

Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council

Volunteer Policy

2023



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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Introduction

South Kesteven's Corporate Plan clearly sets out our vision and journey to be the best district in which to live, work, and visit.

We recognise the unique contribution that volunteers provide to the local community and hugely value their importance. Volunteers play a vital role in supporting and improving existing Council work, introducing fresh ideas and promoting community cohesion within our area. We also recognise the benefits of volunteering to the individual; gaining new skills and improving career prospects, boosting confidence and improving mental and physical wellbeing through active work and giving back to the local community.

South Kesteven District Council seeks to promote the importance and effectiveness of volunteering within the community. The following policy document ensures that the Council provides a consistent and supportive approach to its volunteers. Using this policy will ensure that

recruiting, training and supporting volunteers is done in an efficient and appropriate way so that all Council staff and volunteers can work together to deliver positive outcomes for our community.

The policy aims to:

- Provide a framework for all South Kesteven District Council staff
- Improve the recruitment and support of our volunteers
- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to our volunteer programme



Karen Bradford
Chief Executive
South Kesteven District
Council



Cllr Rhea Rayside
SKDC Cabinet Member
for People and Communities



Role of volunteers

There are many opportunities for volunteering across the Council's service areas, with new postings displayed on our volunteer webpage. The role of each volunteer will be different depending on the team the placement is based, and the service needs at the time, but the duties and expectations of all volunteers will be clearly outlined in their Volunteer Role Description. At South Kesteven District Council, the bulk of our volunteer opportunities are based in the magnificent Parks and vibrant Arts Centres teams which are located in Grantham, Stamford and Bourne. There are also often opportunities to work alongside other areas during the volunteer experience.

Some examples of the kind of volunteer roles that may be available include:

- Visitor Centre volunteer
- Event volunteer
- Digital volunteer
- Outdoor work / gardening volunteer
- Arts Centre volunteer

No specific qualifications or experience are needed to be a volunteer with us, as on the role training is always provided. However, the following qualities and skills are important to the Council, as we consider that all our staff and volunteers work for the good of our residents:

- Reliability and punctuality.
- The ability to work as part of a team and get on well with other volunteers and staff.
- Friendliness, patience, and a commitment to providing a good quality service to our residents.
- A willingness to undertake any relevant training and follow the Council's procedures.
- An ability and desire to follow procedures and undertake tasks as needed.
- A commitment to equal opportunities, and treating people with respect.

People have many different reasons for why they wish to volunteer, and it is important that each role fits the personal goals and desires of the individual, as well as the needs of the service. During the application stage of any volunteer role, there will be an opportunity to discuss the applicant's expectations and the possibility of shaping the role around these.



Rights and responsibilities

In working with volunteers, the Council recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- Be given a clear induction at the start of their volunteer opportunity
- Have adequate and clear lines of support in their volunteering
- Receive appreciation and respect
- Have safe working conditions and be provided with any necessary safety equipment including Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)
- Be insured
- Know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- Receive reimbursement for relevant approved out-of-pocket expenses
- Feel able to take holidays and breaks
- Be free from discrimination and harassment
- Be offered the opportunity for personal development and receive appropriate training
- Be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do
- Ask for a reference

The Council expects volunteers, in return to:

- Work within agreed guidelines and remits
- Carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to our aims and values
- Be reliable and honest
- Respect confidentiality of service users and staff
- Make the most of training and support opportunities
- Respect the work of the Council and not bring it into disrepute
- Comply with the Council's policies and procedures

Applying to volunteer

In some contexts, volunteers will come forward without the requirement for the Council to advertise a particular role, although a formal Role Description will need to be agreed prior to the commencement of the volunteer opportunity. Where advertising is undertaken, a clear outline of the role and expected duties will be provided and information and support will be available on how to apply.

If interested in applying for a volunteering role at the Council, applicants can apply through the route outlined with the posting. An interest or application form will then be provided, as well as an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. Once these have been completed and returned, successful applicants will be invited to an informal interview to discuss the role further and the applicant's expectations for the volunteering opportunity. For applicants under the age of 18, written consent from a parent or guardian is required.

