

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Policy & Resources Committee - 8 February 2010

REPORT ON: Revised Volunteering Policy and Guidance

REPORT BY: Director of Leisure and Communities

REPORT NO: 86-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The report summarises developments in volunteering at local and national levels and seeks approval for Dundee City Council revised Volunteer Policy and Practice Guidance.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to:

2.1 approve the revised Volunteer Policy and Practice Guidance

2.2 remit the Director of Leisure and Communities to report back to Committee in 12 months' time on volunteering developments within Dundee City Council.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Any costs arising from implementation of the recommendations will be met from within existing budgets.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

Reference is made to the report number 204 - 2009, "Dundee Partnership Compact and Volunteering Strategy" wherein committee agreed to support the development of both the Compact and Volunteering Strategy and implementation of their associated action plans. Reference is also made to the existing Dundee City Council Volunteer Policy and Practice Guide, adopted by the Policy and Resources Committee on 8 December 1997.

4.1 The Dundee Partnership Volunteering Strategy highlights the benefits of consistent approaches, policies and guidelines for all Partner agencies. The Strategy also summarises new developments in national policy on volunteering.

4.2 These developments include

- National Occupation Standards for management of volunteers
- Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit
- Investing in Volunteers UK Quality Standard

4.3 In order to ensure that the City Council is fully prepared to carry forward the new Strategy internally, and to contribute effectively to its implementation at Partnership level, it was considered timely to review and revise the existing Volunteer Policy.

- 4.4 The existing Volunteer Policy and accompanying Practice Guidance was adopted by the Policy and Resources Committee on 8 December 1997. While it is acknowledged that volunteering management within DCC has continued to develop apace with national changes, there has been no revision of the corporate policy.
- 4.5 The attached new Policy makes the following changes:-
- Updates name changes, e.g. Volunteer information Point is replaced by Volunteer Centre Dundee.
 - revises the definition of volunteering in line with the definition adopted by the Scottish Government
 - includes reference to the Partnership Compact and Volunteering Strategy
 - Lists the 5 agreed priorities for change and the nationally agreed standards and toolkit.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance have been consulted on this report and are in agreement with its contents.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The following background papers as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

Dundee City Council Volunteer Policy 1997

Dundee Partnership Compact - "Working Better to Make Dundee Better" 2007

Dundee Partnership Volunteering Strategy "Volunteering Matters - it's Time to make a Difference" 2008

DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES
28 JANUARY 2010

**DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL
VOLUNTEER POLICY
2010**

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

VOLUNTEER POLICY

This policy sets out to clarify the relationship between volunteers, Council departments and service users. It has been developed in the context of the Dundee Partnership's Volunteering Strategy entitled " Volunteering Matters - It's Time to Make a Difference", endorsed by Dundee City Council in April 2009.

It outlines the commitment of Dundee City Council to supporting volunteering.

It aims to achieve consistency in the support of volunteers across all Departments.

It defines the roles, rights and responsibilities of both the Council and volunteers.

It provides a framework within which the relationship between the Council and volunteers will be developed.

It will provide a bench mark against which the Council's support of volunteers can be monitored.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Dundee Partnership has developed a Volunteering Strategy as part of its Compact with the community and voluntary sector. This strategy builds on the City Council's Volunteer Policy approved in 1997. The Compact , entitled "Working Better to Make Dundee Better," is a written statement of understanding which aims to improve joint planning and provision of services in the city. The Volunteering Strategy sets out 5 key priorities to ensure that volunteering is embedded across all sectors of the Partnership. The accompanying action plan sets out how partners will work towards their agreed Vision for volunteering i.e.

"Dundee is a city where volunteering to give your time to benefit others or the environment is accessible to all, is a rewarding experience and is highly valued as an act of citizenship"

- 1.2 The Dundee Partnership Volunteering Strategy's 5 Key Priorities for change are:-

- All people in Dundee readily know about volunteering and how to get involved - to ensure visibility of volunteering across the city
- Volunteers experience the same high standard of volunteer management
- Young people have the opportunity of a positive experience of volunteering from both the voluntary and public sector.
- Partners recognise and enable employee supported volunteering and encourage local employers to support their staff to volunteer.
- Dundee Partnership is knowledgeable about the scope of volunteering a how it contributes to delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement and that this contribution is shown in its reporting.

- 1.3 This policy aims to provide a framework for DCC services to enable them to develop and support high quality volunteering opportunities in a way that is consistent with the Partnership's vision and priorities, but flexible enough to be adapted to their own particular needs and circumstances.

