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Brentwood Borough Council Employee Volunteering Policy

This policy sets out Brentwood Borough Council's commitment to employee volunteering, including paid time to volunteer.

Vision for Volunteering

Volunteering is one of the UK's most rewarding activities. It helps to create a vibrant and active community where people feel more valued, listened to and safe.

In our roles as Brentwood Borough Council employees, we work to improve our residents' quality of life in many different ways, both directly and indirectly. Employee volunteering provides an opportunity for employees to make a more direct and personal contribution to local people and our communities.

This policy has been developed to ensure that:

1. Employees and managers understand the process to approve volunteering requests.
2. Brentwood Borough Council actively promotes volunteering work as an aid to employees' learning and development.

Employee Volunteering Principles

In supporting and encouraging employees to volunteer, Brentwood Borough Council aims to:

- Strengthen our links with the local community and share knowledge, expertise and skills of our employees;
- Contribute positively to the delivery of Brentwood Borough Council services;
- Enhance partnership working;
- Aid skill development of employees that can be brought back to the workplace;
- Raise wellbeing and morale of employees;
- Lead by example.

Benefits for employees:

- Sense of personal achievement;
- Understand and contribute to the local community;
- Skills development, including increased communication, decision making, and problem solving skills;
- Working within a team in a challenging environment;
- Contribution to personal development and future career options;

- Supporting and valuing others.

Employee Volunteering Procedures

What is a Volunteer?

Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and, or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to the local community. In this sense, volunteers are to be distinguished from students, other work placements and secondees, where the primary aim is usually for the student or secondee to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research in certain areas.

How much time can I spend volunteering?

- Up to two paid days a year (pro-rata for part time employees) with the agreement of your Line Manager.
- Of course, you can volunteer in your own time
- In work time, leave with or without payment may be granted for public duties such as School Governor, or Jury Service. This is separate to volunteering leave – please speak to HR about this for further information.

Carry forward of volunteering leave

Volunteering leave cannot be carried forward from one year to the next.

Managing the Staff Volunteering Scheme

Volunteering by employees is supported on the basis that:

- There is no loss of service standards to the organisation;
- The activity does not conflict with the interests of Brentwood Borough Council;
- The suitability of the opportunity and the time allocated to undertake voluntary work is in agreement with the line manager;
- The time and activity in the community will enhance the individual's values and behaviours, which can be incorporated into the employee's performance and reviewed as part of the appraisal process;
- The manager considers the activity an appropriate opportunity for the individual concerned;
- The placement is meaningful;

How will my Volunteer Leave be Recorded?

Your line manager will record this on your absence record, but you should also keep your own record on your flexitime spreadsheet as 'Leave'.

Evaluation

On completion of the volunteering placement, a debrief between the employee and the line manager should take place, and the outcomes recorded at the appraisal.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Some volunteering posts may require you have a DBS check to safeguard you and the people you will be working with on your placement. These will be normally carried out by the organisation who is hosting your placement. The results of the checks undertaken for the purpose of volunteer work will be kept confidential between the applicant and the organisation with whom you are volunteering. See [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) for more information.

Expenses, Training and Health and Safety

Although Brentwood Borough Council will continue to pay salary or wages for time employees have taken on their volunteering placement, it cannot pay any expenses or additional costs. However the organisation hosting your volunteer placement may offer expenses and employees are advised to clarify this before agreeing to the placement.

All necessary training, clothing and equipment that you will need for your placement should be provided by the host organisation.

Whilst volunteering, staff should satisfy themselves that they are not at any undue risk, and that the organisation they are volunteering with has appropriate health and safety policies and procedures and relevant insurances.

Brentwood Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any volunteering activity.

Conflict of Interest

If an employee has any official direct contact with a particular group, they should not undertake any volunteering activity which may result in a conflict of interest. If in doubt the employee should check this with their line manager.

4 Easy Steps to Start Volunteering

Step 1

All employees considering volunteering will need to have their activity agreed by their line manager. Remember, your volunteering activity does not have to be connected with your role at work.

Step 2

Find a suitable volunteering role. Volunteering opportunities can be found on the following:

1. Brentwood CVS Website www.brentwoodcvs.org.uk. The Brentwood Volunteer Centre, run by the CVS is due to launch in 2016 and will provide a one stop shop for prospective volunteers.
2. Vinolved website if you are aged between 14 and 25 www.vinspired.com
3. Volunteering England www.volunteering.org.uk
4. Find out about volunteering opportunities at the Council – services such as Sheltered Housing and operational services are often looking for helpers.
5. Approach community and voluntary organisations directly – ask Community Services Department for advice about who you could contact.
6. Visit www.do-it.org.uk – a national database of volunteering opportunities that allows you to apply online.
7. Speak to your colleagues – you may wish to volunteer as a group!

Step 3

Once you have decided what volunteering you would like to do, you need to agree this with your line manager. Remember, your 2 days volunteering leave is flexible and could be taken as separate hours, so you may wish to do 1 hour a week for a number of weeks, but you will need to get agreement from your line manager on your pattern of volunteering.

Step 4

Start Volunteering!

Manager's Checklist

