



Volunteering Policy

Members of the Public



This policy outlines the principles and procedures for members of the public who would like to volunteer with Tewkesbury Borough Council.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy sets out the principles for volunteering with Tewkesbury Borough Council and to provide consistency of treatment for people approaching the council in order to volunteer. It outlines what volunteers can expect from the council.

1.2 This policy is designed to reflect current legislative provisions in respect of volunteers and is non-contractual.

2.0 Who does it apply to?

2.1 All unpaid volunteers.

3.0 When does it apply?

3.1 It applies in situations where a member of the public is looking for a volunteering opportunity with Tewkesbury Borough Council.

4.0 When does it not apply?

4.1 It does not apply to permanent or contractual short-term recruitment or employment on a paid basis of Tewkesbury Borough Council employees whether employed directly or through an agency.

5.0 Definition of a volunteer

- 5.1**
- A volunteer is a person who donates their time, skills and experience without receiving any form of compensation from Tewkesbury Borough Council.
 - A volunteer is not an employee of Tewkesbury Borough Council and there is no legally binding contractual relationship between the council and the volunteer.

6.0 Why does Tewkesbury Borough Council involve volunteers?

- 6.1**
- Volunteers allow the council to expand and improve its services to local communities.
 - Local volunteers have the opportunity of putting their time, skills and experience to good use and to contribute to the community in which they live.
 - Volunteering offers people the opportunity to gain experience and the opportunity to 'try something new' as well as meeting like-minded people.

7.0 Tewkesbury Borough Council's commitment to volunteers

- 7.1
- The council's commitment to volunteers is based in its volunteering promise which confirms the commitment of Tewkesbury Borough Council and partners to the principles of:
 - **Choice**
Volunteering is undertaken as a matter of free choice. Volunteers are not obliged to undertake tasks they are not comfortable with.
 - **Inclusion**
Volunteering is open and accessible to all with fair, simple and consistent processes. Volunteers have influence in how things are organised.
 - **Support**
Volunteers are properly introduced to their role and provided with ongoing support and training appropriate to their individual needs, abilities and skills.
 - **Safety**
The safety and wellbeing of all volunteers has been considered and adequate insurance is in place. Volunteers are aware of how to raise concerns and how they will be handled. If volunteering is undertaken through a host organisation, your safety will be their responsibility.
 - **Reward**
Volunteers receive appropriate recognition for their efforts and often hear the words ... thank you.

8.0 Procedure

- 8.1
- The council will try to:
 - Match the time, skills and experience of volunteers to a suitable volunteering opportunity.
 - Ensure each volunteer receives appropriate training and support.
 - Resolve any complaints raised by a volunteer in a timely fashion.
 - Ensure that each volunteer is supported by a contact from within the council to provide advice and guidance.
 - Foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere for volunteers and make volunteering a positive experience.

- 8.2**
- In return, the council asks the following of volunteers:
 - To maintain and uphold the good name and reputation of the council.
 - To treat all members, officers, service users and members of the public with respect and dignity.
 - To adhere to the relevant council policies and procedures.

9.0 Finding a volunteer placement with Tewkesbury Borough Council

- 9.1**
- To find a volunteering opportunity you should contact the Human Resources Section on 01684 272030 or email humanresources@tewkesbury.gov.uk
 - The council does not guarantee to provide any volunteering opportunities and may withdraw any volunteering opportunity at any time and for any reason.
 - This policy will also apply to anyone wishing to undertake a work experience placement.

10.0 **References and other checks**

- 10.1**
- Depending on the nature of the volunteering opportunity, a volunteer may be required to provide the names of two referees who have agreed to provide a reference on behalf of the volunteer.
 - Depending on the nature of the volunteering opportunity, the council may need to understand specific health issues in order to assess whether reasonable adjustments can be made.
 - An enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check will always be required where the volunteering opportunity involves contact with children or vulnerable adults deemed to be regulated activity.
 - If a volunteer is not engaging in a regulated activity, the manager should undertake a risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding whether or not to do an enhanced DBS check.
 - Any necessary references and other checks will need to be completed before the volunteer is able to commence any volunteering activity with the council.

11.0 **Induction and training**

- 11.1** The council will provide all volunteers with an introduction to the organisation as well as induction and training tailored to the volunteering opportunity.

12.0 Ongoing support

- 12.1**
- The council acknowledges the importance of volunteers and will provide appropriate supervision and support during the course of the volunteering opportunity, through regular meetings, as appropriate to the service the volunteer is involved in.
 - Each volunteer will be allocated a local contact with whom they can liaise from within the council.

13.0 Insurance

- 13.1** Volunteers are covered by the council's insurance policy, whilst engaged in volunteering activities for the Tewkesbury Borough Council. If volunteering is undertaken for a host organisation, that organisation must ensure volunteers are insured. Further information is can be provided upon request.

14.0 Health and safety

- 14.1** The council is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers and has a health and safety policy in place.
- Volunteers will be made aware of this policy during their induction and must be familiar with it before undertaking any volunteering activity.
 - Volunteers must report any accidents, incidents or other dangerous circumstances immediately using the appropriate process.

15.0 Benefits and tax

- 15.1**
- Volunteering does not usually affect any entitlement to social security benefits. Volunteers must advise Jobcentre Plus before starting voluntary work.
 - Volunteers who are in receipt of jobseeker's allowance (JSA) are entitled to undertake voluntary work provided that they meet the conditions for eligibility for JSA, namely being available for work and actively seeking work.
 - You should ensure you understand whether volunteering may affect your entitlement to any social security benefits or may affect your tax situation, including JSA and further advice should be obtained from the DWP, Jobcentre Plus or a Citizen's Advice Bureau.

16.0 Other policies

- 16.1** There are a number of other policies you should make yourself familiar with when volunteering. Further information will be provided by your local contact person at Tewkesbury Borough Council.

17.0 The Volunteering relationship

17.1 In order to achieve the most from your volunteering role volunteers are requested:

- To attend the induction or ongoing training which it is felt is necessary for you to be able to volunteer in an informed and safe way.
- To read and understand relevant council policies which may apply.
- To treat any information obtained when undertaking volunteering duties as confidential and not disclose it to any third party.
- To represent the council positively/appropriately at all times.
- To tell the contact person if you wish to finish volunteering, in case alternative arrangements need to be made.
- To adhere to the health and safety policy and to raise any concerns with the local contact person immediately.
- To report any accidents or incidents, whether it concerns themselves or another person.
- To attend meetings with the contact person when you are able to do so.
- To notify the contact person of any health issues in order that reasonable adjustments may be considered.
- To review personal insurance policies so that appropriate insurance is in place for you to volunteer.
- To understand what you must do if you are driving on behalf of the council.
- To let your contact person know if you are likely to incur out of pocket expenses in order that a relevant claim may be raised to reimburse you in an appropriate timeframe.
- If you are claiming state benefits, to make sure the relevant agencies are aware you are undertaking volunteering. This should not affect your ability to continue to claim benefits whilst volunteering.

17.2 In return the council will allocate a contact person who will:

- Agree expectations with you.
- Arrange a personal induction plan.
- Make sure all the relevant council policies are followed.
- Make sure that there are no barriers which would make it difficult for you to undertake the agreed activity. This should be done before you start.
- Make sure you positively represent the council at all times.
- Make sure you know what the accident and incident reporting procedure is.
- Agree to payment of reasonable expenses and make sure these are paid

18.0 Frequently asked questions

18.1 I would like to apply for a volunteering position. What is the process?

You should contact the Human Resources section at Tewkesbury Borough Council by emailing humanresources@tewkesbury.go.uk.

18.2 What types of volunteering positions are available?

The council serves the local community in a variety of ways such as through the Tourist Information, litter picking, by supporting young and old people, local community projects, and the provision of work to the unemployed. These are the areas which will be of interest to a volunteer wishing to gain real and valuable experience supporting the community.

18.3 I can only volunteer on an ad-hoc basis. Is this a problem?

When an opportunity arises, the specific nature of the arrangement will be agreed at the time. This may well include ad-hoc arrangements.

19.0 Definitions

Volunteer - Someone who gives their time to support council/community activities but with whom the council has no contractual relationship and who is not paid for their time.

20.0 Legislation

This policy has been reviewed by One Legal to ensure compliance with our statutory duties.

21.0 Equal opportunities

Managers will make any necessary adjustments to ensure that all volunteers are treated equally.