2. VOLUNTEERING IN DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

- 2.1 The Council provides opportunities for volunteering in many aspects of local civic life, including, social work, education, housing, advisory services, community development projects, environmental improvements, health sport and leisure.
- 2.2 The Council works with volunteers who serve on Management Committees or in voluntary service provision roles, and many departments involve volunteers in improving or extending the services they provide
- 2.3 The Council supports and funds volunteer groups and projects within the voluntary sector.
- 2.4 The Council purchases services provided in whole, or in part, by volunteers.
- 2.5 The Council is in a position to adopt policies which in general create a climate of support for volunteering.
- 2.6 The Council's key partner in the development and implementation of this policy will be Volunteer Centre Dundee.(VCD)The Council will participate in the Dundee Partnership Volunteering Strategy Implementation Group and will work with VCD to support the achievement, where possible of the National Occupational Standards Management of Volunteers through the use of tools such as
 - Investing in Volunteers/Volunteer Friendly Award
 - Volunteer Impact Assessment Tool.
- 2.7 Each department using volunteers will be responsible for producing a Practice Guide which will detail the specific arrangements made by that department for implementing the Council's Volunteer Policy.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy the Council has adopted the definition of volunteering used by the Scottish Government:-

“Volunteering is the giving of time and energy through a third party ,which can bring measurable benefits for the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, the environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one’s own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary”
- 3.2 Dundee's citizens have a long history of voluntary service and have contributed to the delivery of services managed by the Local Authority.
- 3.3 The Council recognises the integral role of volunteers as active citizens in service provision across the city. Volunteers are a valued resource across a wide range of Departments of the Council.
- 3.4 Volunteers are not a substitute for paid staff, but do complement the delivery of professional services.
- 3.5 Volunteers bring added value by enhancing the quality and variety of services, contributing their time, enthusiasm, additional skills, independence of outlook and a fresh perspective to service design and delivery. Volunteers, who operate mainly at a local level, are valued as a key community resource and their contribution is recognised as a positive expression of community solidarity and active citizenship.

4. THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

- 4.1 The Council will seek to develop volunteering opportunities for all, with increased emphasis on recruiting young people, older people, those with disabilities and people from minority ethnic communities.
- 4.2 The Council will explore, with its staff, its ability to support and promote volunteering opportunities for its employees.
- 4.3 The Council is committed to the establishment of effective consultation measures within volunteering interests in the wider community and to support and develop new volunteering initiatives.
- 4.4 Voluntary organisations funded by the Council will be supported to develop and maintain similar commitments where appropriate.
- 4.5 The Council will monitor, measure and assess the effects of volunteering for individuals, within departments and on the wider community. This will include a comprehensive analysis of the both positive and possible negative impacts of volunteering including skills development, economic contribution and benefits to service users. This assessment will be carried out regularly in order to measure change over time.
- 4.6 The Council will work towards achievement of the Volunteer Friendly Award in all areas where volunteers are involved.

5. ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER CENTRE DUNDEE

- 5.1 Volunteer Centre Dundee is a service which provides information and advice on volunteering and is supported by Dundee City Council and the Scottish Government.

For volunteers it provides:

- Access to a wide range of volunteering opportunities.
- Advice, assistance and support.
- Access to other services.

For organisations that recruit volunteers it provides:

- Potential volunteers.
- Opportunities to share best practice.
- Access to training.
- Information on insurance, recruitment, screening, volunteer policies (voluntary organisations).

5.2 Volunteer Centre Dundee and Council Departments,

Council departments may register volunteer opportunities available within their service areas with Volunteer Centre Dundee. For more information, contact Volunteer Centre Dundee on www.volunteerdundee.org.uk . The registration process may be completed online.

- 5.3 Volunteer Centre Dundee will be the City Council's key partner in the implementation of this policy and will work closely with departments to progress achievement of the Volunteer Friendly Award and to introduce use of the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit

6. VOLUNTEERS: ROLES, RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT, ENTITLEMENTS, RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Volunteer Roles

- Volunteers are recognised as having an important role in enhancing and complementing service provision.
- Volunteers will not be used as a substitute for paid employees.
- Volunteers will not be asked to undertake work or responsibilities for which they are not trained nor has the necessary skill, knowledge or experience.
- The activities of volunteers should be consistent with the values and priorities of the City Council and reflect its commitment to the needs of the community.

