



Employee Volunteering Scheme

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove is renowned nationally for having a thriving community and voluntary sector. Volunteering makes an essential contribution to the well being of Brighton and Hove and without it our social care, healthcare, recreational and education systems would be impoverished and the environment that we live in would not be as safe, green and clean as it is.
- 1.2 Many of our employees already volunteer within the community. They make great ambassadors for the council and through the connections they make, provide additional channels for communication and engagement with the community. Community engagement in this way helps us to understand better what matters most to our residents so that we can prioritise and improve our services and the way they are delivered.
- 1.3 Volunteering also benefits individuals by enabling them to acquire new skills or develop existing ones.
- 1.4 The council is committed to supporting the voluntary sector and has recently developed, with its partners, a Volunteering Strategy for the City. Its principal aims are to increase the number of volunteers and volunteering opportunities within the City.
- 1.5 As the largest employer in the City, the council's workforce represents a sizeable source of potential volunteers. In order to encourage and support as many of our staff as possible to become volunteers, we have developed this Employee Volunteering Scheme.
- 1.6 It is also hoped that by setting up this scheme, other organisations within the City will follow the council's lead and want to make a real difference to people's lives by encouraging their employees to get involved in their local community too.
- 1.7 The provisions of this Scheme are separate from the council's Special Leave Policy which covers employees carrying out voluntary public duties such as those associated with being a magistrate, school governor or member of the Territorial Army.

2 Aims of the Scheme

2.1 The aims of the Scheme are to:

- support Brighton & Hove Strategic Partnership's "Joining the Dots" Volunteering Strategy 2010-2015.
- bring real benefits to the local community by employees getting involved in local projects
- improve strategic commissioning of services through a greater understanding of community issues and local peoples' needs
- develop and strengthen relationships with other organisations to ensure more integrated and effective services across the City
- build closer links with local communities and the voluntary sector
- provide additional channels for communication and engagement with the local community
- build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector through skill sharing
- increase employees' wider understanding and perspective of issues within the community
- enable employees to meet their development needs by helping to develop and build a range of skills and abilities with another organisation that they can bring back to the workplace
- improve levels of recruitment and retention through positive publicity and improved employee satisfaction, motivation and morale
- support employees make the transition from employment to retirement
- enable employees to meet their development needs by helping to develop and build a range of skills and abilities with another organisation that they can bring back to the workplace
- improve the council's reputation and raise its profile locally
- improve levels of recruitment and retention through positive publicity and improved employee satisfaction, motivation and morale
- support employees make the transition from employment to retirement.

3 Who can take part in the Scheme

- 3.1 This Scheme applies to all contracted council employees who have completed their probationary period are not under review through the disciplinary procedure.
- 3.2 In the case of schools, it will be for individual Governing Bodies to decide whether or not they wish to adopt this Policy.
- 3.3 This Scheme does not apply to contracted council employees who have not completed their probationary period, casual workers including

Admin all Areas and Care Crew, agency workers, Path trainees, volunteers with the council, consultants or contractors.

4 Roles and responsibilities under the Scheme

4.1 Managers are responsible for:

- making their staff aware of the Scheme
- discussing development needs with their staff during one to ones and appraisal meetings and considering whether volunteering could be a suitable method of meeting those needs
- supporting, where possible, employees who wish to volunteer as long as there is no adverse impact on the service/budget*
- allowing volunteers reasonable use of council facilities (e.g. telephone, photocopier) to support their volunteering activity where this does not conflict or interfere with the provision of the service
- ensuring the use of office facilities is contained to avoid accusations of misuse of public funds
- ensuring risk assessments of the proposed volunteering activity are carried out and recorded
- making sure their employees have checked that the organisation they will be volunteering with has the appropriate Employers' and Public Liability insurance policies in place
- ensuring their employees will be adequately trained, supported and supervised by the organisation they are volunteering with.

* (in services where employee's hours would have to be covered and thus a direct cost incurred, managers would need to consider the budget situation carefully before agreeing the paid volunteering leave)

4.2 Employees (i.e. Volunteers) are responsible for:

- investigating and organising their own volunteering activity
- obtaining the agreement of their manager prior to volunteering
- agreeing time off work with their line manager in advance
- ensuring that they do not undertake voluntary activity that could bring the council into disrepute
- ensuring that the voluntary activity does not conflict, or could potentially conflict, with the employee's work for the council
- ensuring that the voluntary activity they propose to take part in is suitable e.g. taking into account health issues.
- ensuring that they receive, from the voluntary organisation, appropriate training, including health and safety training, for the activities they are going to undertake
- checking that the organisation they propose to volunteer with has suitable liability cover in place to protect them either as volunteers through their Employers Liability Policy or as third parties through their Public Liability Policy

- recording their “volunteer hours” and producing the record if required by the council.

5 What is the status of the Policy

- 5.1 The policy is not contractual but a breach of the policy may lead to disciplinary action.

6 How will the Scheme be monitored

- 6.1 The take up of the Scheme will be monitored, by equality group, through the Staff Survey.

7 What is the mechanism for review

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed annually.