



# Volunteering with Midlothian Council Policy

## Volunteering with Midlothian Council Policy

**“Volunteering – Making a Difference – A Force for Change”**

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## 1. Foreword

Midlothian Council welcomes and thanks all members of the community, including the many Council staff, who volunteer their own time to support and assist their neighbours and communities. Volunteering has been a feature of our society far back into history and has made, and continues to make, a valuable contribution to the wellbeing of communities. It has benefits for the volunteer as well as those with whom the volunteer works.

Volunteering can be motivated through an interest or hobby, from the environment or sports to the arts. A number of local people commence volunteering to support the groups their children are involved in. Some engage in campaigning or running community groups that deliver services even taking voluntary responsibility for employing paid staff. Other people see volunteering as helping them gain experience that will help them on the way to work, or a journey back from illness, or to gain confidence. Some volunteer to stay active and involved after retirement. Volunteering has proven health benefits including reduced social isolation and increased wellbeing.

Whichever motivation draws a volunteer into spending their time doing unpaid activities, it is up to the individual to control how much or what they choose to do, and for how long. Midlothian has a strong tradition of volunteering, with statistics showing nearly a third of the population give time regularly as a volunteer each week.

The Council wishes to encourage all staff teams to consider how they could offer volunteers a chance both to contribute to their work area and achieve the volunteer's personal goals.

As a Corporate Management Team we welcome the policy which will support managers across the Council to work with volunteers. The policy provides support and guidance to encourage and expand volunteering and types of volunteer experiences that the Council can offer. It also provides information on the further actions which will be taken to support expansion of volunteering (Appendix 1).

We look forward to hearing about the increased range of opportunities offered to volunteers across the Council.

Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive

## 2. Introduction

The volunteering policy was produced by a cross Council and Third Sector Joint Working Group including representatives from Human Resource, Finance, IT, Legal Services, Service Managers of Leisure Services, Lifelong Learning, Communities, Adult Social Care, Schools, Children's Services, Libraries & Customer Services.

This policy aims to provide a framework and guidance for supporting those who volunteer and help Midlothian Council staff to grow the number of volunteer opportunities for those of all ages. The Council recognises the excellent contribution that volunteers make. Staff and volunteers working together for the benefit of our communities is a key strength in our approach to making Midlothian 'a great place to grow'. Volunteering is a force for change – making a difference together.

The policy aims to address the following 5 objectives:

- To enhance the range of volunteer opportunities with Midlothian Council;
- To improve the recruitment and support for our volunteers;
- To increase the diversity of our volunteers to reflect our population profile;
- To recognise, reward and celebrate our volunteers;
- To work in partnership with volunteer lead agencies both locally and nationally.

## 3. Policy Context

### National

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (CE(S)A) 2015 and associated Guidance and Regulation – aims to empower individuals and communities shifting the balance of power clearly towards communities from public sector providers through a number of different requirements including locality planning; community asset transfer and engagement.

The Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services – chaired by Campbell Christie, highlighted that if they are to be effective, public services must empower individuals and communities by involving them in both the design and delivery of services. It advocated a fundamental overhaul of the relationships between institutions responsible for delivering public services and the needs of individuals and communities.

Volunteer Coordination - At national level, promotion and development of volunteering is undertaken by Volunteer Scotland (VS). It advertises and

promotes volunteering opportunities through a variety of channels including face to face consultations, local radio and web promotion assisting potential volunteers and third sector organisations with all aspects of volunteering.

## **Midlothian Policy Context**

Midlothian Learning and Development in the Community Strategic Plan 2018-21 – recognises the importance of supporting local people to volunteer and ensuring that in our new communities this continues to be a tradition.

The Third Sector Interface, Midlothian – volunteering is highly valued in Midlothian and is recognised by Midlothian Council and the Scottish Government, as the body who provides leadership and co-ordination for the volunteering in our area specifically through Volunteer Midlothian.

Volunteer Midlothian promotes and co-ordinates volunteering activities across the region and gives guidance for organisational policy development around volunteering. The Interface also advertises volunteering opportunities on its website and assists third sector organisations with all aspects of volunteering. As a key partner, the Interface has expertise in the promotion of volunteering opportunities and can advise on matching volunteers with opportunities. They carry this out via websites, social media sites, volunteer directories and when meeting volunteers for one to one appointments arranging alternatives for those who do not make use of digital technology.

Midlothian Council is one of 32 local Councils making up the Local Government of Scotland, accountable to the public through Elected Local Councillors who manage the Council, setting local policies and budgets for different services, reviewing and supporting the work of employees managed by a Chief Executive Officer and Senior Managers. The Council is also accountable under a set of UK and Scottish Government laws for the delivery of a wide range of services to the public living and working within the area. These laws set out exactly what must be delivered, standards or quantity, with a local audit network of national scrutiny bodies undertaking regular inspections and reviews to quality assure the work of the Council.

Beyond these detailed statutory duties, such as the provision of education for all children and of learning and community development services, child protection, adult social care, planning and building control, or public housing; the Council under the 2003 Local Government Act has wide ranging powers to 'advance the general wellbeing of the population'. This means it may deliver a wide range of other forms of support to the public but is not legally required to do so to a specified legal level. This means services such as sports and leisure, parks, countryside paths, economic development support for local businesses, tourism, voluntary sector grants, heritage and arts do not have a specified legal level of required service that a Council must provide.

The Council is committed to working in partnership with its residents wherever creative or constructive ways can be found to do so, and with other public, voluntary and private sector bodies through the Community Planning Partnership Board, a statutory body set up under the Community Empowerment Act 2015. As a sign of this commitment to working with partners and communities, the Council has adopted the partnership's shared strategy, the Single Midlothian Plan, as its own strategy. The top three priorities of this plan for 2016-19 are:

- **REDUCE THE GAP IN LEARNING OUTCOMES**
- **REDUCE THE GAP IN HEALTH OUTCOMES**
- **REDUCE THE GAP IN ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES**

## 4. Role of Volunteers in Midlothian Council

The Council as a partner in community planning is committed to building communities' capacity to manage their own affairs and to the co-planning, design, and delivery of public services with service users and with members of our communities. For example:

- The countryside ranger service working with community volunteers to plan, develop and maintain open public spaces and access to the countryside;
- Sports groups managing and maintaining Council owned but community operated pavilions and playing surfaces of community sports groups;
- Newbattle Community Learning Centre, Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre/Grassy Riggs similarly being owned by the Council but programmed and internally managed by volunteer management groups;
- Community Councils are a formal part of Local Government dependent on volunteers to work;
- Community councillors volunteer their time to gather and represent the views of their communities to the Council and partners in community planning;
- Transfer of some current Council buildings to community ownership or management, as part of Community Asset Transfer legislation builds on examples of effective community leadership such as the volunteer managed Ladywood Centre in Penicuik, the Beacon in Gorebridge, Mayfield and Easthouses Community Development Trust pavilion, the Glencorse Centre and Village Halls;
- The Council has supported the development of a network of after school care 'social enterprises' managed (on a not for personal profit basis) by local volunteers;
- Adult Health and Care staff have worked with committed local volunteers co-designing and delivering opportunities services with people on the Autism spectrum and their families, people with mental

health conditions, people learning disabilities and physical disabilities, older people. Children's Service staff have also co designed opportunities with care experienced young people. In all these cases the Council is working with volunteers. In some cases, such as the longstanding Ageing Well programme, volunteers have been the main deliverers of activities that support the physical and mental wellbeing of older people. Schools across Midlothian have daily support from parent volunteers in a variety of capacities. This ranges from Parent Council membership who support the work of staff in their endeavours to raise the standards and quality of education in the school and develop the pupils at that school to their fullest potential, to parents volunteering to come into classrooms to support classroom activities and assist on school trips. In addition the Parent/Teacher associations jointly run: school fairs, fetes and sponsored event fundraisers. These have become a key part of the way resources are provided for education;

- Adult Literacy and Numeracy support operated by the Lifelong Learning and Employability service has volunteer tutors, and volunteers make up part of its youth work teams;
- The Adult Health and Social Care Service has volunteers involved in befriending residents of care homes;
- Church and other faith group volunteers have worked with the Council on developing and delivering volunteer staffed foodbanks, volunteer support for refugees, clothes recycling, a volunteer "listening project" (offering an ear for young people needing someone to listen to their concerns);
- Staff within the Council volunteer in support of the Council's mediation service.

This is not an exhaustive list but gives a sense of the scale and diversity of the joint effort by volunteers working with council staff delivering local services.

Every year the Citizens' Panel survey asks about volunteering in the Midlothian area. Results from this show that around 30% of the residents of Midlothian volunteer in some capacity every week. Internal reviews of Council staff suggest that they are also volunteering in their communities outside their paid employment in a similar proportion.

The Council wishes to support and encourage residents volunteering and to ensure all volunteers within the Council are well treated. It is not the intention of this policy to seek to substitute volunteers for paid staff, or to treat volunteers as 'employees'. This policy is not intended to cover anyone who is engaged in community justice unpaid work, vocational learning, school work experience placements, employability programmes or undergraduate/postgraduate or research student placements within the Council, as these activities are not by definition volunteering.

## 5. Rights and Responsibilities

**In involving volunteers the Council recognises the rights of volunteers to:**

- know what is expected of them and to be given clear information and induction;
- have clearly specified lines of support; respect, confidentiality and privacy;
- be shown appreciation;
- have safe working conditions;
- be insured;
- know what their rights and responsibilities are;
- be reimbursed expenses;
- feel able to take holidays and breaks;
- be given appropriate options for learning;
- be free from discrimination;
- experience personal development through their participation as volunteers;
- ask for a reference;
- be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do;
- give notice to stop volunteering.

**Volunteers have the responsibility to:**

- carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of the Council;
- volunteer within agreed guidelines and remits;
- respect confidentiality of service users and staff;
- respect other volunteers, service users and staff;
- respect the human rights of others;
- carry out their tasks with a regard for their own health and safety and that of others;
- attend training and support sessions where appropriate;
- not bring the Council into disrepute.

## 6. Applying to Volunteer

Midlothian Council is committed to achieving an environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination. We put equality and diversity at the heart of the work we do, ensuring that we lead by example and embed equalities across all areas. Action will be taken as necessary to address any barriers in relation to individuals who have one or more of the nine “protected” characteristics, namely, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In recruiting volunteers we will uphold these principles.



Legally, the Council as a Statutory Body can take on unpaid Voluntary Workers (Minimum Wage Act 1998 S.44) as long as no monetary payments are made of any description (apart from reimbursing of actual expenses incurred by the volunteer) and there are no benefits in kind to the volunteer. The Council will not set out minimum hours of volunteering as this might imply an employee type relationship, but may set out “reasonable expectations of hours”. The period of the volunteering opportunity will also be left as open as possible. It will always be clear that the volunteer is free to leave at any time but to get the most out of an opportunity a specific period has been suggested.

The Council will not apply employee-related policies and terms (e.g. disciplinary process, employee terms and conditions, formal appraisal or Council performance management systems) with the exception of Health and Safety, General Data Protection Regulations, Confidentiality, Human Rights and Equalities, IT usage policy, which apply equally to both volunteers and employees.

The Council will ensure all volunteers have description of the volunteering role in their setting.

The Council can withdraw from offering the volunteering opportunity if a service ceases or changes.

### **Advertising for volunteers**

In some contexts, such as parental involvement in schools, or learning and development in the community settings, volunteers will come forward without the requirement to advertise. Where advertising is undertaken, vacancies will be promoted through Volunteer Midlothian using a range of methods including [www.volunteermidlothian.org.uk](http://www.volunteermidlothian.org.uk) and through other Council outlets for example myjobscotland.

Advertising will set out the opportunity on offer with a brief description of the role and any specific requirements of the setting. Clear information and support will be given on how to apply. Volunteers will be offered a meeting to discuss the opportunity on offer and whether they and the manager of the setting involved feel there is a match between them and the opportunity on offer. One reference will normally be sought from volunteers. If it is agreed that a volunteer is not right for the particular volunteer role they are interested in, the volunteer will be given clear supportive feedback and encouraged to look at alternative areas of activity where they could volunteer, and may with their agreement be referred to Volunteer Midlothian who can assist them in finding a more suitable volunteering opportunity.

## Induction and training

Anyone volunteering with the Council in any setting will be entitled to an induction session with the Council staff member responsible for them. This induction will brief them on the setting, the tasks and their rights and responsibilities. Volunteers will have appropriate access to training to enable them to develop their confidence and capabilities for their volunteering role.

## 7. Protection of Vulnerable Groups

The Council has opportunities that involve volunteering with children, young people or other vulnerable groups. Procedures are in place for screening potential volunteers (i.e. Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check and self-declaration forms).

When volunteers wish to volunteer in what is described as a 'regulated work' setting, a PVG check will be requested. In this situation, the volunteer will also be issued with ID bearing their photo.

To support the Council's understanding of the location of volunteers and the activities they are engaging in, any regular and substantive volunteering should be registered on the Council's iTrent system.

Establishing a regular volunteer on the iTrent system can be achieved by completing a Volunteer Registration/I Trent Form which is available on the intranet alongside other manager forms.

Information about a volunteer will be held with their explicit informed consent and in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations. The central database will be reviewed and refreshed 6 monthly to ensure those no longer participating in a volunteer opportunities details are removed.

The PVG Scheme is administered by Disclosure Scotland and allows organisations to satisfy themselves that an individual to whom they are offering 'regulated work' is not barred from doing that type of 'regulated work'.

PVG Scheme members are continuously monitored for new vetting information and any information which comes to light which may indicate that they are unsuitable to do 'regulated work' will lead to a consideration for listing. This is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland which, as an executive agency of the Scottish Government. Full details of the way the scheme operates can be found here (<https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme/> and <https://www2.gov.scot/Publications/2009/11/05140540/3>

## 8. Expenses

Reimbursing volunteers' expenses means that volunteering is accessible to all, regardless of income. Midlothian Council is committed to ensuring volunteers are paid travel expenses incurred, at the standard rates applied.

Volunteers are expected to make expense claims within a month of incurring the expense, and to be able to provide evidence (such as bus tickets) to support the expense claim.

To assist regular volunteers working within the Council, travel expense payments are made through the Council's expenses claim system, which allows for travel claims and direct payment to be made into volunteer's bank account in line with the monthly timetables.

To set this up regular volunteers need to be registered on the Council's ITrent system which will also enable the Council to monitor the number and location of volunteers across the organisation. Establishing a regular volunteer on the ITrent system can be achieved by completing an online Volunteer Form.

## 9. Support

The kind of support that the Council will provide for volunteers will depend on the type of work they are involved in. However, in all cases volunteers will have a named supervising staff member and regular meetings to discuss any ideas, suggestions, improvements, problems or issues that may arise. In some settings a group of volunteers may meet regularly with the staff member responsible for them to discuss such matters.

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views on matters concerning the setting within which they are volunteering and to make suggestions to improve the experience of volunteers and service users.

## 10. Insurance

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

*“The word 'Employee' shall mean any person under a contract of service or apprenticeship with the Named Insured. In respect of the Employers' Liability Section and Public and Products Liability Section the word 'Employee' shall for insurance purposes include and/or mean:*

*(f) Any volunteer worker acting under the authority of the Named Insured  
(g) Members of schemes or associations formed to assist in the activities of the Named Insured “*

## 11. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The Council is committed to promoting a positive working environment for all volunteers which, is essentially about good management practices characterised by respect and value of meaningful consultation, volunteer involvement and participation in decision-making.

Midlothian Council's approach to equality and diversity is changing from looking at solutions geared to special treatment for “groups” to developing a framework that helps remove barriers to and within employment or volunteering and creates fairness and opportunities for all. Everyone has the right to be respected and treated fairly. An individual should have both their individual needs, talents recognised and have an equal opportunity to progress.

The 2010 Equality Act sets out equality groups known as the nine 'protected characteristics'. The Council's Equality Plan 2017 - 2021 details the Council's obligations under the public sector duties and how the Council will meet them. Accordingly, the Council is clear that any unlawful discrimination will not be tolerated. We will continue to listen to and involve all stakeholders, including volunteers, work with other expert agencies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and apply the duties placed on the Council by the Equality Act 2010. Full details of legal protections can be found here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-scotland>

## **The Council will:**

- Provide development and guidance for volunteers, as appropriate, to ensure they understand the Council's equality duty;
- Review and develop, as required, recruitment procedures, practices and training arrangements in order to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination;
- Regularly monitor the effectiveness of the Plan and associated policies and identify possible areas for improvement;
- Ensure that the actions of volunteers in the provision of services shall be carried out in a non-discriminatory manner;
- Ensure confidentiality in line with the General Data Protection Regulations is adhered to and that all data relating to a person's profile is regarded as sensitive personal data, which must be stored securely, kept in confidence and only passed on with the individual's informed consent.

## **All volunteers:**

- Have a responsibility to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different equality groups;
- Must comply with measures introduced by the Council to promote equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination;
- Must not themselves discriminate against other volunteers / employees;
- Must draw to the attention of management any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- Must not victimise any individuals who have made complaints or who have provided information about discrimination;
- Must not harass, abuse, or intimidate other volunteers/employees on any grounds or otherwise act in a discriminatory manner including through the use of social media;
- Must ensure that, in any dealing with client groups and members of the public, no actions are undertaken that can be held to be discriminatory;
- Discriminatory acts or omissions committed by volunteers of the Council will be viewed seriously and will normally result in volunteering opportunities being withdrawn.