6.2 Volunteer Recruitment

- The Council will identify, publicise and promote volunteering opportunities as appropriate within its range of services.
- Volunteers will be recruited, selected, placed and supported in a manner consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy and Scheme which includes application forms, interviews, references and Disclosure Scotland checks where applicable. All volunteers recruited to work with or who have substantial access to children will be subject to Disclosure Scotland checks.
- Volunteers will be placed according to their skills, interests, level of commitment and wishes subject to meeting the Volunteer Specification devised for the position or task.
- All potential volunteers will have a right to an interview to assist them to identify volunteer opportunities. The interview will also give potential volunteers an opportunity to discuss their individual circumstances with a Council Officer before a decision is made regarding placement possibilities.
- The Council will endeavour to operate a non-rejection policy subject to its need to meet its statutory responsibilities and to safeguard the interests of service recipients, employees and volunteers.

6.3 Management of Volunteers

- Council Departments will designate named volunteer managers who will have responsibility for the implementation of the Volunteer Policy and procedures. This will include working with those who directly supervise volunteers on a day-to-day basis in their departments. The corporate liaison role for supporting volunteer managers and monitoring implementation of the policy will be fulfilled by a named officer from the Leisure and Communities Department
- Volunteer managers will:
 - Work within their departments to identify and promote development of volunteering opportunities.
 - Manage the recruitment, selection and supervision of volunteers in line with the Volunteer Policy.
 - Ensure that volunteers are given recognition for their contribution.
 - Ensure that volunteers receive their entitlements.
 - Ensure that volunteers are aware of and meet their responsibilities.
 - Ensure that the needs of those in receipt of services take priority over the needs of volunteers.
 - Manage information on volunteering within their department/section for monitoring and assessment purposes.

6.4 Volunteer Entitlements

The Council affirms that volunteers are entitled to:

- Clear information about Council policies and departmental procedures, with which they will be expected to comply.
- Clear information about the role of the volunteer and the commitment that is expected.
- Fair selection procedures within the recruitment process.
- Induction, initial and subsequent training that is based on the volunteers' role and recognises and respects their previous experience.
- An assurance that anyone selected for a voluntary role has the skills, knowledge and aptitude to enable them to adequately perform the tasks and duties related to the role.
- Individual support and supervision through regular contact with a named supervisor.
- Regular meetings with their supervisor and an annual review at which their progression can be discussed.
- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses, which have been approved by the supervisor, consistent with Council policy.
- Adequate public liability insurance cover.
- Assistance to develop their understanding of the values of the Council.
- Encouragement, guidance and assistance to plan, review and evaluate their own practice and contribute to team planning.
- A reference related to their voluntary activity.
- Assurance that information on volunteers will be treated as confidential.
- Holiday breaks.
- Opportunities for personal and skill development in line with their interests and placement needs.
- Access to accredited training programmes as and when developed by the Council.
- Recognition for training and demonstrated competence.
- An explanation in the event that the volunteer's services are no longer required.
- An indemnity in respect of authorised volunteering activities undertaken on behalf of the Council.

6.5 Volunteer Responsibilities

The Council has clear expectations of the volunteers with whom it works, Volunteers should:

- Accept and adhere to the Aims and Values of the Council.
- Seek to promote equality of opportunity and be anti-discriminatory in their work.
- Strive to be effective and efficient within available resources.
- Be accountable for resources given or lent to them.
- Accept that the needs of those in receipt of services must take priority.
- Adhere to Departments' policies on confidentiality, health and safety use of ICT equipment.
- Comply with standards of practice and conduct within Departments.
- Accept responsibility to work as a member of a team.

- Honour the commitment they have agreed.

Volunteers will be supported in the exercise of these responsibilities through training and supervision.

7. NON-REJECTION POLICY

- 7.1 The Council will continue to operate a non-rejection policy as stated in the 1997 Volunteering strategy, subject to the need to meet its statutory responsibilities and to safeguard the interest of service recipients, employees and volunteers.
- 7.2 In practice, this will mean that every potential volunteer should be offered an interview to assist them to identify volunteer opportunities and/or to assess their personal specification against particular volunteer post specifications/descriptions. If potential volunteers do not meet the specifications they will not be accepted as volunteers for the post or posts. For certain volunteering roles e.g. working with vulnerable adults and young people, Disclosure Scotland checks will be carried out. Care will also be taken to ensure that volunteers do not have health problems which might place them, or service recipients or employees at risk. Where possible, potential volunteers should be advised of action that they could take to enable them to meet a post specification. Failing this, alternative volunteer opportunities related to the individual's skills, aptitude and interest should be offered.

8. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1 Everyone delivering services on behalf of the City Council, whether a member of staff or a volunteer is required to work within the law. .
- 8.2 Departmental volunteer managers are responsible for ensuring that volunteers will be fully briefed on any legal implications related to the volunteer(s) post(s). Examples include Health and Safety legislation and Child Protection Guidelines.