

Volunteering Toolkit for Brighton and Hove City Council



Brighton & Hove
City Council

Foreword

Brighton and Hove City Council is committed to expanding our offer to work alongside volunteers both across our services and within communities. We see this as an opportunity to promote wellbeing and social value, support prevention, and redesign services and activities to be more inclusive, collaborative and accountable to communities and service users.

The toolkit is design to be used alongside the Brighton and Hove Council Volunteering Policy that set out our commitment to volunteering.



[Click here for the Volunteering Policy](#)

The volunteering toolkit has been designed to offer guidance and practical resources to staff who are working with volunteers and to support the volunteers who have roles within our services.

People of all ages in Brighton and Hove regularly volunteer in a wide range of activities in the city from caring to sport. The council values the work that volunteers contribute to building stronger, more resilient communities. Their work in the city and with the council is invaluable, they bring added value to services through their skills and life experiences and they improve the city in which we live and work.

This toolkit aims to provide information on quality procedures when supporting volunteers within our services. We hope that the toolkit will offer the guidance required when supporting volunteers, as well as practical tools such as application forms, expenses and induction procedures.

The toolkit will advise staff how to meet legal requirements and protect volunteers, customers the council and its services whilst supporting volunteers to get the most out of the experience.

Contents

How to use the toolkit

This is a substantial document but it's designed as both guidance and with practical tools such as a range of forms and procedures that create a simple way for all council staff to have a consistent approach to managing and supporting volunteers.

The electronic menu should enable staff to use the toolkit to go to each section as they need it rather, than read the whole document at any one time.

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Section 1 - Volunteering Roles

The single most important factor in having successful volunteers is the development of the roles. The more interesting roles we have to offer the easier it is to attract and retain volunteers.

Involving staff and people who use the service

The process should begin with involving staff and people who use services in a conversation about the role volunteers could play in your service, if you already have volunteers in your service then it is important that you listen and include their views too. Including a wide range of people will help to ensure that volunteer roles meet the needs of the people using the service and that the work of the volunteers is integrated with that of staff and that volunteers have the support of the staff team.

Role Descriptions

A role description is a basic tool for outlining what a volunteer will do, the sort of personal qualities are needed for the role and how the volunteer will benefit from the experience, i.e. skills development, experience and training.

Volunteer Role Description

What to include in a role description

Title – this should be appealing and relevant to the role

Purpose – What are you looking for the person to contribute or achieve? What will the impact be for filling the position?

Tasks and responsibilities - use this section to give more detail on what you are looking for a volunteer to do

Skills and behaviour—what is needed to do the role well

Checks - Inform volunteers at the outset whether or not the role is subject to a disclosure and barring service (DBS) check

Benefits – what can they get out of doing the role?

Duration and time commitment – is the role short-term or long-term

How to apply – if the volunteer wants to apply, what is the next step?

Any Questions – who can the volunteer contact if they have any further questions?

Sample volunteer role description

The Level Restoration Project - Volunteer Role Description	
Volunteer Role	VOLUNTEER 'GREETER'
About The Level Restoration Project	Brighton & Hove City Council is restoring mainly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund. This will create a high quality, well-used and vibrant city Centre Park which welcomes people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds - while celebrating its cultural heritage and providing activities to meet the needs of today's users.
Overview/purpose of the role:	<p>The involvement and presence of community volunteers at The Level is a key part of ensuring the park offers a welcoming and enjoyable experience for local people and visitors</p> <p>The greeter activity is designed to offer a personalised service for visitors wanting to gain a deeper understanding of The Level and of its valued place in the city.</p> <p>Note: The city's VisitBrighton Greeter role operates a similar role, but on a city-wide scale For information see www.visitbrighton.com/greeters:</p>
What's involved?	<p>Volunteer Level greeters will be given information and training to enable them to guide individually-booked tour groups of not more than six people around The Level and the park's immediate surroundings.</p> <p>The role is on an as-needed basis: greeters will be booked in advance. Tours of The Level are not expected to last more than one hour, including a stop at the Level café.</p> <p>Training will support volunteers to provide tours focused on certain key t areas, eg The Level Restoration background and process, the park's social and cultural history, the gardens and wildlife of The Level, Art at The Level</p>
Some of the key benefits to the volunteer:	The role provides the opportunity to expand your knowledge of The Level and the city, and to share this with others. Meeting people from other parts of the world and other areas of the UK, and from many walks

	<p>of life. You will become an integral part of the future of</p> <p>The Level and the surrounding communities the park serves</p> <p>As a volunteer with The Level, you may be entitled to reduced cost refreshments at The Level café, and may be eligible for a reduced room hire rate for any community group you represent at the park's community rooms</p>
This role may suit people who	<p>Are passionate about The Level, and its past, present and future role in the community life of this area of the city.</p> <p>Formal knowledge is not required. However, if you do have specific related knowledge or skills, and wish to do so, there are other opportunities within The Level Activity Plan, such as helping at community talks and events. www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/joinusonthelevel</p>
Training and equipment	<p>Volunteers will be expected to undertake health and safety and/or first aid training.</p> <p>You will be given an induction to the role and training to enable you to run tours as required.</p>
Checks and references	<p>This role is subject to providing a reference and a DBS check</p>
Commitment from you	<p>The scope and likely time demand of this role cannot be precisely defined, as greeter tours are dependent on bookings and what precise elements groups may additionally wish included – ie general information or specific themed tours.</p> <p>www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/thelevel</p>
More information	<p>Volunteer greeters may also wish to become involved with other 'behind-the-scenes' tasks such as helping promote The Level and its volunteering opportunities, including representing the greeter function by participating in the 'Communities of The Level Forum' which is guiding the park's operation and direction.</p> <p>There is also an extensive community Activities Plan for The Level, which welcomes volunteer involvement. More details at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/joinusonthelevel</p>
Who to contact to apply	<p>We are in the process of appointing a Garden Manager for The Level. In the meantime, initial enquiries should be referred to parksprojects@brighton-hove.gov.uk, Tel 01273 292929 www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/thelevel</p>

Section 2 - Recruiting and Supporting Volunteers

Once a volunteer shows interest in a role within your service it is vital that you act quickly, follow up their line of enquiry as soon as possible if you leave contacting them for a long period of time they may go elsewhere or presume that you are not interested.

Remember the volunteer is usually very keen to do their volunteering placement and start their role straight away. Feedback shows that having a chat in the first instance works a great deal better than producing time consuming materials to post out.



Checks and Confidentially

Information should only be requested if it is needed for the recruitment process, do not ask for criminal records information unless the role requires this. There are 2 application forms below please use as appropriate to the role.