At interview / induction stage, volunteers will be provided with the following:

- Interview template
- Personal details form
- Volunteer Agreement
- Volunteer Induction Checklist

Other documents available:

- Data Protection & Freedom of Information Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Cash Handling Policy
- Workplace Drug and Alcohol Policy

All successful volunteer applicants will complete an initial training and assessment period of 4 weeks. During this time, they and their supervisor will decide whether their volunteer opportunity is right for them. If the decision is made that it is not, volunteers are entitled to advice on alternative placements.

Expenses

In principle volunteers should never be out of pocket for expenses incurred during their volunteering opportunity.

However, if this does occur, any expenses should be agreed in advance of expenditure and volunteers are expected to make expense claims within a month of incurring the expense. An expense claim submission form can be requested from the volunteer's supervising member of staff. Evidence (such as receipts of purchase) must be provided to support the expense claim.

Volunteers should not accept gratuities or money from clients or customers, although they may wish to accept small gifts such as flowers.

Support

South Kesteven District Council greatly values the contribution our volunteers make and appreciates their commitment in time and effort. We want to ensure that all volunteers feel supported and empowered during their volunteering opportunity so that their experience is as enriching as possible.

All volunteers should have a nominated supervisor, someone they can have regular access to if problems arise or when help and support is needed. The level of supervision will match the nature of the role and the experience of the volunteer. Volunteers under the age of 18 can expect a greater level of supervision as well as additional support.

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views on matters concerning their role and the working practices of their setting. Any suggestions made by the volunteer to improve the experience of volunteers and service users will be listened to and fed back on by their supervisor.

Insurance

For avoidance of doubt, all volunteers are covered by the Council's Employer Liability Insurance. The Council insurance policy states that an 'Employee' is:

'Any natural person who is:

- a) **under a contract of service or apprenticeship with the insured**
- b) **a labour master or labour only subcontractor or persons supplied by any of them**
- c) **self-employed**
- d) **under a work experience or similar scheme**
- e) **hired or borrowed by the insured from another employer**
- f) **volunteering to assist or co-opted to assist the insured**

...and working for the insured in connection with the business while under the insured's direct control or supervision.'

In accordance with this, all Council volunteers must be undertaking tasks in connection with Council business and must be supervised at all times.

Equal opportunities and diversity

Our values and our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion help shape how we deliver our services and how we meet our priorities. Within our council and our communities, we want everyone to feel welcome and valued.

SKDC is committed to equal opportunities for everyone and welcomes applications for

volunteering from all members of the community. We believe that all applicants have the right to be treated with fairness and equity.

To enable us to monitor our recruitment process to ensure it always aligns with our values, we ask volunteer applicants to complete an Equal Opportunities Form. All information applicants give us are regarded as strictly confidential and are used only for the development of future recruitment practices aimed at ensuring equality.

You can read more about our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in our Equality and Diversity Annual Position Statement on the Council's website:

www.southkesteven.gov.uk/EDI

Health and Safety

The Council has a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to health and safety risks. During the induction, volunteers will be made aware of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and any other practical safety advice. During induction, volunteers will also be made aware of Accident Report Forms, to be used in the case of any health and safety incidents.

Volunteers are expected to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy during their volunteer opportunity. All volunteer roles will be risk assessed, covering both the duties and tasks involved and the setting in which they will be undertaken.

Where relevant to a volunteer's role, the Council will provide specific training such as moving and handling, liaising with vulnerable adults and food hygiene. Volunteers should make the Council aware of any pre-existing medical conditions or disabilities, as an individual risk assessment may also be necessary.

Where appropriate, for example in a context where a volunteer may work with children or vulnerable adults, a standard or enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be required.

Resolving issues

Any complaints by volunteers should be raised in the first instance with their named supervisor, and dealt with informally where possible. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by their supervisor, or if the complaint is against their own supervisor, by the supervisor's line manager. If a volunteer wishes to file a grievance, the Council's existing Grievance Policy will be adhered to, a copy of which can be requested.

If a complaint is brought against a volunteer, this will be investigated by the relevant supervisor. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and informally as possible. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the volunteer may be advised that their services are no longer required with immediate effect.

Confidentiality

The expectation is that in the majority of volunteering opportunities there should not be the need for volunteers to handle sensitive or confidential information.

