

**VOLUNTEERING**

**POLICY**

1. **INTRODUCTION**
   1. Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) delivers a wide range of public

services such as planning and building control, administering elections, housing advice, environmental health, parks and open spaces. MVDC employs approximately 300 staff at its main office at Pippbrook, Dorking and at Park House, Leatherhead; The Fairfield Centre, Leatherhead; the Leatherhead Helpshop; the Depot and Dorking Halls.

* 1. A volunteer is a person who freely gives their time, skills and experience without expectation of, or agreement for, any financial reward.
  2. Volunteering can take many forms with some tasks requiring more

specific skills than others. Volunteering may be for a limited time e.g. to complete a specific project or it may be on an ongoing basis.

* 1. MVDC recognises the immense benefits that volunteers bring to an

organisation, and the bridges that they build between the organisation and the local community.

* 1. MVDC values its volunteer workers highly and is committed to

supporting them. It recognises the contribution that volunteers make in a variety of roles to enhance its services, meet its priorities, support its residents and service users, and to add to the quality of people's lives. In return, MVDC hopes to give its volunteers an opportunity for new experiences and to use, enhance or develop their skills in a different environment.

* 1. MVDC endeavours to offer a range of volunteering opportunities and to

ensure that the opportunity to volunteer is widely available.

* 1. MVDC also supports and encourages staff who wish to volunteer outside of their work either for MVDC itself or for other organisations. Please see [here](https://molly.molevalley.gov.uk/myhr/leave-and-time-off/other-reasons-for-time-off-work/staff-volunteering-scheme/) for more information. This section is on My HR on Molly under Leave and Time Off Work.

1. **PURPOSE**

2.1 MVDC aims to provide fair, safe, enjoyable and empowering experiences

for all its volunteers.

2.2 This policy provides a framework for MVDC to involve volunteers, and

includes minimum standards.

1. **STATUS OF VOLUNTEERS**
   1. A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of

employment with MVDC. MVDC will agree a role with the volunteer so there will be an expectation that the volunteer can meet the requirements and that MVDC will provide work for the volunteer, within the parameters of the agreement and scope of the anticipated role. However, the volunteer is free to refuse to fulfil the opportunity identified and MVDC is not bound to provide opportunities. It is also expected that both MVDC and the volunteer will give as much notice as possible if unable to meet the expectations expressed or agreed.

1. **RECRUITMENT**
   1. Roles and tasks suitable for volunteers are identified by the manager responsible for the role. This should be in agreement with the relevant Business Manager where this is not the identifying manager. The responsible manager will draw up a volunteer outline. This will outline the requirements of the role, the nature of the anticipated tasks and the skills or experience needed, as well as any training that is required before the volunteering work is undertaken. **Note: Volunteers cannot be used as substitutes for employees under any circumstances**.
   2. Identifying managers should consider whether it would be pertinent to

undertake a health check by referring through the usual channels to our Occupational Health provider. The requirement for this assessment will be informed on any level of risk posed by the nature of the work and/or skills required. Individuals who will be doing tasks involving manual handling or lifting are likely to need health checks.

4.3 Volunteers can be identified in one of two ways. They can either:

1) contact MVDC speculatively asking to do some volunteering work, in which case they will be asked to complete a standard Volunteer Application Form. The applicant will be asked to identify areas in which they would like to volunteer and MVDC will see if they are able to match the applicant to a suitable opportunity, or

2) identified volunteering opportunities will from time to time be advertised, for example through local Volunteer Centres, MVDC’s website and/or other recommended avenues. Interested applicants will apply as above completing a standard Volunteer Application form.

* 1. MVDC is committed to equality and diversity as evidenced through the

[Equality Policy statement](https://www.molevalley.gov.uk/sites/default/files/home/council/about-mvdc/equalitystatementandobjectives2017-21accessible.pdf) which can be found on the Council’s website.