Records of volunteer’s names and addresses and phone numbers will be needed for future contact. Remember some people may need support to complete forms for example if they have dyslexia or a learning disability, this should not stop them volunteering.

References and other checks

- In order to ensure everyone is safe, where the volunteering opportunity involves contact with children or vulnerable adults, an enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check will be required as a first step in the process.

- All references and checks considered necessary by the council must be satisfactorily completed before the volunteer is able to commence any volunteering activity with the council.

References

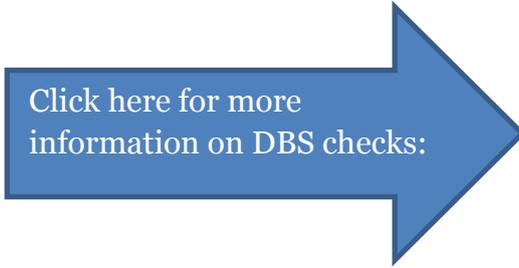
- Asking for the names of two referees is standard practice for the council in its support of volunteers. A relative or someone under 18 is not acceptable as a referee. It's preferable that the referee has known the volunteer for over a year.
- References should be taken on the volunteer's ability to fulfil a particular role, therefore when sending out the request for a reference its good idea to also send a copy of the role description.
- References are only the views of another person, their accuracy or detail may be limited. A good informal interview process is far more effective than just relying on a reference as this may well reinforce any information that is given at interview.

Volunteer Reference Form	
Name of person applying for volunteer role	
Role applied for	
Relationship to the above named	
How long have you known them	
In what capacity do you know them	
Do you have any reservations about them volunteering in this role? If yes, please give your reasons	
To your knowledge have they worked with children or vulnerable adults in the past? If yes, please give details (<i>delete if not applicable</i>)	
General comments:	
Please complete the following details about yourself	
Name	
Address	
Tel No	
Signature	
Date	
Please e-mail the completed form to	

DBS Checks

- **The Independent Safeguarding Scheme (ISA)**
- The Independent Safeguarding Scheme (ISA) is a new and improved checking and monitoring scheme aiming to prevent unsuitable people from working or volunteering with children and /or vulnerable adults. (It's often called the Disclosure and Barring Scheme - DBS).
- It's a new Non Departmental Public Body which will decide who is 'barred' from working with these groups. It is supported by the Home Office, the Department for children, schools and families and the Department of Health. This scheme is supported by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which defines 'Regulated Activity' and 'Controlled Activity'. It applies to paid workers; Volunteers; current workforce and workers from overseas.
- The regulations are more prescriptive for a volunteer working in an Adult/Children's Services setting e.g. a Day Centre. Full information about the scheme can be found on www.isa.gov.org

<http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/HR/Pages/VettingBarringScheme.aspx>



Click here for more
information on DBS checks:

When you go through the Disclosure application process with an individual, you can do a number of things to help them join the Update Service at the earliest opportunity. The DBS has produced an Update Service application checklist and an application form reference receipt that'll help you achieve this.

Download the [checklist and application form reference receipt template](#) and use it to make sure you have:



Completed the correct [workforce and position applied for](#) in lines one and two of field x61 within the 60 character limit



Directed the applicant to our website to [join the Update Service](#)



Provided the Disclosure application form reference number or e-reference receipt to the applicant, so that they can immediately apply to join the Update Service and [track the progress of their application online](#)



Made sure that HR and then the DBS receive the Disclosure application form from you within 28 days of the applicant joining the Update Service with their application form reference number



Made the applicant aware that if they join the Update Service using their DBS certificate number, they only have 14 days to do so from the date the certificate was issued – with day one being the date of issue

Volunteer Progress

It's worthwhile keeping a volunteer recruitment progress list as this will allow you to see at a glance at what stage of the recruitment process the volunteer is at.

Volunteer Recruitment Progress List

Volunteer's name:

.....

First contact	Date:	Volunteer application form sent	Date:
Completed application form received	Date:	Interview/first meeting	Date:
Reference 1 Sent for:	Received:	Reference 2 Sent for:	Received:
DBS form completed and received	sent off Date:	DBS disclosure received back	Date:
Volunteer induction	Date:	Volunteer health and safety induction	Date:
(if different)	Date:		
Actual volunteer start date	Date:	First one to one	Date:
Second one to one	Date:	Third one to one	Date:
Relevant training – <list details here>			

Confidentiality for volunteers Keeping people safe

In order to ensure that all our customers are comfortable and safe we need to make sure we do not inappropriately share personal or sensitive information. Everyone who has access to personal information including **volunteers** must treat this as confidential.

Personal information is any information about an individual, child, parent or colleague who can be identified from that information.

Confidential means that you must not disclose this information to any unauthorised person without the consent of the person the information relates to. This applies even after you or the person concerned has left the volunteering role with the Council. **If you are unsure if something is personal or confidential please speak to your supervisor straightaway.**

All **discussions** held with staff are regarded as being confidential and information should not be shared outside the setting without consent. Ensure that you hold confidential conversations in an appropriate place that cannot be overheard.

Social Media refers to any internet based shared site. No discussion or mention of any personal information relating to service users, their family members, council staff or any other professionals or organisations should take place on social media. Volunteers must take care not to represent their personal views as those of the council when using social media.

All **documents** that contain personal information are confidential and need to be locked in cabinets when not in use. Please shred all documents or forms that are no longer needed, but contain personal information.

Computer passwords should be kept confidential and not shared. Remember to log off when finishing on any computer. **Check** with your **supervisor** before sending any confidential or personal details by email unless

- it is to an valid Brighton & Hove email account

When you receive **telephone calls** requesting personal information

- verify the identity of the caller
- ask why they want the information
- talk to your supervisor if you are in any doubt as to whether the information should be disclosed.
- tell the caller you will call them back.

Be careful about leaving personal information on answer machines and avoid it if possible unless you know that it is secure. Always talk to your supervisor if you have any queries or concerns around confidentiality.

Volunteers' rights

- You don't have a contract of employment as a volunteer, so you don't have the same rights as an employee or worker.
- You will usually be given a volunteer agreement that explains:
 - the level of supervision and support you'll get
 - what training you'll get
 - whether you're covered under the organisation's employer or public liability insurance
 - health and safety issues
 - any expenses the organisation will cover
- The volunteer agreement isn't compulsory, but sets out what you can expect from the organisation you're volunteering for. It doesn't form a contract between you and the organisation.
- The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has information on volunteers' legal status.
- In order to support volunteers, the council **may** need to understand specific health issues in order to assess whether reasonable adjustments can be made and in this situation may need to obtain medical information before a placement can commence, or for an existing placement to continue.