However, in the case a volunteer does come across confidential information about the Council, its staff, and third parties, they must respect this confidentiality and not use the information for their own benefit or disclose the information, except where required or permitted to do so by law. In cases such as these, volunteers may be asked to sign a confidentiality document.

All supervising members of staff must ensure that during induction volunteers are aware of the Council's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. Volunteers must receive appropriate training, for example Information Governance training, where appropriate.

Ending the volunteering opportunity

If deciding to end their volunteering opportunity, volunteers are encouraged to discuss this with their supervisor to allow time for them both to make the relevant adjustments.

Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the Council at one week's notice, or immediately where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

When a volunteering opportunity ends the named supervising member of staff needs to ensure that the following take place:

- An exit interview is offered to the volunteer. This is an opportunity for volunteers to reflect on their time, highlighting the positives of their experience as well as suggestions for improvement to the Council's volunteer process.
- The volunteer is thanked for their commitment and time, and a reference is offered.
- The volunteer's photo ID and any equipment or clothing issued for their role is collected from them and returned to the Council.
- The volunteer's personal details, as held by the Council, will need to be updated accordingly and in line with current legislation.
- Any access permission to Council buildings or information systems held by the volunteer will need to be removed.
- All expenses have been paid.

Review and implementation of Policy

Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the assigned supervisor of the volunteer and, on a day-to-day basis, with the staff/volunteers working in all the settings where volunteering is taking place.

Created July 2023

Amended

Updated

This policy will be reviewed by January 2024.

The input of volunteers will be an important part of reviews and updating.

Appendices

- Volunteer Application Form
- FAQs for Volunteers and Council staff
- Volunteer Recruitment Process Flow Chart
- Volunteer Agreement
- Personal Details Form
- Volunteer Expenses Claim Form



Contact Details

Alternative formats are available on request:
audio, large print and Braille

South Kesteven District Council
01476 40 60 80

 www.southkesteven.gov.uk



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Appendix 1

Application Form



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South Kesteven District Council is committed to equal opportunities for everyone and welcomes applications for volunteering from all members of the community. If you are interested in a volunteer role at the Council, please fill in the following and return the completed form to the address provided at the bottom. A member of our team will then be in touch to discuss this further and answer any questions you may have.

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Home phone number	
Mobile number	
Email	
Date of birth	

Please provide details of who we can contact in the case of an emergency:

Name	
Mobile number	

Please indicate which volunteering roles you are interested in:

--

When are you available to volunteer? (please tick)

Please note that if you are under the age of 18, the maximum number of hours you can volunteer on a weekday or Sunday is 2 hours.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
AM							
PM							
Evening							

What skills and attributes do you feel you could bring to the role?

How did you hear about volunteering at South Kesteven District Council?

- Internet / Google search
- South Kesteven District Council website
- Wyndham Park Forum website
- At an event
- Other (please specify):
- Volunteer centre
- Newspaper/ magazine
- Family / friend

I consent to this information being kept on file by SKDC in addition to information provided on the volunteer personal details form.

I declare that the information given on this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and beliefs.

Signed

Date

Please return the completed form to: HR@southkesteven.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Volunteer Recruitment Process Flow Chart



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Stage 1

- Volunteer role posted on Council website

Stage 2

- Application by potential volunteer made by sending application form to HR@ southkesteven.gov.uk

Stage 3

- Information conversation with relevant Council employee around role if required

Stage 4

- Meet with supervising staff member on site for informal conversation exploring role



Stage 5

- Paperwork completed and returned

Stage 6

- Individual starts volunteering

Stage 7

- Induction process

Stage 8

- Ongoing training, support and feedback provided by named supervisor

Appendix 3

FAQs for Volunteers and Council Staff



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Frequently Asked Questions by Volunteers



Why has the Council developed a new Volunteer Policy?

The Council has always valued the importance of engaging residents across the community in volunteering opportunities and we have launched the new policy to ensure consistency and quality in how we do this. As a Council our vision is to increase volunteering opportunities and work in partnership with communities to provide crucial services. Volunteering is mutually beneficial to both the volunteer and the Council and we want to continue to build this partnership going forward.



Where can I find out about existing volunteer opportunities at the Council?

Opportunities will be advertised through the Council's internet page. Some opportunities may also be advertised in local spaces depending on the volunteer role. If you have a skill you think would lend itself well to volunteering please contact us and we can put you in touch with the right opportunities.



Will I get paid?

No, volunteers offer their time free of charge however reasonable and agreed expenses incurred can be claimed. It is important to us that any potential volunteer does not experience a barrier to taking part. You will be given a key contact for your volunteering they would support you to claim small levels of expenses if required.



Will I be covered by insurance and how will my safety be protected?

All volunteers working under the supervision of the Council are covered by the Council's insurance policy. You will be required to adhere to the Council's health and safety practices and policies which are there to help and protect you. Any necessary health and safety equipment, such as PPE, will be supplied to you.



I'm concerned I could be taking over the job of an existing employee?

The Council does not substitute paid staff by volunteers nor treat volunteers as employees. Volunteering provides added value through an increased amount of activity or by providing services council staff do not. In addition, as volunteers are sacrificing their time free of charge the Council will aim to ensure you get the most out of your volunteer opportunity through prioritising your learning and development.



Can I undertake more than one volunteer opportunity?

There is no limit to the number of volunteer roles you can undertake, providing you are over 18. However each volunteer opportunity has a specified role so you would need to apply for each opportunity individually.



What if I have a problem or issue in my volunteering?

The Council's Volunteer Policy outlines the process you should follow should you encounter a problem or issue during your time volunteering. During your time volunteering you will have a named supervisor who will help you with any issues. In exceptional circumstances volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering or Council staff may be subject to formal policies of the Council.



Can I get a reference for my volunteering?

Yes, your named supervisor would provide this.

Frequently Asked Questions by Council Staff



How do I create a volunteer opportunity in my service?

All volunteer opportunities should be discussed and agreed with your Assistant Director. You will need to create a volunteer role specification which outlines the tasks associated with the volunteer opportunity. You will also need to undertake a risk assessment of the role and tasks. The number of volunteers within your service area will depend on the amount of staff time you have to support them and the budget available to pay expenses.



How do I advertise the volunteer opportunity?

Opportunities should be advertised through the Council's internet, and then in relevant local spaces where possible. A template for volunteer role specifications is available from HR upon request.



Who can volunteer?

The majority of our opportunities should be open to all. Although if the opportunity is with young people or vulnerable adults then you would be required to complete additional checks, as referred to in the Volunteer Policy document. If the volunteer is under 18 then appropriate opportunities would need to be considered as part of a risk assessment and additional supervision and support provided. Most regular volunteer opportunities would be suitable for those aged 16+ although on occasion roles may be suitable for those younger than 16.



Will volunteers get paid?

No, volunteers offer their time free of charge however reasonable and agreed expenses incurred can be claimed. It is important to us that any potential volunteer does not experience a barrier to taking part. You would agree and sign off any expenses and these would come from within your existing budgets.



Will volunteers be covered by insurance and how will I protect their safety?

Yes they would be covered by insurance and entered into the volunteer register. They would adhere to the Council's existing health and safety practices and policies. A risk assessment for any volunteer opportunities would be undertaken and shared by the member of staff creating the volunteer opportunity.



What support do I need to give a volunteer?

You need to provide volunteers with a named supervisor who must be a paid member of staff at the Council. This staff member will provide ongoing support and advice to the volunteer, including regular informal one-to-ones. This member of staff will also need to induct the volunteer into their role and assess progress as frequently as is appropriate to the experience. They may also help volunteers access appropriate training if available and affordable. They need to resolve any issue and in some circumstances follow the formal process for resolving issues. In some situations they may have to stop the volunteering opportunity.



What if I have a problem or issue arises with the volunteer?

The Council's Volunteer Policy has clear steps in place to support and resolve issues. In exceptional circumstances volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering or Council staff may be subject to formal policies of the council.



Can I give a reference for Volunteers?

Yes, the named supervisor can provide this. Guidance on the provision of references is available from HR.

Appendix 4

Volunteer Agreement



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Volunteer agreement

As a Council we really appreciate your time and efforts to come and volunteer with us. This Volunteer Agreement is a description of the arrangement between us (South Kesteven District Council) and you (the volunteer) in relation to your voluntary work. The purpose of this agreement is to provide an outline of your role, responsibilities and entitlements as a volunteer. Setting out the Council's and your expectations clearly and formally will allow your volunteer experience with us a positive and rewarding one.

Although set days and hours will be outlined as below, you may be asked to work flexibly from time to time in order to best support the service. Any irregular days and times will be agreed between you and your supervisor in advance.

applications for volunteering from all members of the community. If you are interested in a volunteer role at the Council, please fill in the following and return the completed form to the address provided at the bottom. A member of our team will then be in touch to discuss this further and answer any questions you may have.

Part 1 - Volunteer

I, agree to the following while volunteering at South Kesteven District Council.

My role title will be:

My responsibilities will be:

I will volunteer on the following day/s:

The times I have agreed to are:

My start date will be:

My supervisor will be:

I agree to:

1. To help South Kesteven District Council fulfil its (write in your service here).
2. To perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability
3. To adhere to the organisation's rules, procedures and standards, including health and safety procedures and its equal opportunities policy in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients.
4. To maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients.
5. To meet the time commitments and standards undertaken, other than in exceptional circumstances, and provide reasonable notice so that alternative arrangement can be made.
6. To provide referees, as agreed, who may be contacted, and to agree to a police check being carried out where necessary.

Signed (Volunteer):

Date:

Part 2 – South Kesteven District Council

In turn, South Kesteven District Council commits to the following:

1. Induction and training

To provide thorough induction on the work of the Council, its staff, your volunteering role and the training necessary to assist you in meeting the responsibilities of your volunteering role, SKDC's Volunteer Policy provides full details of the organisation.

2. Supervision, support and flexibility

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.

To provide a personal supervisor who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any associated problems.

To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us and to be flexible in how we use your volunteering.

3. Expenses

To reimburse appropriate and agreed in advance expenses incurred by you in doing your voluntary work in accordance with the procedures set out in SKDC's Volunteer Policy.

4. Health and safety

To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is appended to SKDC's Volunteer Policy. To also provide any necessary health and safety equipment, such as PPE.

5. Insurance

To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised and supervised by the Council.

6. Equal opportunities

To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is set out in SKDC's Volunteer Policy.

7. Problems and issues

To endeavour to resolve in a fair and just manner any problems, grievances or difficulties which may be encountered while you volunteer with us;

In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the procedures set out in the Volunteers Handbook.

Signed (Supervisor):

Date:

Appendix 5

Personal Details Form



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It is important that South Kesteven District Council holds up to date information on all our volunteers, including contact details and details of emergency contacts and next of kin details which may be needed in the event of an emergency or accident.

Your data will be treated confidentially. Once completed, please put your form into the envelope provided and seal.

Sensitive information

Title	
First Name	
Last Name	
Do you have a disability?	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>
Additional support needs (specify if applicable)	

Emergency Contact Details

Please ensure that you have obtained the permission of the below to be contacted in the case of an emergency

Contact Name	
Relationship to me	
Contact (telephone)	
Contact (mobile)	
Contact email	
House name/number	
Street	
Town	
County	
Postcode	

Appendix 6

Volunteer Expenses Claim Form



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Volunteer agreement

Please use this form for recording any out of pocket expenses you incur whilst volunteering for South Kesteven District Council.

Expenses forms should be given to your named supervisor as agreed. Please remember to keep receipts, bus tickets, parking tickets etc. and staple them to your claim as expenses cannot be reimbursed without them.

The types of expenditure that we can reimburse you for are:

- Any costs associated with special journeys taken as part of voluntary work
 - The most suitable method of travel will be agreed in advance with your supervisor
 - Standard fares for public transport will be paid if discounted fares are unavailable
 - Mileage is paid at a rate of 45 pence per mile
- Parking expenses if there is no free parking available at a reasonable distance.
- Other genuine expenses associated with your volunteering if authorised in advance by your supervisor.

If claiming for mileage, please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that your vehicle is suitably insured for business use.

Date	Type of expense	Full receipt attached? (Y/N)	Amount (including VAT)	Authorised on

Total:

If you are claiming for mileage, please fill in your vehicle details below

Vehicle type (e.g. car, motorbike, van)	Registration number	Insurance expiry date (dd/mm/yyyy)

The above are an accurate record of my volunteering expenses

(Printed name of volunteer)

(Signature of volunteer)

Authorised by: (Supervisor)

Date: