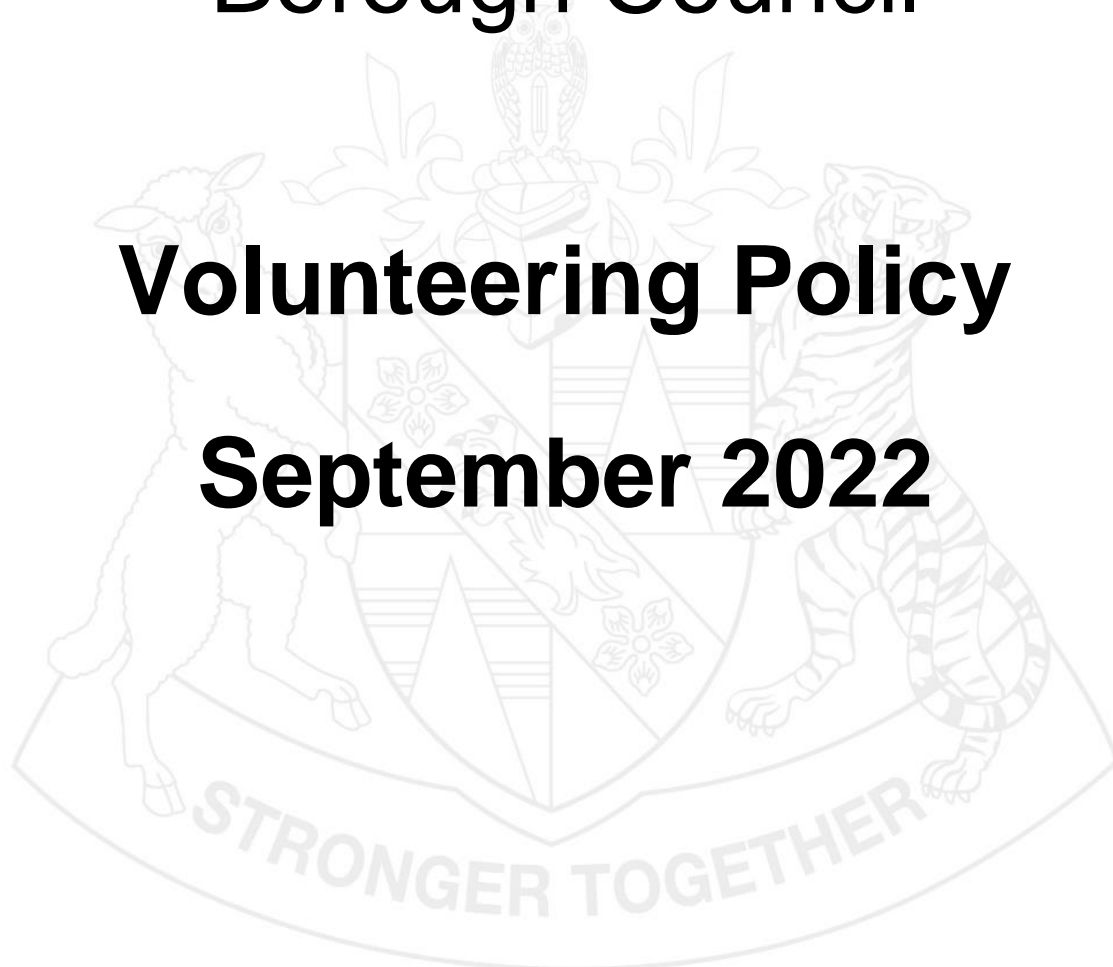


Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Volunteering Policy

September 2022



Committee Approval	Policy, Finance and Development
Policy Owner	Mark Smith
Last Review Date	
Next Review Date	



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's ("The Council") Volunteering Policy provides a focus for the Council in how it makes use of volunteers in providing services to the community, as well as how it can usefully encourage volunteering opportunities and the take up of those opportunities across the Borough.

This Policy is three-fold;

1.1 **Volunteers Registered with the Council for Working in the Community**

As part of the Council, the Community and Wellbeing Team will link up with partners and stakeholders in the community to identify local priorities, activities, and opportunities for volunteers registered with the Council to work on.

1.2 **Encouraging Council Staff to Volunteer in the Community**

The Council will support its employees who undertake voluntary roles, and is exploring ways in which its existing staff population can contribute to the community through volunteering.