Application Form for Volunteering

Any information given on this form is confidential and covered by the Data Protection Act 1998

Date Enquired:			
Name:		Preferred Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/MS/MX	
Tel No		Tel No	
Address:			
Email:			
Where did you hear about volunteering for Brighton and Hove City Council:-			
Your Skills and Interests (Please tick)		Projects which may interest you	
Admin/Clerical		Need to list what's Available right now at the council	
Arts and Crafts			
Car Owner			
Computer Skills			
Driving			
Form Filling			
Fundraising			
Listening/Befriending			
Practical (DIY, Gardening, Shopping)			
Telephone Skills			
Other Please specify			

Any experience you may have as a Volunteer <i>(this is not essential)</i>
Any work experience you may have <i>(this is not essential)</i>
Courses or Training <i>(if relevant to role)</i>

Volunteering Tool Kit

Hobbies and Interests	
Why would you like to be a volunteer with Brighton and Hove	
Are you willing to visit people in their own homes? Yes/No	
Approximately how much time could you give each week? Please indicate below days (including weekends) and or times	
Please give two independent referees who would be willing to supply a character reference (please remember these can't be family members)	
Name	Name
Address	Address
Tel No	Tel No

Thank you for your interest. Please note that some Volunteering roles are subject to a satisfactory DBS police check.

Declaration

Any information given on this form is confidential and covered by the Data Protection Act 1998

I declare the above information is correct

Full Name:

Signature:Date:

Application Form for Volunteering

(With Criminal Declaration Information)

Any information given on this form is confidential and covered by the Data Protection Act 1998

Date Enquired:			
Name:		Preferred Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/MS/MX	
Tel No		Tel No	
Address:			
Email:			
Where did you hear about volunteering for Brighton and Hove City Council:-			
Your Skills and Interests (Please tick)		Projects which may interest you	
Admin/Clerical		Need to list what's Available right now at the council	
Arts and Crafts			
Car Owner			
Computer Skills			
Driving			
Form Filling			
Fundraising			
Listening/Befriending			
Practical (DIY, Gardening, Shopping)			
Telephone Skills			
Other Please specify			

So that we can best use your skills and abilities, please complete the form overleaf

Volunteering Tool Kit

Any experience you may have as a Volunteer (<i>this is not essential</i>)	
Any work experience you may have (<i>this is not essential</i>)	
Courses or Training (<i>if relevant to role</i>)	
Hobbies and Interests	
Why would you like to be a volunteer with Brighton and Hove	
Are you willing to visit people in their own homes? Yes/No	
Do you have any criminal Convictions (other than minor driving offences) Yes/No If yes, Please state date and nature of conviction (Also see declaration document on the next page)	
Please note Brighton and Hove Council is committed to ensuring appropriate volunteering opportunities are open to ex-offenders.	
Approximately how much time would you give each week? Please indicate below days (including weekends) and or times	
Please give two independent referees who would be willing to supply a character reference (These must <u>not be</u> family members)	
Name	Name
Address	Address
Tel No	Tel No

Declaration

Any information given on this form is confidential and covered by the Data Protection Act 1998

Confidential

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders – Brighton and Hove’s volunteering opportunities will involve direct contact with potentially vulnerable people. As such, applications to volunteer are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

This means that potential volunteers are required to declare their entire criminal record, including cautions, reprimands, and final warnings and criminal convictions categorised as ‘spend’ under the above legislation.

Please complete and sign this section. The information provided will be kept confidential.

It will only be disclosed to specific Officers at the Council if/when they are considering you for specific volunteering opportunities (where you may come into contact with potentially vulnerable people).

Have you ever been convicted at a Court or Cautioned by the Police for any offence?

Yes/No (Delete as appropriate).

If Yes, please give details, including date(s) and nature of offence(s).

.....
.....

I declare the above information is correct

Full Name:

Signature:Date:

Section 2 - Recruiting and Supporting Volunteers

Process

If an interview situation seems too formal for your service, then an informal chat maybe more appropriate. When talking to potential volunteers it is best to base initial questions around a set list.

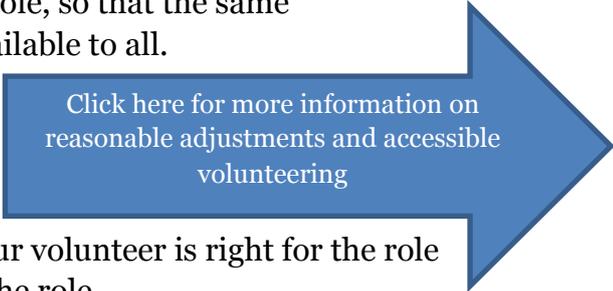
It is important to tell volunteers about:-

- The service and the role volunteers have within it
- The specific volunteering role and responsibilities
- Training and support offered
- The services relationship with the volunteers
- The time commitment required for the role both frequency and time
- Resources available to volunteers, such as the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses

You need to ensure that recruitment is a two way process, and that you give the volunteer an opportunity to ask questions. This is a good place to find out what skills the volunteer may have and can bring to the role, why they want to be a volunteer and what has motivated them to apply for a specific role, this will help you to establish if the role will meet their needs.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments” is the term used to describe any steps taken to remove barriers that prevent a disabled person doing their role, so that the same opportunities in volunteering in our services are available to all.



[Click here for more information on reasonable adjustments and accessible volunteering](#)

Do not underestimate volunteers, but make sure your volunteer is right for the role or can be offered training and support to carry out the role.

It will be helpful to establish a trial period to enable both you and the volunteer to try out the placement for an initial time.

It is therefore important to be steady and consistent when initiating new volunteers, where their range of roles and tasks can slowly grow, rather than giving them too much responsibility.

Section 2 – Recruiting and Supporting Volunteers

If the Volunteer is unsuitable for a role

- Help them to identify other roles that may be suitable (do this before you feedback)
- If the volunteer is unsuitable to carry out a role then you should provide constructive feedback
- If there are no other suitable roles within your service you can look at the Brighton Volunteer Centre with them at (<https://do-it.org/organisations/volunteer-centre-brighton-and-hove>) or refer them to the Volunteer Centre directly if more appropriate.

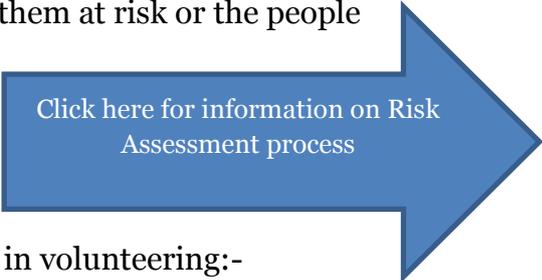
Taking on Young Volunteers

Young people may be interested in taking up a volunteering opportunity; volunteering roles can be of great benefit to a young person, offering invaluable experience that could inform their career choices.

However there are limits on the hours that young people can volunteer, and there are laws in place to protect children under school leaving age.

Brighton and Hove City Council has an advanced duty of care when involving volunteers under the age of 18, as they should be regarded as vulnerable.

It's a good idea to carry out a risk assessment of the volunteer role to allow for proper judgement to be made as to whether the young person should be placed in that particular voluntary role or whether that might put them at risk or the people they work with at risk.



Click here for information on Risk Assessment process

Following basic principles young people can be involved in volunteering:-

1. Young people should be supervised
2. Induction, training and supervision may have to be amended or increased for young volunteers

Section 2 - Recruiting and Supporting Volunteers

Ex-offenders and Volunteering

Consideration will be taken of applicants from all sections of the community the following check list can help support you in involving ex-offenders as volunteers.

A good practice checklist:-

- Be aware that a volunteer does not have to provide your organisation voluntarily with information about his/her criminal record unless specifically asked.
- Consider carefully whether the volunteering role in question requires knowledge about criminal convictions.
- State that spent or unrelated convictions need not be disclosed or discussed, unless the role in question is exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Exceptions Order.
- A summary of the Legislation for Disclosure has been included below may wish to provide this information to potential volunteers as part of their information pack.
- Consider a person's criminal conviction in the context of his/her overall application, motivation, ability to carry out the role, and the responsibility of the service for staff, volunteers and clients.
- A risk assessment should be made using information on the nature of the offence and the sentence received against the activities of the volunteer role.
- If the volunteer is not suitable, explain that it is because the criminal conviction was incompatible with the role in question
- Once volunteer is considered suitable for the role, the named contact person should be informed of the nature of the offences. It is important that the volunteer is informed that this information will be passed on.
- If volunteering with services to children or vulnerable adults, be aware that volunteers must declare all past convictions even when the offences were committed more than five years previously.

Summary of Legislation

THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS (EXCEPTIONS) ORDER (NI) 1979 (amended by 1987, 2001 and 2003 Orders)

A range of occupations (paid and unpaid) are exempted from the legislation; for these posts/roles applicants **MUST** disclose information on both “spent” **AND** “unspent” convictions. The list of posts is extensive and can be summarised as follows:

- WORK THAT INVOLVES CONTACT WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE ADULT GROUPS –
- E.g. provision of health care or social services, work with children such as youth work, education, or with adults with learning disabilities, mental illness, the elderly.
- PROFESSIONS THAT ARE REGULATED BY LAW - e.g. medical practitioner, nurse, chemist, optician, accountant, manager of an insurance company.
- POSTS INVOLVING NATIONAL SECURITY e.g. security personnel or senior civil service posts.
- POSTS CONCERNED WITH ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE e.g. police officers, solicitors, probation officers, traffic wardens, judges, prison officers.

THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS (NI) ORDER 1978

For posts that do not have access to vulnerable groups or sensitive information the 1978 Order applies.

If a conviction is ‘spent’ you do not have to mention it, even when asked, unless applying for a post which is “accepted” under this legislation.

Sentence	Aged 18 or over at conviction	Under 18 years at conviction
Absolute Discharge	6 months	
Probation Order, Bind Over, Conditional Discharge, Care/Supervision Order	Date Order ceases OR 1 year – whichever longer	
Attendance Centre Order Juvenile Justice Centre Order Youth Conference Order, Reparation Order, Community Responsibility Order	1 year after Order expires	
Hospital Order	5 years or 2 years after Order expires – whichever longer	
Fine or Community Service Order Combination Orders	5 years 2	1/2 years
Prison – (immediate or suspended) OR Young Offenders Centre – sentence of 6 months or less	7 years	3 1/2 years
Prison – (immediate or suspended) OR Young Offenders Centre over 6	10 years	5 years

months up to and including 2 ½ years		
A period of detention of less than 6 months under Article 45 of the CJ (Children) (NI) Order 1998	N/A	3 years
A period of detention over 6 months but less than 30 months under Article 45 of the CJ (Children) (NI) Order 1998	N/A	5 years
NB: CUSTODIAL SENTENCE OF MORE THAN TWO AND A HALF YEARS CAN NEVER BECOME SPENT		

Consecutive prison sentences count as a single term when calculating the rehabilitation period.

- If more than one sentence was imposed for an offence, the longer rehabilitation period applies.
- a person receives new conviction during rehabilitation period:
- for a summary offence (i.e. can only be tried at Magistrates Court) both rehabilitation periods expire separately;
- for a more serious offence (i.e. Which **could** be tried at the Crown Court) **neither** conviction will become spent until longest period expires.
- Cautions, reprimands and final warnings are not considered to be convictions and become “spent” immediately unless relevant to “excepted “posts.
- A spent conviction will remain on your criminal record.
- It is an offence for anyone to give information about spent convictions from official records except in the course of official duties.

Section 3 - Induction and Training of Volunteers

Induction - A volunteer's first day

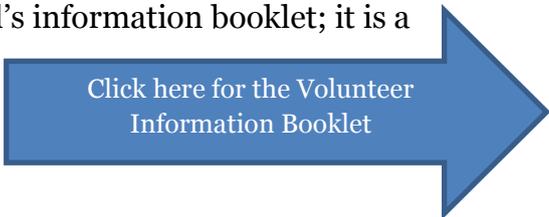
The main reason for a volunteer leaving a project after a short time is that they have not been made to feel welcome or they are not clear about their role.

All volunteers should have an induction that is appropriate to their level of involvement. This may be fairly basic for volunteers engaged in short term or one off volunteering projects; but for volunteers with regular involvement, the induction should aim to prepare them fully for their role.

What should be included in an induction for all volunteers?

- Give a tour of the workplace including all the areas that are available to the volunteer, such as the kitchen facilities, toilets and offices
- Introduce a volunteer to their named contact person and other staff members and volunteers working within the service
- Give a brief history of your service and its values plus an overview of the services you provide
- Go through and sign the volunteer agreement together
- Describing the customers that are served by your service
- Explain the meaning of confidentiality within your service and stress its importance
- Give a health and safety tour highlighting any possible risks (Also cover first aid, risk assessments and Health and Safety this should be considered mandatory)
- Show the volunteer their designated place of work
- Give details of the procedures for out of pocket expenses and other required reports or forms if this is necessary
- Show the procedure for using phone, social media and interne computer, social media, shredder or photocopier if necessary
- Give emergency phone numbers and obtain contacts for volunteer in case of emergency

It is advisable that you give volunteers the council's information booklet; it is a simple guide to volunteering.



