

Employee Volunteering Scheme

Introduction

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain. This is the definition commonly accepted across the UK and used by the Welsh Government.

Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) recognises that many of its employees already volunteer in their local communities and believe that volunteering is a great way for employees to develop new skills and support an event or project in the local community.

Purpose of this Scheme

This Scheme outlines how CCBC will support employees in formal volunteering which takes place in the County Borough. The Council believes that volunteering can increase staff satisfaction and well-being. **(Volunteering and Public Services in Wales, January 2018)**

CCBC is working with partners to achieve a better Wales and volunteering is crucial to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

This Scheme aims to increase volunteering opportunities for employees by releasing employees from work to support the local community and by offering the opportunity to apply for up to two days leave of absence to employees who commit to long-term volunteering projects. The release of employee capacity will support the Team Caerphilly- Better Together strategy and supports the 'social heart' ethos of the Council. This Scheme is consistent with the Caerphilly Cares strategy.

This Scheme is intended to create additional capacity in communities by releasing employees to volunteer for a whole or part of a day event and encouraging volunteering on a long-term basis in the employees own time. This Scheme will not be used to support individual employee events, such as coaching one's children's football team. Even though this is classed as volunteering, it is not supported under this Scheme because it could create a conflict of interest. This Scheme is for CCBC employees only and the volunteering events will not be used to replace employment opportunities.

How the Scheme works

The Scheme is made up of two options:

- **Day or part of a day organised volunteering event**
Employees can register to volunteer for an organised whole or part of a day community event and the Council will, subject to manager's approval, release the employee to take part in these events.

Volunteering events will be available from a list of options decided by the Council, in partnership with voluntary organisations. The limited number of

events will be available to employees on a first come basis.

Examples of day/part day event volunteering could be marshalling a fun run in Caerphilly, or painting a community centre

- **Longer-term volunteering commitment**

Longer-term volunteering involves a commitment of a minimum of 12 months with regular volunteering and engagement taking place at least once a month. Longer-term volunteering will be carried out in the employee's own time and outside working hours.

In some cases, employees may volunteer more regularly over a shorter period in line with demand from services, for example, employees may support night shelters over the winter months which run more regularly over a shorter period. These volunteering opportunities will be considered as providing an appropriate commitment and considered as long-term volunteering.

Employees who undertake longer-term volunteering will be able to apply for **two days leave of absence** which equates to **14.48 hours for fulltime employees or equivalent in hours depending on individual work pattern per calendar year**. The leave of absence must be taken within the calendar year and cannot be carried over. Employees who work on a term-time only contract must discuss leave of absence requests with their manager.

Examples of longer-term volunteering could be a trustee for a voluntary organisation, a telephone befriender, social media support volunteer supporting a summer scheme or volunteer as a buddy on the Caerphilly Cares Buddy Scheme.

How to apply for the day/part of a day event volunteering:

- Employees should speak with their manager to ensure they can be released from their job role for the time required for the event.
- Complete the online booking form on the Volunteering Wales Website, selecting the event they would like to participate in.
- Enter the request to attend the event using the appropriate drop-down option in iTrent
- If an employee decides to volunteer on a day/part of a day that they are not scheduled to work, then this is in their own time and time cannot be claimed back for this.
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The employee will receive a confirmation appointment or email with details of:

- Meeting point for the event
- Times required for the event
- Additional equipment required (wellington boots/waterproof coat etc)
- A reminder to bring their own lunch and drinks

The employee is agreeing to:

- Volunteer to the best of their ability
- Attend the project on time for the total hours agreed
- Notify the organisation and their manager with as much warning as possible if they are unable to attend the event.
- Complete a pre and post volunteering form to record their volunteering experience
- Demonstrate partnership working and accountability for their work while being part of the community project and a willingness to try new opportunities

How to apply for the longer-term volunteering:

- Employees should speak with their manager about the volunteering opportunity and the commitment they will be able to give. Long term volunteering is a commitment of a minimum of 12 months which can be given weekly, monthly or more frequently. In some cases, employees may volunteer more regularly over a shorter period in line with demand from services, for example, employees may support summer schemes which run regularly over a shorter period. These volunteering opportunities will be considered as providing an appropriate commitment. This volunteering will take place in the employees own time, outside of paid working hours.
- Complete the online booking form on the Volunteering Wales Website, selecting the project they would like to participate in and agree to give a long-term commitment.

The employee is agreeing to:

- Volunteer to the best of their ability
- Attend the project on an ongoing long- term basis. This can be a weekly or monthly commitment. **It will not be a one-off commitment or for a short period of time unless you are participating in a short-term scheme with regular commitment. Long-term commitment is anything from 12 months onwards and requires giving your time once a month as a minimum.**
- Notify the organisation that they are volunteering with as much notice as possible if they are unable to keep up the commitment. The employee must also notify their line manager if they are unable to fulfil the commitment – this may mean they are no longer eligible to apply for the two days leave of absence. The employee may have to pay the leave back if it has been used but they have been unable to fulfil the volunteering commitment or when an employee leaves the Council's employment.
- The employee should record the hours spent volunteering on the project on the Volunteering Wales website
- Demonstrate partnership working and accountability for their work while being part of the community project and a willingness to try opportunities.

Day/part day and long-term volunteering distinctions:

There is no limit on how many day/part day events employees can apply for, release from work depends on service provision and discussion with a line manager. It is possible that some employees may take part in multiple events during the year.

Long-term volunteering takes place in the employees own time and the leave of absence is an acknowledgment of the commitment. The leave of absence is capped at two days or equivalent in hours depending on the individual work pattern. Employees can take part in both long-term and day/part day events and all arrangements will be dependent on service provision and discussions with their manager.

Schools

The scheme applies to all Caerphilly employees except employees directly employed by Schools unless the School Governing Body has adopted the Policy

Types of volunteering that are covered

This Scheme is intended to support and encourage employees to volunteer; the Scheme can also be used to support volunteering activity that employees may already be engaged in, provided that the project is registered on the Volunteering Wales website and that the employee applies using the process set out above. Employees can suggest day or half day events which can be considered and potentially added to the list for that year. Employees who currently volunteer on a long-term basis may be eligible to apply for two days leave of absence as long as their volunteering meets the criteria for longer-term volunteering i.e., it is for 12 months, at least once per month, is recorded via the Volunteering Wales Website, benefits the Caerphilly area and is not for any personal gain.

Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Checks and Volunteering

Certain activities that involve volunteering with young people in need of care and support or other at-risk groups may require employees to have a Disclose and Barring Service (DBS) check. If day or part day events organised by this Council require DBS checks these should be provided by the department organising the event.

For longer-term volunteering the organisation that the employee is volunteering with will indicate if this is necessary. Caerphilly County Borough Council will not facilitate DBS checks unless it is related to a volunteering opportunity through this Council. Where required the DBS check required for Council run volunteering will be paid for from a central fund within Caerphilly County Borough Council as it is a corporate initiative.

Subsistence and travel expenses

For day or part of a day volunteering events, parking, travel and mileage whilst the employee is volunteering may be claimed in the normal way.

For longer term volunteering these costs must be met by the employee, and if eligible, claimed back from the voluntary organisation they are volunteering for.

Monitoring

Following manager's approval and prior to volunteering, employees will complete a pre-volunteering form and upon completion of volunteering a post-volunteering form will be completed. This will assist managers and employees in supporting volunteering and capturing the benefits of the Scheme for employees and the community.

Managers will need to see proof of hours from the Volunteering Wales database to authorise the leave of absence for employees engaging in long term volunteering. All volunteering will be registered with Volunteering Wales and volunteering data will be captured to help with reviews of the Scheme.

Recording volunteering time

Prior to volunteering, employees will need to register on the Volunteering Wales website. All volunteering hours can be recorded using this link:
<https://volunteering-wales.net/vk/volunteers/index.htm>

This website may be accessed via a link on the Council's Intranet pages or via volunteering-wales.net.

Both day and longer-term volunteering events will be recorded on the Volunteering Wales website.

Discussing Volunteering with managers

Managers will prioritise the needs of the service before authorising day/part day volunteering; decisions can be recorded in the employees My Time notes or on the pre-volunteering form which will have a section to record management agreement or reasons why volunteering cannot be supported.

Operational requirements will be considered by managers before supporting long-term volunteering as this involves agreement on leave of absence days or hours. Managers will need to balance requests from employees and service delivery. This discussion can be recorded in the employees My Time notes or on the pre-volunteering form which will have a section to record management agreement or reasons why volunteering cannot be supported.

Liability

The Voluntary organisations must have their own health and safety policy and appropriate insurance cover. Where a person is volunteering/working on behalf of a third party, there is an expectation that the third party will have appropriate insurance in place/assume responsibility and liability. All volunteering events will need to provide proof of insurance before they can register on the Volunteering Wales Website. If an employee is injured whilst volunteering, a claim should be made against the organisation for sick pay in the same way that people do for third party accidents.

Training requirements (including health and safety) to perform volunteering activities

The organisation for which employees volunteer is responsible for providing any induction, health and safety, or other training to allow them to perform their volunteering role and remain safe.

If the employee is involved in community transport volunteering and using their own car, they are advised to check that their own motor insurance policy is suitable.

Clothing and equipment

For day or half day events, employees will be advised of any clothing requirements. All specialist equipment will be provided. For longer term volunteering, if the volunteering activity requires specialist clothing or equipment, this will need to be provided either by the voluntary organisation or by the employee themselves. The organisation should provide details of what is required.

Volunteering principles

When volunteering, the employee agrees to:

- respect the privacy, property and confidentiality of others. Be aware that any safeguarding concerns supersede confidentiality and must be reported to the relevant department.
- report any problems they experience to their manager and the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations' Volunteer Centre (where it has acted as a broker)
- aim to fulfil the commitment they have made and inform their named contact in the voluntary organisation and their line manager if they are unable to attend
- act in a professional way, recognising that they are representing the Council while carrying out the volunteering activities.
- Ensure they are aware of their safeguarding obligations and report any concerns.
- The employee should ensure that they do not behave in any way that brings the Council into disrepute.

For quality assurance purposes, the organisation for which employees volunteer must be registered on Volunteering Wales, the Welsh Government funded national platform for volunteering. The website can be found here:

<https://volunteering-wales.net/vk/volunteers/index.htm>

Declaration of Interests

Employees are required to complete a Register of Employees Interests Form which will need to be authorised by their Head of Service prior to commencing all volunteering opportunities.

Post volunteering

Employees should discuss their volunteering activity with their manager and share the experience with colleagues. Employees must complete a post-volunteering form which will be signed off by their manager and uploaded to the relevant local system.

Five easy steps to get volunteering

1. Look at the intranet where volunteering projects will be updated on a yearly basis. There will be an option to volunteer on a one-off project or apply for a longer-term volunteering commitment.

2. The employee should discuss and agree the volunteering activity with their line manager and complete a pre-volunteering form. Once they have agreement from their line manager, the employee can register on the Volunteering Wales website. The Register of Employees Interests form should also be signed off at this stage.

3. The employees volunteering hours will be recorded on the Volunteering Wales Website.

4. Get volunteering and tell colleagues about the experience

5. After employees have volunteered, they should complete the post-volunteering form and discuss the experience with their manager at their next 'My Time' discussion.

Any questions or requests for more information about the Employee Volunteering Scheme, please contact Caerphilly Cares.