* 1. The application and selection process will need to be appropriate to the

opportunity. Often this will simply be an informal meeting to agree the nature of the volunteering activity. Volunteers may be asked to provide a character reference to the identifying manager. This will be at the discretion of the identifying manager and subject to their agreement in terms of adequacy.

* 1. Volunteering opportunities that involve working with children, young

people and/or vulnerable adults will require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which will be included in the volunteer outline. The check will need to be completed for the individual by the manager before volunteering can begin. The outcome of a DBS check will be sent to the volunteer and they will need to share the outcome with their manager. The manager will be informed by the DBS when the check has been completed and if there are any issues with it.

* 1. An applicant should only be considered unsuitable for a particular

opportunity if they do not meet the criteria for that role as evidenced on the volunteer outline, if sufficient volunteers have already been identified, or if there is no available work in the area of interest. An explanation will be given by the manager where relevant.

* 1. When engaging groups or organisations in volunteering, the

group/organisation will be provided with a lead contact from MVDC. The lead contact will work with the group/organisation to establish responsibility for volunteer management, public liability insurance, risk assessment, health checks, references and DBS checks (where appropriate and necessary).

1. **VOLUNTEERING AGREEMENT**

5.1 Each volunteer will enter into a volunteering agreement with MVDC. This

agreement will identify:

* The nature of the volunteer’s role and identified tasks;
* Any training that the volunteer will need to undertake.
* Insurance cover that will be provided for the volunteer;
* Who will supervise the volunteer;
* Any policies the volunteer must adhere to (NB it is always expected that the Code of Conduct will apply and that during any public facing activities, volunteers are requested to remember that they represent MVDC and to behave in a manner that is in accordance with maintaining and enhancing our reputation);
* Where possible, the length of time that the volunteering is anticipated to go on for or if it is open ended at this stage.

1. **INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

6.1 MVDC will provide any training required for the tasks involved in the

volunteering opportunity, including a welcome and an introduction to

volunteering, equality and diversity, GDPR and health and safety by the

host team.

1. **EXPENSES**

7.1 Volunteers are unpaid and free parking is generally provided on site. However, MVDC values its volunteers and does not want finance to be a barrier to volunteering therefore in exceptional circumstances, reasonable out of pocket expenses may be reimbursed if there has been prior agreement with the identifying manager.

1. **SUPERVISION**

8.1 All volunteers will be provided with a named supervisor who will provide

relevant support and advice. The supervisor will review the arrangements

after an agreed timeframe (typically 3-6 months) and thereafter on a

regular basis.

8.2 Volunteers will have the opportunity to meet their supervisor regularly as

appropriate to the identified opportunity.

8.3 Volunteers engaged on an ongoing basis may be invited to relevant team

meetings with other volunteers and/or paid staff.

8.4 If a volunteer has any queries or would like to make any changes to the

tasks they undertake, this should be discussed with their supervisor.

8.5 The relationship between MVDC and its volunteers is entirely voluntary

and does not imply any contract or offer of employment. However, it is

important that MVDC is able to maintain its reputation and ensure

compliance with organisational values. Volunteers are therefore expected

to comply with all relevant policies and procedures whilst on the premises

or undertaking volunteering activities. Induction will include an

explanation of these policies and procedures.

**9 DEALING WITH ANY PROBLEMS**

9.1 Volunteers are welcome to talk through any concerns, problems or

complaints they might have at any stage. They should initially discuss

them informally with their supervisor through an ad hoc discussion or in a

supervision meeting.

9.2 The supervisor will try to solve any problems informally at the earliest

stage, but if a volunteer wishes to make a formal complaint, they should

put the complaint in writing to their supervisor. The supervisor will look

into the matter, as far as is reasonable, and give a response to their

complaint, either in person or in writing.

9.3 If a complaint is made about a volunteer this will be notified to them where appropriate and the supervisor will decide whether any action should be taken. The supervisor responsible for the volunteer may set a time period in which they will monitor the volunteer to find out if the problem or concern has resolved itself. However at any point if the contribution of a volunteer does not meet with MVDC’s standards then MVDC reserves the right to stop engaging the volunteer.