[Click here for the Volunteer Information Booklet](#)

Brighton & Hove City Council Volunteer Agreement

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between Brighton & Hove City Council and you the volunteer.

We, (*inset service name*) accept the voluntary service of (*inset name of volunteer*), beginning (date), at (location)

Attach volunteering role description

1 We (*inset service name*) commit to the following:

In line with the Brighton and Hove Council Volunteering Commitment we will always strive to:

- 1.1 Match the time, skills and experience of volunteers to a suitable volunteering opportunity.
- 1.2 Resolve any complaints raised by a volunteer in a timely fashion.
- 1.3** Foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere for volunteers and make volunteering a positive experience

2 Expenses

- 2.1 All expenses need to be agreed in advance between the volunteer and named contact person.
- 2.2 Any claims must be supported by receipts. The only expenses to be reimbursed will be expenses directly and necessarily incurred in carrying out your volunteering duties as follows: * Delete as appropriate:
- 2.3 *No expenses will be paid / or
- 2.4 Expenses will be reimbursed for the following activities – *<insert activities here>..... (*Delete as applicable)*

3 Induction and Training

- 3.1 The named contact person will provide personal induction on the work of (*service name*) its staff, your volunteering role
- 3.2 Ensure each volunteer receives appropriate training, support and tools to perform their role where appropriate, including assessing and providing reasonable adjustments if required

4 Support and flexibility

- 4.1 To define appropriate standards of our services, to communicate them to you, and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them as part of your voluntary work.
- 4.2 To provide a named contact person who will meet with you regularly to discuss you're volunteering and any associated problems.

- 4.3 To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us and to be if needed to be flexible in the types of volunteering you will be doing.
- 4.4 To keep you informed of changes and developments affecting your volunteering role

6. Health & Safety

- 6.1 To provide adequate training in support of the council's Health & Safety policy and to ensure that relevant documents such as risk assessments are shared with you in your volunteering role.
- 6.2 To undertake volunteering tasks in a manner which is consistent with safe work practices. Please see link for guidance on Manual Handling if needed
<http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/LGCSDocumentLibrary/Health%20and%20safety/Risk%20management/Safer%20Handling%20Standard%20HS-S-17.pdf>

7. Insurance

- 7.1 To provide insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by the council.

8. Data Protection

- 8.1 Information kept on volunteers will fall under the Data Protection Act 1998's definition of 'personal data'. The council has legal duties concerning the collection, storage, use of and disclosure of such information.

9. Equal Opportunities

- 9.1 To ensure that all volunteers are treated in accordance with the council's Equality and Inclusion Policy.

10 Problems and Issues

- 10.1.1 If a service user makes a complaint to the Council against a volunteer, then the volunteer will be asked not to carry on in their role while the co-ordinator investigates the complaint. If the complaint proves to be justified, then depending on its severity and nature, the following action may be taken:
 - After consultation, the volunteer may resume their role
 - The volunteer may be required to withdraw from the role
 - The complaint may be referred to the appropriate authorities (Social Services, the Police)

11 Volunteer Relationship

In return the Brighton and Hove City Council asks all volunteers to sign up to the requirements below

- a. Ensure you have a clear understanding of the volunteering role and responsibilities
- b. Treat the people you work with (other volunteers, staff and service users) respectfully and fairly.
- c. Be honest about the level of your volunteering commitment, it may be better to start small and build up to more.
- d. Attend induction & other training to ensure you are safe and informed
- e. Understand and apply relevant council & volunteer policies
- f. Treat any information obtained while volunteering as confidential and don't disclose it to any third party.
- g. Represent the council positively/appropriately at all times
- h. Try to be reliable as people may be depending on you.
- i. If you cannot make a volunteer session or wish to stop volunteering give as much notice as possible so alternative arrangements can be made.
- j. Adhere to the council's health and safety policy and raise any concerns with the named worker immediately.
- k. Report any accidents or incidents, whether it concerns yourself or another person.
- l. Attend meetings with the contact person when you are able to do so.
- m. Ask for help if there is anything you are unsure about
- n. Notify the contact person of any health issues that impact on your volunteering role so that reasonable adjustments may be considered.
- o. Understand arrangements for volunteer driving roles on behalf of the council if relevant to the role

Declaration

Any information given on this form is confidential and covered by the Data Protection Act 1998

I understand and agree the information above

Volunteer Name:.....

Signature:Date:

Named Contact PersonService.....

Signature:Date:

Section 3 – Induction and Training of Volunteers

Training and Skill Development

Whether you have only a few volunteers, or are entirely dependent upon them, if you don't train them, then your service may suffer in the long run.

Training for a volunteer really deepens the volunteering role its always best practice to give a minimum one off training session when an individual starts to volunteer. This gives them a chance to meet other volunteers and staff and makes them feel part of the organisation.

Some volunteers value the provision of training whilst others may not understand the need for training and it might even put some volunteers off.

The need for training must be sold with sensitivity it must be well planned and appropriate to the needs of the service or our organisation and to the needs to the individual volunteer.

There might be a need for some volunteers to do specific training in order for them to carry out the role. So as to not discourage people from volunteering you could manage this by buddying with other volunteers prior to training starting their specific role.

When the use of specialist equipment is involved in the volunteering role then training must always be given.

The following information could be helpful to your volunteer

- Training lessens the likelihood of mistakes and other problems
- Training allows new volunteers to learn about the service/organisation and their specific tasks
- Training also allows existing volunteers to perform their roles better and to take on new roles as the service/organisation changes
- Training gives volunteers an opportunity to learn about the political, social and economic setting
- It can also improve interpersonal and group awareness, so volunteers can both work more effectively with colleagues and deal more sensitively with the service/organisation's client group
- Training helps to minimise risk (for example, health and safety training)
- Benefits to your organisation can include, better staff/volunteer harmony and increased volunteer retention rates
- Training can help volunteers feel valued

Section 3 - Induction and Training of Volunteers

Ways of training and developing skills

This can be carried out in a variety of ways they may include:-

- Practical demonstrations
- Work shadowing
- Buddy/mentoring
- Visiting other organisations/inviting outside organisations
- Attending conferences, workshops, lectures or seminars
- Role plays and simulations
- Problem-solving exercises or group discussions
- Speakers at meetings
- One-off training sessions
- Telephone conferencing
- Linked or modular courses, consisting of several sessions over a period of time
- Distance learning
- Include volunteers in internal skills audits

Using a variety of these methods should help to maintain the volunteer's interest and learning style

Section 4 - Equality and Diversity

Brighton and Hove Council actively promote equality and diversity it is embedded in all our policies and functions. This is of course extended to everyone who wishes to volunteer with the council. We want to encourage participation from all residents and communities across our city to ensure that we bring the best advantages to volunteers, council staff and our services.

