**Policy title: Volunteer Policy**



**Policy Control**

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| **Policy reference:** | *Contact Corporate Policy & Equality Officer for a policy reference* |
| **Title of Policy:** | Volunteer Policy |
| **Version:** | 1 |
| **Directorate / Departmental ownership:** | Active & Healthy Communities |
| **Officer responsible:** | Sonya Burns, Head of Programmes |
| **Date of ratification:** | 2 November 2020 |
| **Review date:** | 2 November 2024 |
| **Equality screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed by:** | Sonya Burns, Head of Programmes |
| **Equality screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment date:** | 26 January 2021 |
| **Location where document is held and referenced:** | Responsible Department  Corporate Policy repository |

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| **1.** | **Title of policy** |
|  | Volunteer Policy |
| **2.** | **Statement** |
|  | This policy has been developed to encourage and support volunteering with Newry Mourne and Down District Council (Council) and to provide guidance to ensure the interests of volunteers, staff and service users are met within our volunteering activities.  The Council has adopted the following definition of volunteering:   * ‘Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one’s immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice’. (Source: Northern Ireland Volunteering Strategy 2012) |
| **3.** | **Aim** |
|  | To develop and promote best practice in the involvement and support of volunteers in the work of the Council.  Specifically, the policy aims to:   * Encourage development of volunteering in all appropriate areas of the Council. * Recognise and promote the importance of volunteering to the Council. * To provide clear guidance to individuals, groups and corporate organisations considering volunteering opportunities with Council. * Identify standards to which Council staff and volunteers are expected to adhere. |
| **4.** | **Scope** |
|  | The Council recognises that volunteers offer their time freely. There is, however, an element of responsibility on both sides. It is important for volunteers to understand the benefits that will be gained from volunteering with the Council, and the Council’s expectations of the volunteer.  Council employees volunteering during work hours is outside the scope of the policy and procedures  Council undertakes to provide volunteers with:  • A clear explanation of what they will be doing and why.  • Appropriate training, supervision and support for their role.  • A safe volunteering environment.  • Induction training.   * Appropriate personal protective equipment to undertake volunteering   activities safely.  Council expects volunteers to:   * Maintain good working relations with other volunteers, employees and service users. * Be an ambassador and positively promote the Council. * Strictly adhere to the Council’s decisions, policies and procedures. * Attend and be responsible at all times. Undertake their role safely, both for their own sake and that of others. * Demonstrate high standards of voluntary work and attend training as required. * Maintain strict confidentiality.   The key implementation principles of the Volunteering Policy and associated Volunteer Agreement are:   * Recruitment, selection and registration * Safeguarding and health checks * A Volunteer Agreement * Appropriate and relevant induction and training * Support and Supervision * ‘Adding value’ to existing services * Attendance |
| **5.** | **Related policies and legislation** |
|  | The following, which is not an exhaustive list, are the principal related policies:     * Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan * Internet Acceptable Use Policy and all other IT and staff policies * Health and Safety Policy * Disciplinary Policies * Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees * Local Government Employee and Councillors Working Relationship Protocol * Safeguarding Policy * Domestic Abuse Policy * Bilingualism Policy * Newry, Mourne and Down District Council’s Equality Scheme * Access to Information Policy and Procedure * Records Management Policy and Procedure * Retention and Disposal Schedule   This following is not an exhaustive list of the related legislative provisions and measures requiring regulatory and legal compliance:     * General Data Protection Regulation 2018 * The Data Protection Act (2018) * Freedom of Information Act 2000 |
| **6.** | **Definitions** |
|  | Not applicable. |
| **7.** | **Department and Officer responsible** |
|  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Directorate / Department | Active & Healthy Communities / Community Engagement | | Officer(s) responsible for developing the policy | Sonya Burns, Head of Programmes | |
| **8.** | **Policy approval process** |
|  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Meeting** | **Date** | | CMT | 11 August 2020 | | SMT | 9 September 2020 | | Active & Healthy Communities | 19 October 2020 | | Monthly Council Meeting | 2 November 2020 | |
| **9.** | **Review Date** |
|  | The policy will be reviewed in line with the Council’s agreed policy review cycle i.e. every 4 years (as per Council’s Equality Scheme commitment 4.31), or sooner to ensure it remains reflective of legislative developments. |
| **10.** | **Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the implementation and impact of the policy** |
|  | A Volunteer Agreement has been developed to implement the practical outworking of the policy. |
| **11.** | **Equality Screening** |
|  | The policy has been screened and the outcome is that it is not required to be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required) |
| **12.** | **Rural Needs Impact Assessment** |
|  | Due regard to rural needs has been considered and a rural needs impact assessment has been completed. |