1.3 **Volunteers Working in the Council to Support Services**

The Council seeks to encourage and facilitate volunteering to support the delivery of Local and Strategic Priorities identified within the Council's Corporate Plan 2019-24, and within its services provided to the community.

The Council recognises the benefits of volunteering for individuals, organisations, and communities. These include the individual benefits of pride and an enhanced sense of belonging in the community.

In addition, there are wider community benefits including retaining or providing services that would otherwise be financially unviable. Other Council partners are supportive of the use of volunteers and this Policy.

Volunteering can be via short term, one-off events, or attached to a more permanent scheme or services.

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out a vision of 'A Stronger Borough Together, Improving the Lives of Our Communities', as well as making specific reference to working with 'voluntary sector partners', and providing specific Council services with the support of volunteers. Volunteering has a key role to play in this.

This Policy is to encourage more people to get involved in volunteering, and give the Council a lead role in removing or reducing barriers to volunteering. The Policy recognises the challenges of the Council's ability to impact individual decisions, and therefore its focus is on making the best use of volunteers and volunteering opportunities to maximise the personal, organisational, and community benefits from volunteering.

2. Vision and Aims

The Council is committed to;

- 2.1** Overseeing, obtaining, and increasing the number of people who volunteer in the Borough, and the number of volunteering opportunities available to those people.
- 2.2** Promoting opportunities for organisations that rely on volunteers to collaborate and share best practice.
- 2.3** Making the best possible use of the time, energy, and skills that volunteers provide across the Council's services, out in the community, and with partners.
- 2.4** Keeping volunteers, those they support, and those that commission them safe.
- 2.5** Recognising the value of volunteers.

By making these commitments the Council will achieve the following;

- 2.6** Deliver more and improved services and support through volunteering to more people across the Borough than is otherwise currently possible.
- 2.7** Provide individuals with more skills and experience in order to improve their employability.
- 2.8** Provide more individuals with a sense of purpose, involvement, and passion for their community in order to help improve self-confidence, opportunities, health, and wellbeing.
- 2.9** Support the building of community cohesion by linking individuals and groups through volunteering.

3. OBJECTIVES

The Council will improve and grow volunteering within the Borough. Volunteers can be involved in supporting one-off activities, often related to one-off events or campaigns, or be involved in longer term opportunities.

The Council, as part of this Policy, will have a continuous review process concerning the use of volunteers within the Council, and policies and procedures will be updated accordingly. This will include;

- Recruitment of volunteers (including a dedicated registration form).
- Appropriate vetting of volunteers, including DBS requirements for volunteers working with the public in roles where this is a requirement, e.g. working with children or vulnerable adults.
- A suitable induction for volunteers pertinent to the role and / or service.
- The provision of relevant training, as necessary, such as safeguarding or manual handling.
- Review meetings and ongoing support and training.
- Recognising and celebrating the contributions and successes of volunteering.

A process has been developed to promote and support the use of volunteers registered with the Council working in the community, Council staff working in the community, and volunteers working in the Council. Officers and Managers will act as internal volunteering experts, and as a source of knowledge and experience to be called on for support if and when required.

Increasing the number of opportunities to volunteer will require a Council wide response as more volunteers will need to be managed within existing resources.

The Council will develop a central register of volunteers for information management and statistic purposes electronically to ensure proper volunteer management, and a safeguarding overview. This will comply with the *General Data Protection Regulations (2018)*.

All volunteering opportunities will be advertised on a single page on the Council's external facing website (www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/volunteering) with links to further, or additional, details where appropriate.

In addition, promotion of specific opportunities will be undertaken as appropriate for that opportunity.

Volunteers will be accepted in accordance with the principles of fairness, consistency, and openness in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, and should aim to reflect the diversity of the Borough.

4. VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES AND OVERSIGHT

The Council currently makes use of community volunteers in the following areas;

- Local Area Boards supported by the Community & Wellbeing Team, such as;
 - Resident's Forums
 - Youth Council
 - Health and Wellbeing Board
- Physical and mental wellbeing programmes under the 'Active Oadby & Wigston' banner, such as;
 - Care to Walk
 - Let's Grow Project
 - Get Moving Together
 - Waterways Wellbeing
 - Walking Groups
- Community safety initiatives under the 'Community Safety Partnership' banner, such as;
 - Community Speedwatch
 - Neighbourhood Watch
- Greening the Borough initiatives running out of Brocks Hill Country Park.
- One-off or annual events such as;
 - The Big Lunch
 - Queen's Jubilee
 - Supersonic Boom
 - Estate Clean-Up Days

Many of the above opportunities have directly benefited from the level of volunteering, community cohesion, and public spirit fostered through now discontinued initiatives necessitated throughout the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, such as the Council's Community Hub and numerous 'mutual aid' groups set up independently within the community.

This Policy seeks to continue the development of enhanced community cohesion and a positive public spirit born through the pandemic by signposting volunteers to existing opportunities, as well as creating additional opportunities that the pandemic previously prevented. To that end the development of additional volunteering opportunities, supplementing the current offer, will be explored in the following areas;

- Housing
 - 'New Neighbour' checks
 - Estate Inspections
 - Mediation
- Community and Wellbeing
 - Further physical and mental wellbeing programmes
 - Further community safety programmes
 - Youth Provision

- Community Champions
- Communications
 - Newsletter Distribution
 - Event Development and Delivery
- The Depot
 - Further Greening the Borough programmes
 - Low-effort grounds maintenance
 - Low-effort street cleansing
- Council-wide
 - Administration Support

This list is not exhaustive, and Managers will be encouraged to look at where volunteers can add value, and support, their service areas in ways which are mutually beneficial to both the Council and the volunteer, i.e. upskilling an individual.

This Policy highlights that volunteers are a finite resource which should be deployed strategically; failure to do so may appear to be exploitative of an individual's goodwill and availability. As such care should be taken in all areas to prevent the duplication of volunteering opportunities within the Borough offered by external agencies, which may be detrimental to established services or organisations and those they support, and to ensure that volunteers are not inadvertently relied upon for the delivery of key or statutory services within the Council.

To mitigate this risk, oversight of the volunteering programme in place at the Council will be undertaken by the Community and Wellbeing Team who will maintain the following;

- The Council's Database of Registered Volunteers showing;
 - Volunteer's Details (Application Form – *Appendix A*)
 - Training Record
 - Current Assignment
 - DBS Status
- A Database of External Community Volunteering Opportunities and Organisations

Volunteers will be expected to undertake a review at the end of each volunteering 'assignment' assessing the benefit of the opportunity to the individual, where additional training opportunities may be desired, and how the opportunity may be further developed. This review will also serve to generate case studies to aid in the monitoring of Council projects, including the overall volunteering programme.

The Community and Wellbeing Team will act as the receiver for queries, questions, or concerns relating to the volunteering programme or any volunteering opportunities the Council is either responsible for, or signposting individuals to.

The Community and Wellbeing Team will also be responsible for ensuring the Council's external facing website is kept up to date with current volunteering opportunities, assisted by the Communications Team, as well as maintaining an external volunteering newsletter developed for registered volunteers.

The volunteering programme as outlined above will be defined as the following for clarity;

- A Council managed umbrella programme where registered volunteers are matched to opportunities of mutual community benefit complimentary to existing skills, or the development of new skills, with the overarching goal of improving community cohesion, engagement, and wellbeing.

The Community and Wellbeing Team, despite maintaining overall responsibility for the Council's volunteering programme, are recognised through this policy as being the facilitators of volunteer matching, and not the direct deliver of the opportunities which will fall to named individuals, or Council staff, within the community setting. E.g. Greening the Borough linked volunteering projects will be overseen and delivered by staff from the Depot or Brocks Hill Country Park, with volunteers signposted to them by the Community and Wellbeing Team.

Whilst the Community and Wellbeing Team will signpost registered volunteers to suitable opportunities, the lead officer or individual for that opportunity will have the final say as to whether the volunteer is suitable for the role or not.

Volunteering opportunities for Council staff should be managed in a similar fashion by the Community and Wellbeing Team, but coordinated with the People Team and the relevant service manager for the staff member.

This Policy recommends that Council staff are eligible to claim one paid working day off for established, and agreed, community volunteering opportunities in the Borough outside of their usual duties as an extension of the Council's Workplace Wellbeing scheme. This is to be with the express agreement of their direct line manager, and matched to an opportunity overseen by, or signposted to by, the Community and Wellbeing Team.

5. VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

Upon the completion of the Volunteer Role Application Form, and acceptance on to the Council's volunteering database, but before being signposted to an opportunity, volunteers will be expected to complete the following mandatory training within two months of being registered;

- Safeguarding
- GDPR / Confidentiality
- Health and Safety

With the above three areas being complimentary to one another, a volunteer training package will be developed by the relevant Lead Officers within the Council for the above areas. This training should be designed in such a way as to be able to be delivered both in person or virtually, depending on current restrictions at the time of delivery.

Where volunteers may require specialist training to undertake a particular volunteering opportunity, such as direction in the use of certain tools, or in a particular method of working, the responsibility for ensuring this training is provided and implemented to a suitable standard will fall to the individual responsible for the delivery of the relevant activity.

Periodically offers of additional training may be made to all registered volunteers as part of an ongoing upskilling remit, and as a longer term goal to create sustainable activities and projects within the Borough. These training offers may, for example, cover subjects and skills such as;

- First Aid
- Sign Language
- Activity Leadership

Additionally, some volunteering opportunities may be reliant on the volunteer undertaking a DBS check. In these instances the application will be support by the Council's People Team, and the volunteer will be unable to participate in volunteering opportunities requiring a DBS check until an acceptable certificate is received.

APPENDIX A – VOLUNTEER ROLE APPLICATION FORM



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Volunteering
in Oadby and Wigston

Volunteer Role Application Form

Volunteer Role

Which role are you applying for:	
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Personal Details

Full Name:	
Title: (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, etc.)	
Address:	
Home Telephone Number:	
Mobile Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	
Date of Birth:	
Please indicate your Ethnic Origin:	
Do you have any specific needs that need to be taken into account:	
Do you have access to your own vehicle for use in your voluntary work:	

Current Occupation - Current occupation (paid or unpaid) and all previous occupations over the 5 years

Occupation	Dates

Additional Information

Why are you interested in Volunteering with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council?
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Why are you interested in this particular role? What do you want to gain from the experience?

State how you think your skills and experience would be of help to you as a volunteer in this role?

Criminal Convictions

Note: A criminal conviction will not automatically disqualify you. Please give details of any criminal convictions, or cautions/ reprimands/ warnings/ fixed penalty notice which, you have had and any appearance pending (this is an excepted question under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and you therefore must give details of all convictions whether spent or unspent under that Act).

Offence	Penalty or order of court	Court	Date of conviction

Referees

Give details of two people who may be asked about your ability to act as a volunteer. Your referees must not be relatives, you must have known them for at least two years; and one must be a current/previous employer or other professional.

Reference 1

Title:	
Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Position Held:	
Context in which known to you:	

Reference 2

Title:	
Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Position Held:	
Context in which known to you:	

I have obtained consent from the above named individual to supply their contact details for the purpose of providing a reference to support my application to volunteer (Please tick) I understand that OWBC will contact the above named referees in accordance with Safer Volunteer Recruitment best practice and the relevant legislation (Please tick).

Emergency Contact Details

Contact Name:	
Contact Number:	
Relationship to you:	

I have obtained consent from the above named individual to supply their contact details and that in the event of an accident or emergency during my volunteering they may be contacted (Please tick)

Medical Information

Please supply any further information you feel might be helpful in the event of an emergency e.g. Regular medication taken, allergies, injuries, health conditions etc.

Declaration

“I certify that the information given is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.”

I agree to Oadby and Wigston Borough Council processing my personal data, as well as my sensitive personal data for the purpose of processing my application; for equal opportunities monitoring; for purposes of my volunteering; for administrative purposes and for the purpose of complying with applicable laws, regulations and procedures. This will include holding this data electronically on the Volunteering Database.

We will contact you periodically to confirm that you still wish your data to be held and to check for any changes. You can ask to be removed from the database at any time by contacting the Council’s Customer Service Centre on Leicester (0116) 288 8961 or email: csc@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please complete and return this form to the address/email address below as soon as possible:

Ross Levy/Jennifer Mackenzie
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Council Offices
Bushloe House
Station Road
Wigston
LE18 2DR

Email: volunteering@oadby-wigston.gov.uk