If any volunteer for the council experiences discrimination, harassment, bullying or abuse of any kind, it will be investigated fully and immediately once reported and all appropriate action taken.

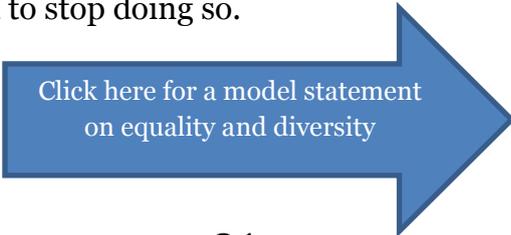
Why is the promotion of equality and diversity important?

Equality and Diversity are becoming more and more important for volunteer organisations that involve volunteers, as:

- We live in an increasingly diverse city and need to be able to understand and respect diversity and respond appropriately and sensitively to the difference in others
- Volunteers, and those that benefit from their role reflect diversity in many ways including different groups from protected characteristics
- Everyone should have the opportunity to volunteer and we need to ensure there are not barriers for particular groups within communities that prevent them from volunteering

Examples of discrimination in the context of volunteering

1. **Direct Discrimination:** A volunteer programme rejects a volunteer applicant because of their protected characteristic
2. **Indirect Discrimination:** A volunteer programme only promotes new opportunities by word of mouth, the majority of current volunteers are female and this practice results in mostly females seeking to volunteer with them. This practice has unintentionally disadvantaged males who might have considered volunteering
3. **Failure to make a reasonable adjustment:** A volunteer with a visual impairment needs to use a computer to complete a task. A computer with the software to make the computer fully accessible is available and there is no cost involved in changing the computer settings. Despite this the organisation asks another volunteer to undertake the task needed.
4. **Harassment:** A lesbian woman leaves a two week volunteer camp early because other volunteers repeatedly make homophobic, sexist jokes even after they have been told to stop doing so.

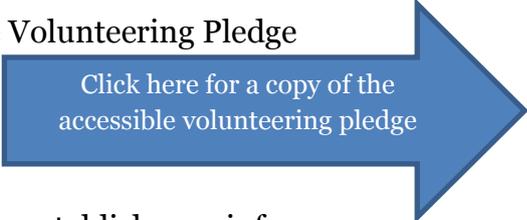


[Click here for a model statement on equality and diversity](#)

Accessible Volunteering

People with disabilities volunteer for the same reasons as anyone else: they want to contribute their time and energy to improving the quality of life for others, or to promote a cause they believe in, or to have fun. They want to be challenged and be rewarded for their volunteering roles, or projects that provide them with outlets for their enthusiasm and talents, just like anyone else.

Brighton & Hove Council is committed to the accessible Volunteering Pledge



[Click here for a copy of the accessible volunteering pledge](#)

Ex Offenders

Volunteering offers an important way for ex-offenders to establish or reinforce positive community ties and skills. By ensuring that appropriate volunteering opportunities are open to ex-offenders, we are increasing their chances to turn their lives around, while at the same time enabling them to make a valuable contribution to the community.

Ex-offenders can be embarrassed by their past offences and unwilling to put themselves in positions where they will have to declare the information. Many potentially excellent volunteers choose not to get involved because of their concern about how they will be treated by organisations that become aware of their past offences.

The safety of service users is paramount; but the vast majority of potential volunteers who have a criminal record pose no risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults and have a positive contribution to make. It is important that potential volunteers who are ex-offenders are treated fairly and not penalised for having committed an offence with no relevance to the role for which they are applying.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

If you are seeking to fill positions covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, then you should not take spent convictions into account. Under the Act, most convictions become spent after five years.

Please see Appendices 2 & 3 of this document both of these application forms will cover what is mentioned above.



[Click here for volunteer application forms](#)



[Click here for Rehabilitation of Offenders Act](#)

Section 5 - The parameters of involving volunteers

When recruiting volunteers it is important to remember that volunteers are working with staff to enhance their role and not to replace them. They are there to offer new services, or increase the capacity of existing services, not to fill roles and duties currently being done by employees.

Volunteer roles and descriptions to be clearly set out, and developed in consultation with staff, before the volunteer begins their work, and perhaps before you start your volunteer recruitment process.

Integrating volunteers with existing employees

- The best way to avoid any conflict is to demonstrate that you have specific roles for volunteers to fill and that these are not already established posts.
- Follow up meetings to assess the roles of volunteers, and to address any concerns of employees to ensure the continued support of employees, and to make sure volunteers can be as effective as possible.
- Be clear on volunteer roles within your services, and make sure that the volunteer policy is implemented properly.
- Work with staff to look at possible roles for volunteers, and explore the opportunities and difficulties that will arise, particularly around volunteer management and direction
- Be perceptive to any employees issues which arise, be open, honest, and direct with employees about what roles volunteers will be filling, and give employees the chance to query the new volunteer roles and air any issues

Section 6 – Managing Volunteers and Expenses



[Click here for the BHCC
Volunteering Policy](#)

- Volunteers can be paid out of pocket expenses
- If required travel expenses will be paid at standard mileage rates or bus fares based on a day saver and whilst volunteering (taxis are only permitted if the volunteer has a disability and the volunteer would require this as a reasonable adjustment)
- Access to employee facilities – volunteers will be able to use employee facilities.
- Time keeping and attendance – volunteers will be asked to contact us should they be unable to attend at the times agreed.
- Intellectual property and copyright – work done by volunteers will become the copyright of Brighton and Hove City Council.
- Placements can be terminated at any time by either Brighton and Hove City Council or the volunteer.

Volunteer expenses

The following information has been taken from the Volunteering England website and is designed to help you consider:-

- Reason to reimburse volunteer expenses
- Which expenses should be reimbursed
- How to avoid tax or legal problems when reimbursing expenses
- How to reimburse expenses in a volunteer friendly way

Which expenses should be reimbursed?

In general any reasonable expense incurred as part of the volunteering activity should be reimbursed. This can include:-

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering;
- Travel while volunteering
- Meals taken while volunteering
- Care of dependants, including children, during volunteering
- Postage, phone calls, stationery
- Cost of protective clothing/special equipment

Guidelines on transport usage

It's also reasonable to ask volunteers to come in by the cheapest reasonable form of public transport. Do remember though that it may be necessary for some volunteers to take taxis (only by prior agreement) – because of disability, for example, so try to be flexible and budget for extra costs. Please see the Council's Travel and Sustenance Limits in the following document link <http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/LGCSDocumentLibrary/Human%20resources/Terms%20and%20conditions%20of%20employment/Staff%20benefits/Travel%20and%20Subsistence%20Policy.doc>

Reimbursing vehicle mileage

BHCC has a set rate for the reimbursement of driving expenses. They are set at a level to take into account depreciation and other running costs as well as fuel.

Mileage Rates

Authorised business mileage using a private car will be paid in accordance with the Band 1 and 2 rates set out below.

Mileage	Band 1 451 – 999cc	Band 2 1000cc and over
Per mile first 8,500 miles	46.9p	52.2p
Per mile over 8, 500 miles pa	13.7p	14.4p

Authorised cycle mileage will be reimbursed at 20p per mile.

Authorised motorcycle mileage will be reimbursed at 24p per mile.

Volunteers receiving Benefits

Claimants receiving more than their actual expenses may lose part of their means tested benefit, and the nature of their volunteering may also be called into question. Also, asylum seekers who volunteer are only allowed to receive out-of-pocket expenses. They must not be given something that would be regarded as income. Money over and above out-of-pocket expenses is regarded as income by HM Revenue and Customs, and is therefore taxable. Please see link here for further details: <https://www.gov.uk/search?q=volunteering+and++Benefits>

For all of the above reasons it is important to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses only, which means asking volunteers to produce receipts, bus tickets etc. Please use the volunteer expenses form and keep copies of the documentation.

Please see **Appendix 12** for the Volunteers Expenses form

- **Use clear record-keeping**
- **Have Volunteer friendly procedures**
- **Encourage all volunteers to claim expenses**

Section 7 - Keeping Volunteer Records

All volunteer records will be kept in accordance with Data Protection requirements and shall also be accorded the same confidentiality as staff records.

Records should include

Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) checks

References

Positions held and duties performed

Evaluation of role

Expenses received

Volunteers and appropriate staff should be responsible for submitting all records and information to their named contact person in a timely and accurate fashion.

At the end of their volunteering volunteer will be issued with a certificate of thanks this may include a reference if requested.

Sample Data Protection

Volunteer Healthwalk Leaders & Data Protection

Brighton & Hove Healthwalks collects personal information from walkers. This includes contact information & details of possible health conditions. As a **Volunteer Walk Leader** you will be collecting this information from new walkers, and you therefore need to be sensitive and discreet when discussing with the new participant any health information on the form.

In addition, you may need to store the new walkers' personal information before sending it to the Healthwalks Office for monitoring purposes. Some Walk Leaders also enter walker information into our online database. As you will have this role, it is important to understand and comply with your obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 which protect the way people's personal information is handled. These require you:

1. To ensure that collected forms on walks are kept with you and not disclosed to any other walker; or, if left in a vehicle, are stored securely and out of view.
2. To ensure that forms are forwarded on to the Healthwalks office using the pre-paid envelopes supplied as soon as possible, and whilst stored at home, ensure they are kept securely and out of view.
3. If entering forms onto the Sports Development online database at home, to take all reasonable steps to ensure that walkers' personal information is not left in view of others, either as forms, or on-screen; and that once the personal information has been successfully transferred to the Sports Development database, you:
 - a. send the form to the Healthwalks Office as soon as possible or hand to the Scheme Manager/Volunteer Co-ordinator if they are on your walk
 - b. permanently delete any electronic record of the information stored on your home computer

The Adult Physical Activity Questionnaire which first time walkers need to complete includes the following notice:

Using & sharing your information:

Your information will be held by Brighton & Hove Sports Development and Natural England in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. It will be used by each scheme to evaluate activities and show funders that they offer value for money. The information will be collected by activity leaders and passed onto the project coordinators for inputting to a central database. This will be used to draw anonymous reports, the results of the analysis will be used to influence further local programmes and support funding applications where necessary. Where Brighton & Hove City Council Sports Development Team have service level agreements with external funders that require monitoring of activities these anonymous reports will also be shared with our funders.

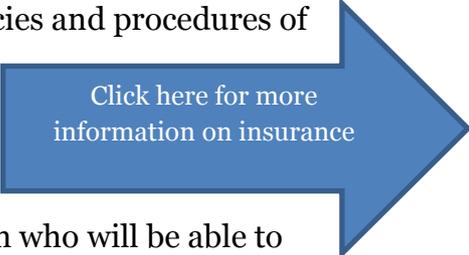
Please sign and date below to confirm that you have read and agree to comply with the data protection obligations above.

Name:.....Signed.....

Date:.....

Section 8 – Insurance & Risk

Volunteers must restrict their duties and tasks to those set out in their role description or volunteer agreement, and to adhere to the policies and procedures of the organisation.



[Click here for more information on insurance](#)

If you are unsure, please speak to the Councils Insurance team who will be able to contribute guidance and experience in this area. Contact Steve Frost 01273 291634.

You should have relevant policies in place to cover theft, loss, or damage to employees possessions or valuables (even if this includes taking no responsibility for them). Volunteers should come under the same policies.

Whilst volunteering with you, it could occur that a volunteer would be asked to use their private motor vehicles for conducting business on behalf of your organisation. Should the necessity occur, and be agreed by the volunteer, it is the volunteer's responsibility to inform his/her insurer in writing that the vehicle is being used for voluntary work.

Managing Risk

Having volunteers is not considered a significant risk. However, risk assessment is an important tool is an essential part of good volunteer management and should not be seen as an add-on.

What is risk?

Risk is everywhere. Every action we take, from crossing the road to trying something for the first time, is a calculated risk.

Risk describes the uncertainty surrounding events and their outcomes that may have a significant effect, either positive or negative, on:

- *Operational performance*
- *Achievement of aims and objectives*
- *Meeting expectations of stakeholders.*

Why assess risk within your volunteer programme?

Services that involve volunteers are well aware of the benefits they bring. However, there are a number of very good reasons why we should take the time to assess risk:

- To protect the council and its resources
- To protect service users, beneficiaries and volunteers
- To maximise effectiveness through applying good practice and to address areas of potential weakness

What types of risk can be associated with involving volunteers?

The more demanding the volunteer role and the more contact the volunteer has with customers or service users the greater the potential risks. However, all roles need to be assessed to identify any potential issues. The following are just some examples:

Risks to the organisation, its reputation or its funding through, for example:

- Volunteer misrepresenting the council through speaking or acting inappropriately
- Volunteer breaching confidentiality
- Service users suffering harm through abuse by a volunteer

Risks to service users/beneficiaries through, for example:

- Volunteer providing inaccurate information or advice
- Volunteer failing to provide adequate standard of care
- Volunteer breaching confidentiality.

Risks to the volunteer through, for example:

- Council failing to provide adequate training
- Council failing to meet relevant health and safety standards
- Council having inadequate policies and procedures to protect, support and supervise volunteers whilst engaged in voluntary work

Risk of harm to colleagues through, for example:

- volunteer acting outside of role description and exceeding skills and/or authority
- Substandard performance by a volunteer
- Theft or fraud by a volunteer.

What is the process for assessing and managing risk?

The risk assessment process involves working through four key steps:

1. **identifying** the risks faced
2. **categorising** the seriousness of these risks according to likelihood and impact
3. identifying and implementing measures for **managing** the risks
4. regularly **reviewing** your risk assessment to factor in change.

In order to be effective, your approach should be:

- systematic
- regular
- recorded
- involving all appropriate people
- monitored
- reviewed
- Effectively communicated.

<http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/performanceimprovement/riskopportunity/Pages/default.aspx>



Click here for the Risk Assessment tools

Section 9 – Recognition and Rewards

You should continually be aware of the contribution that your volunteers are making to your service delivery. Congratulating and thanking can have a real impact on volunteer's morale and commitment to their role.

Think about including volunteers in any employee outings or activities this is a great way to show your appreciation, as is a certificate of thanks and achievement when they either finish working with your service or, complete a suitable piece of particular work.

Methods of recognition could include:-

- A simple thank you
- Including include volunteers in decision making and implementing projects that involve the volunteer
- Volunteer awards and certificates
- References

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER'S WEEK TAKES PLACE FROM THE 1ST JUNE EVERY YEAR AND YOU MAY WANT TO MARK THIS IN SOME WAY.

Section 10 – Complaints

Brighton and Hove City Council Complaints Policy applies to paid staff, volunteers or trainees of the organisation. This document is consistent with the Complaints policy but is addressed to volunteers.

Introduction

Brighton and Hove City Council aims to create a work environment where volunteers feel valued. We also recognise that there may be occasions when volunteers have concerns it is for volunteers to make known their problems and aims to enable problems to be resolved quickly before they fester and become major problems.

Informal Discussions

In the first instance, if any volunteer has any problems or issues whilst carrying out their volunteering or a difficulties' with colleague they should discuss it informally, as soon as possible, with their named contact person or another person if the issue involves the named contact person. That person will take the issues seriously and ensure that everything is done to try and resolve the issue informally.

Section 11 – Reflection and Review

Exit Interviews

Exit interviews where possible are very important, and should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their Volunteering roles.

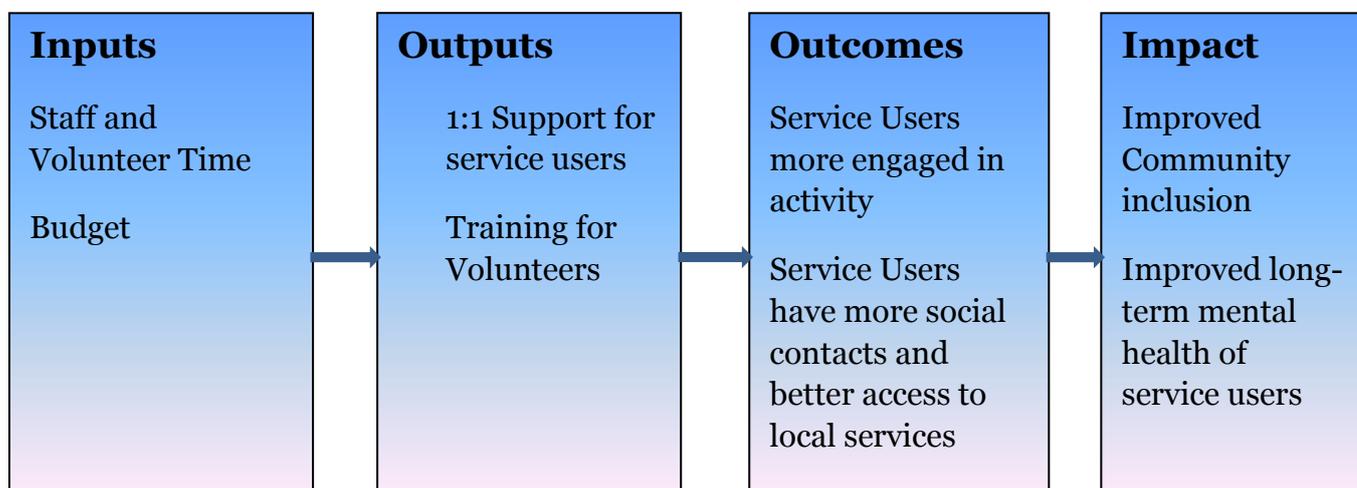
These informal interviews should help you ascertain:-

- Why the Volunteer is leaving their position
- What did they learn from their role
- How they think the role could be improved for future volunteers
- And how they think they might improve the functions of the wider council
- Work with the Volunteer to see if you can sign post them to another opportunity of volunteering at the council in another service

Impact

The change that has happened as a result of an activity or project, measuring impact can tell you whether changes have been positive or negative, and how much change has taken place.

Example: Volunteers providing 1:1 support to people using services



Monitoring

This may include counting the number of volunteers and the hours they contribute. Monitoring helps you check that the activity is being undertaken as you expected it to. However it does not tell you what changes have been experienced as a result of the volunteering.

Evaluation

Impact and monitoring information describe what has happened, evaluation involves interpreting that information and putting a value on it for example:-

- Is the impact good enough?
- Is the programme worth the resources that are being put into the activity?
- Have you given the volunteer the opportunity to feedback on their experiences of working in your service?

This information may be used for:-

- Showing value
- Provide evidence to support further investment
- Showcase achievements
- Develop a structured activity
- Identify good practice

Tips for measuring impact, whichever method you use

- Ask people about change soon after they are likely to have experienced it
- Always ask people whether the change happened as a result of the volunteer programme or whether there were other factors that played a part
- Do not assume that all impacts are positive; and ask about negative impacts too if there was no change at all
- Ask about barriers or enablers to experiencing the impact; for instance, if a service user has had a stay in hospital they may have experienced less value than expected from the volunteer programme; or if a user is in receipt of some additional money which can fund leisure activities they may have experienced more value than expected

Examples of some methods for collecting information:

