



TRAFFORD COUNCIL

EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING POLICY

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TRAFFORD COUNCIL – EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Volunteering is a great way to develop new skills and support something that's worthwhile. Employees can get involved in activities that benefit individuals, clubs, charities, faith groups and the environment.
- 1.2 This scheme lets employees take up to two days (pro-rata for part-time employees) paid time off work to volunteer. Employees must match the paid time taken with at least an equal contribution in their own time. Therefore the maximum time for volunteering using this scheme could be as much as 4 days (29 hours) over a year. Employees may volunteer additional hours in their own time if they wish to do so, however for each year, the maximum amount of paid release is 2 days.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy details what employee volunteering is and how the Council will support employees to volunteer.
- 2.2 It details the amount of paid leave employees can take and how they request this leave.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy covers all employees of Trafford Council with the exception of Teaching and Support Staff employed by Schools.

4. Benefits of volunteering

- 4.1 Benefits for the employee are:

- A chance to do something different and gain new skills.
- It can be fun, social and enhance health and wellbeing.
- Gives a broader outlook and appreciation of diverse communities.
- Share experiences and existing skills with others.
- Can lead to a sense of satisfaction and personal achievement by contributing to the community of Trafford.
- The opportunity to develop transferable skills that can be used at work.
- Releases individual potential.
- Can help adjustment from work to retirement.

- 4.2 Benefits for the Council are:

- Improves partnership working between sectors, building increased knowledge and understanding.
- Increases Trafford's reputation as an exemplary employer.

- Increases levels of employee engagement and job satisfaction, morale and commitment.
- Promotes work-life balance and health and wellbeing priorities. Volunteering can be good for mental health.
- Increased level of skills from volunteering experience.
- Helps team building through group volunteering.

4.3 Benefits for the Community are:

- Gives practical, hands on assistance to voluntary organisations to assist them in service delivery and improve communities.
- Gaining from the skills and experiences of Trafford employees.
- Breaks down barriers between sectors.
- Improves relationships and understanding between council staff and residents.
- Builds a more robust and resilient society.

5. **Volunteering opportunities**

5.1 There are different ways to approach volunteering to suit individual interests and circumstances. Some may be ongoing commitments and some might discrete pieces of work or projects. These are just some possible volunteering activities:

- Mentoring looked after children and vulnerable people.
- Supporting vulnerable adults and disabled people.
- Reading and listening activities at school.
- Outdoor activities e.g. environmental clean ups, recycling initiatives.
- Club leader, treasurer or secretary, e.g. at youth clubs, Scouts, Guides or similar groups.
- Organising sports activities or events.
- Trustee for a charity.
- Decorating a community centre or doing gardening as a team.
- Assisting with a work club for unemployed adults.
- Building databases for community groups.

6. **Team volunteering**

6.1 The scheme supports teams in taking part in a volunteering activity together. These team challenges are designed to meet community needs as well as giving teams the opportunity to spend time together outside of the usual working environment to assist with team development and networking. The specific work skills of a team could be used.

6.2 Examples of team volunteering could be teams working on challenges such as clearing local outdoor areas, painting and decorating a community centre or running a practical workshop session together (for example an interview and job skill search workshop).

- 6.3 Teams should bear in mind that time spent on activities should also be matched with the employee's own time. For example an activity could be completed over a full day on a non-working day and each team member could take a day off in lieu at different times so it that the service isn't disrupted.

7. Agreeing volunteering activity

- 7.1 Before staff request leave for volunteering under the policy, they must discuss with their manager the type of volunteering they wish to do. The Trafford Thrive website lists lots of volunteering opportunities. However staff can find their own opportunity provided that it meets the criteria in section 8. Once a suitable volunteering opportunity has been found, then the employee must speak to their manager. Opportunities can be explored here:

- [Thrive](#)
- [Trafford Directory](#).

- 7.2 The information provided to the manager will enable them to discuss and explore any implications or risks. Consideration should also be given as to whether there are any potential conflicts of interest and whether this means that an opportunity isn't suitable. The manager will need to understand enough about the proposed volunteering activity to be able to approve it in line with the criteria in section 8.

- 7.3 Where at all possible, managers are expected to support volunteering activities, demonstrating flexibility for cover arrangements e.g. swapping shifts, covering each other's work, working flexibly and/or remotely, use of flexi-time, time off in lieu and unpaid leave. The manager and employee should agree what is reasonable.

8. Volunteering allowance

8.1 Time allowance and eligibility criteria

- 8.1.1 Employees are allowed up to two days (14.5 hours) per year paid time off to volunteer (pro-rata for part-time employees) provided that:

- The activity is within Trafford.
- The volunteering must be for a charity, not-for-profit organisation, or community group.
- It does not involve a visible financial cost to "back-fill" staff cover, e.g. employees based in schools.
- Time taken to volunteer will not disrupt or adversely affect individual or team activity.
- There are no conflicts of interest, e.g. political campaigning.
- The activity will not bring the Council into disrepute
- The activities are not used to replace council jobs or to carry out council work.
- Their manager has agreed the volunteering.

- Their manager has agreed release for each period of paid leave, ideally at least 4 weeks before. As with annual leave, the needs of the service must be taken into account.
- They at least match the time the Council is giving with volunteering in their own time.

8.1.2 This Scheme covers employees who already volunteer and those just starting out, provided the criteria above are met. Volunteering time can be used flexibly, one day at a time, two together or broken down into half days to fit the needs of the activity and the voluntary organisation or group. The employee and manager will need to have discussions to make sure that this fits both the individual and the team's needs.

8.2 Monitoring employee volunteering

8.2.1 So that a central record can be maintained of all employee volunteering, once a volunteering activity has been agreed by the employee's line manager they should complete the application form (add in web address on the intranet page). A copy of the completed form will be sent to their line manager for information. When a team is volunteering one web form should be completed by each individual.

8.3 Recording volunteering time

8.3.1 When the date/s for the paid leave have been agreed with the employee's line manager they should request it via the Mi-Trent system using 'Other Absence' – click 'add other' then under 'absence type' select 'volunteering leave'. Detail the date and whether full or half day and if a half day whether it is a morning or afternoon.

9. Other considerations

9.1 Liability

9.1.1 It is the manager's responsibility to be satisfied that there are no conflicts of interest and that any risks have been considered and mitigated or accepted. The employee should discuss any relevant risk assessments with the organisation with which they are volunteering. The council will not be liable for damages or injuries that occur while an employee is volunteering for other organisations.

9.2 Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

9.2.1 Certain activities that involve working with young people or other vulnerable groups may require the employee to have a check by the Disclosure and Barring Service. The organisation for which they are volunteering with will indicate if this is necessary. The Council will not fund any check required.

9.3 Expenses

9.3.1 Employees should discuss any out of pocket expenses with the organisation with which they are volunteering. The Council will not be liable for any expenses incurred by staff through volunteering.

9.4 Training requirements (including H&S)

9.4.1 The organisation for which the employee volunteers, is responsible for providing any induction or other training to allow the individual to undertake the volunteering role and remain safe. If the individual is involved in volunteering using their own car, they will need to check that their own motor insurance policy is suitable. Employees should also use a common sense approach to engaging in volunteering activity if a task seems unsafe.

9.5 Clothing and equipment

9.5.1 If the volunteering activity requires specialist clothing or equipment, this will need to be provided by the organisation or by the volunteer. The organisation will provide details of what is required.

10. Volunteering examples

10.1 Example 1

Melissa would like to volunteer in a primary school listening to children read. She works Monday to Thursday (29 hours per week). A placement has been arranged with a school and they would like her to come in every Thursday and Friday afternoon for 2 hours from 1 to 3pm. Melissa has agreed release from work with her line manager for the 2 hours on a Thursday and then she volunteers in her own time on Fridays for 2 hours. She does this for 7 weeks. This means that she is released from work for 14 hours with pay and she contributes 14 hours in her own time.

10.2 Example 2

Dave is interested in the opportunity to work on the local community allotment clearing outdoor spaces and growing vegetables. He has discussed it with his line manager and it has been agreed that he will do this on two work days and two non-working days.

10.3 Example 3

Steve would like to offer his DIY skills and his line manager is supportive of the idea. He has found an opportunity to work on a project redecorating a scout hut in Sale at the weekend. Steve works on two consecutive Saturdays and Sundays (which are non-working days for him) to get the job done and with the agreement of his manager takes the following Mondays off as time in lieu.

11. Review

- 11.1 This policy will be periodically reviewed in order that that it remains appropriate to the Council's operation, is best practice and meets legal requirements.