9.4 Volunteers are free to stop volunteering at any time, but are requested to

give reasonable notice, and preferably a reason for ending the

arrangement where this is not anticipated.

**10 INSURANCE / USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES**

10.1 All volunteers will be covered by MVDC’s insurance policies (personal

injury, professional and public liability) whilst they are on the premises or

engaged as a volunteer for MVDC. The insurance will not cover

unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement.

10.2 Any volunteers who will be transporting equipment or will use a vehicle

provided by MVDC must have a valid driving licence. They will be

covered by MVDC’s insurance as referred to above.

10.3 Where the volunteer will be using their own vehicle, they must

provide a copy of the vehicle’s insurance policy, and if appropriate, the

MOT certificate. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform their

insurance company if they are using their own car in the act of

volunteering and ensure that they hold the appropriate insurance cover

and driving licence.

10.4 Any accidents in the course of volunteering activities must be reported to

MVDC by the volunteer as soon as practicable. They must also report

any driving offences or police cautions as soon as issued. MVDC will not

pay any parking fines accumulated by the volunteer.

**11 RESPECT AT WORK**

11.1 MVDC is committed to equality and diversity and expects volunteers to

uphold this commitment and the legal standards expected in a modern

society. Volunteers will be briefed about MVDC’s standards of behaviour

during their training and are covered by MVDC’s Respect at Work policy.

**12 HEALTH AND SAFETY / RISK ASSESSMENT**

12.1 MVDC has a responsibility for the health and safety of its volunteers. All

volunteers will therefore be made aware of the Health and Safety policy

as part of their training and are required to follow the policy and

procedures at all times. Volunteers will be shown around any building(s)

where they will be volunteering making sure they know where fire exits

are, what to do in the event of a fire and who to report any health and

safety concerns to. Volunteers will be made aware of risk assessments

relevant to the tasks as appropriate.

12.2 Volunteers have a duty of care to take care of themselves and others

who might be affected by their actions or inactions.

12.3 MVDC expects volunteers to fulfil the role as stated in the volunteer

outline, to follow safety instructions, and to complete any specific training

required for the identified tasks. Volunteers should not act outside their

authorised area or work.

12.4 Volunteers should report any accidents to their supervisor. MVDC will

provide volunteers with appropriate guidance on any health and safety

issues that arise.

12.5 MVDC expects volunteers to let their supervisor know at the earliest

opportunity if they are unable to come in to volunteer due to illness or

other unforeseen circumstances.

**13 CONFIDENTIALITY**

13.1 Volunteers may become aware of confidential information about the

organisation, its staff, customers and suppliers depending on the tasks

undertaken. In this event, volunteers should not disclose this information

or use it for their own or another’s benefit without the consent of the party

concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in

the public domain (unless it has been made public as a result of the

volunteer’s breach of confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires

disclosure.

13.2 Volunteers are bound by the same confidentiality requirements as paid

staff.

13.3 Confidentiality will be covered in more detail where relevant during the

volunteer’s training.

**14 DATA PROTECTION**

14.1 MVDC processes personal data collected during the recruitment or engagement process in accordance with its Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement. In particular, data collected during these processes is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the volunteering relationship.

14.2 Inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data constitutes a data

breach and should be reported in accordance with MVDC’s Data

Protection Policy immediately.

14.3 Depending on the circumstances, this may lead to a termination of the

volunteering arrangement however in certain situations MVDC reserves

the right to seek further information from the volunteer in order to comply

with its reporting obligations to the Information Commissioner.

**15 VOLUNTEER STARTER INFORMATION**

15.1 On commencing their volunteer work, the volunteer will be given the

following information:

* general information about MVDC;
* a copy of this Volunteering Policy;
* a standard Volunteering Agreement;
* Role description if relevant;
* details of where they can access any relevant policies and procedures (NB this may need to be provided in hard copy or emailed to the individual’s home email address given it is unlikely volunteers will have MVDC ICT access); and
* information on other volunteering opportunities that are available.

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