

Guidance for Volunteers and Mentors

1 Introduction

St Edmundsbury Borough Council recognises that volunteers offer a valuable contribution to the work of this organisation. This guidance formalises our commitment to encourage and support volunteers as a resource that enhances the quality and range of our services.

We use the collective term "staff" to describe both paid and unpaid employees and therefore this includes volunteers.

This policy is guided by the following principles:

- The organisation, its staff (including volunteers) and Councillors will follow this policy
- The organisation recognises that volunteers have a freedom of choice about how and when they will volunteer. Their level of contribution will be mutually agreed upon.
- All volunteers will have a clear role which will be explained and mutually agreed.
- The organisation will provide an appropriate level of induction including information on how the volunteer will be supported and trained in their role
- The organisation will strive to find volunteering roles that suit the needs of the volunteer and appropriate to their interests and skills
- Volunteers will have the right to express their views
- Staff (including volunteers) will work together within the policies and procedures of the organisation
- Staff (including volunteers) and councillors will treat each other with respect and courtesy
- The organisation is committed to the principles of equal opportunities for all its staff this includes the recruitment and involvement of volunteers

2. Types of volunteers

We recognise and welcome all types of volunteers, from those who undertake one off opportunities or those who volunteer on an ongoing basis, giving a few hours each week/month over a sustained period of time.

3. Guidance

St Edmundsbury Borough Council will ensure that:

Recruitment - we welcome volunteers with skills and interests who meet the needs of this organisation. However, we cannot guarantee regular volunteering opportunities. We will undertake appropriate background checks, which may include Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure. Our policy is available on the intranet, from your named mentor/contact or from Human Resources.

Volunteer role descriptions – we will ensure that volunteers have clearly agreed role descriptions.

Induction, information and training – we will ensure that volunteers receive an appropriate level of induction which will include information on the organisational aims and missions and will encourage a relevant level of skills development opportunities to enable volunteers to thrive and develop in their roles.

Support and supervision - we will ensure that volunteers receive an appropriate level of support and supervision through a named mentor/contact.

Health & Safety – as far as is practical we will ensure that volunteers take responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others. Volunteers will receive a full health and safety induction in line with current policy and procedure, paying particular attention to the health and safety implications where volunteers are young people under the age of 18. Our policy is available on the intranet, from your named mentor/contact or from Human Resources.

Having a voice - we will ensure that volunteers are given opportunities to express their views about issues concerning the organisation and its work at all levels of the organisational structure.

Insurance – volunteers will be covered by the organisations Public Liability Insurance.

Equal opportunities – we will ensure that all volunteers are inducted in and follow our Equal Opportunities principles and practice. Our policy is available on the intranet, from your named mentor/contact or from Human Resources.

Safeguarding policy and procedures - we will ensure that all volunteers are inducted in and follow our safeguarding policy and practice. Our policy is available on the intranet, from your named mentor/contact or from Human Resources.

Confidentiality - we will ensure that all volunteers are inducted in and follow our confidentiality policy and practice and you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Complaints & grievance - we will ensure that all volunteers are inducted in and follow our complaints and grievance policy and practice. Our policy is available on the intranet, from your mentor/contact or from Human Resources.

4. Enquiries and Change Control

All enquiries relating to this document should be directed to Human Resources.

Suggestions for any changes to this document should also be forwarded to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.