteers will be informed of this information as part of their induction, and this is also included in the Volunteer Handbook.

This includes the activities being undertaken by volunteers alongside liability towards them across Community Hubs.

The Council does not insure the volunteer's possessions against loss or damage within Community Hubs.

If volunteers drive as part of their voluntary activity and use their vehicle, they must ensure they possess the relevant business class of insurance. This will be checked by Community Hubs, who will take copies of this documentation if required, and if there are queries, then further guidance should be sought from the volunteer's own Insurance Company.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY & DATA PROTECTION

All volunteers will be informed as part of their induction of the Council's Confidentiality, Information Security and Data Protection Policies.

Volunteers will have access to their records, and all information will be kept in line with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). All volunteers should respect and treat in confidence any information they may be party to through their role, including written, oral and electronic. Volunteers will receive appropriate training on matters such as Information Security if necessary.

15. COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS

The Council's Community Hubs aim to deliver volunteering and activities that meet the needs of our communities within Hartlepool. We must make our activities and services as efficient and effective as possible. To do this, we need to know whether it is being delivered right and how it can be improved in the future.

This includes:

- If a person or volunteer is not satisfied, we want them to tell us why and what we can do to support them or improve things;
- If we are doing things well, we'd like to hear from you so we can congratulate members of the Community Hubs Team and;
- If you have any suggestions for improving the Council's Community Hubs.

Any issues or problems a volunteer has should be raised in the first instance with their Supervisor/Mentor and dealt with informally, where possible. If appropriate, the grievance will be investigated fully in line with the Council's Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy available at www.hartlepool.gov.uk/complaints.

If a complaint is brought against a volunteer, this will be investigated by the relevant Manager. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly as possible, but it may, on rare occasions, mean that we have to stop a person volunteering. This is detailed in the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy.

16. TERMINATION OF VOLUNTEERING

If a volunteer no longer wishes to continue in their role, then we request that they inform their Supervisor/Mentor at Community Hub.

It may be necessary for Community Hubs to end a person's volunteering, which may be because the role is no longer needed or the individual can no longer fulfil the role. If this happens, Hartlepool Community Hubs will notify the volunteer and endeavour to find an alternative role within the Community Hubs or a partner from the Voluntary & Community Sector.

17. VOLUNTEERING IN THE COMMUNITY

Hartlepool Community Hubs is committed to promoting volunteering in the wider community, and through Volunteer, Hartlepool aims to support residents by:

- Providing access to a range of volunteer opportunities within volunteer-involving organisations.
- Providing advice and guidance to identify suitable roles based on an individual's goals, skills and interests.
- Providing advice and guidance about suitable training opportunities to support their personal development and to meet established goals.

Volunteer Hartlepool also aims to support volunteer involving organisations as part of our responsibilities for capacity building by:

- Providing a platform for organisations to advertise and signpost their volunteers through Hartlepool Now.
- Signposting suitable volunteers to their volunteer opportunities alongside promoting the benefits of volunteering across Hartlepool.
- Providing advice on support on developing volunteer management systems alongside access to Example Policies and Procedures.
- Offering bespoke training for staff and volunteers to support volunteer management through Jobs & Skills @ Hubs.

18. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The policy and associated procedures will be monitored and reviewed regularly and systematically in line with the requirements of the Community Hubs.

19. KEY CONTACTS

Brian Young – Careers & Volunteer Advisor
Email: Brian.Young@hartlepool.gov.uk
Tel: 01429 284137 | 07929758854

Tracy Harvey – Community Volunteer Officer
Email: Tracy.Harvey@hartlepool.gov.uk
Tel: 01429 806906 | 07977347208

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