## **12. Health and Safety**

Organisations have a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to risks in relation to the health and safety of the volunteer. The Council has health and safety policies in place volunteers will be made aware of the policy and practical safety issues as part of their induction. A specific risk assessment will be undertaken for any new volunteering roles.

## The Council's policy aims:

To protect the health, safety and welfare of all Midlothian Council employees and volunteers and to protect people who could be affected by the organisation's activities.

## Objectives

The main objectives of this policy and any documents created under its authority are:

- To identify work-related hazards affecting employees, volunteers, service users and others as a result of Midlothian Council's activities;
- To maintain healthy and safe working conditions, including the provision of safe systems of work and safe work equipment;
- To work to prevent workplace accidents and work-related ill health;
- To develop health support services by promoting health screening, health surveillance and preventative medical services;
- To develop proactive health promotion and education initiatives in support of the Council's health promotion programme;
- To ensure that volunteers are provided with information and training to support them to work safely;
- Provide adequate supervision to confirm volunteers are able to work in a safe manner when applying training, knowledge and work equipment in the correct manner;
- To ensure the safe transport, storage, handling and use of hazardous substances;
- To consult with volunteers on health and safety issues affecting them.

Midlothian Council is committed to encouraging all volunteers to play an active role in securing their own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others.

## 13. Resolving Issues

This policy contains the procedure that should be followed to resolve issue relating to volunteers. As volunteers are not covered by employment legislation they cannot be included in the Council Resolution and disciplinary policies. The procedure below exists to ensure that where there are disputes involving volunteers the issue will be solved quickly and fairly.

## **The Procedure aims to:**

- Protect our volunteers;
- Minimise any disruption to staff, service users and other volunteers;
- Demonstrate that Midlothian Council respects its volunteers;
- Protecting the reputation of the organisation.

## **Scope**

The procedure applies to all volunteers and employees.

## **Purpose**

This Procedure sets out the approaches that can be used to attempt to resolve workplace issues informally and as quickly as possible.

## **Complaint from a volunteer about a Council employee**

- In all cases the Resolution Procedure for Council staff will be adhered to.

## **If someone complains about a volunteer**

The process below gives the volunteer the opportunity to be advised why a complaint has arisen, the opportunity to state their case and an opportunity to appeal.

### **First Steps – Verbal discussion**

The first step is to establish the facts of the complaint therefore discussing with the volunteer. Where appropriate identify goals that will help the volunteer to fulfil their role, and offer extra support, supervision and training where necessary.

A date for a follow up review of the situation with the volunteer will be agreed.

### **Next Steps – Written Improvement Plan**

If the issue hasn't been resolved by the oral discussion or the review, then the immediate supervisor can issue the volunteer with a written statement outlining the complaint. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to state their case, which could be to either their immediate supervisor or their line manager.

The volunteer can be accompanied by a support person of their choice. Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set, and help offered to the volunteer. However, if the Council decides to inform

the volunteer to leave, then the volunteer should be given the opportunity to appeal. The decision to cease a volunteer opportunity will be an action of last resort.

## **Opportunity to appeal**

If a volunteer has been asked to leave then they can appeal in writing to the Head of Service or the manager whichever is next in line. The volunteer will be invited to have a nominated person present at this meeting. This manager will consider the case and will respond within ten working days. The manager's decision is final.

## **Exceptions**

There are some occasions when volunteers can be directed to stop volunteering immediately while an investigation is carried out. These include, but are not limited to, acts that constitute gross misconduct such as theft, assault, act of violence, malicious damage, and deliberate falsification of documents, harassment or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In these instances the decision to suspend a volunteer will be confirmed in writing as soon as possible after leaving.

## **14. Confidentiality**

Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff. The Council endeavours to ensure that its decision making process is as transparent and open as possible and that the public is provided with clear and accessible information about how it operates. It also has a complaints procedure in place for the public to use when things go wrong.

There are, however, exceptions to the principle of openness where the confidentiality of personal or commercially sensitive information must be maintained. Failure to secure confidential information can have very serious consequences, volunteers should always check with the staff member responsible for them before releasing anything to a third party. Similarly volunteers should be careful not to divulge such information relating to the Council, its employees or service users outside their volunteering setting.

### **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

The right of access to personal information held by the Council whether an employee, volunteer, or a service user/ member of the public is governed by the GDPR. The GDPR places strict requirements on the Council in respect of the security of information held, how it is used and when it may be disclosed. The new GDPR came into force in May 2018. This tightens requirements to have consent from anyone giving the Council personal information, and requires all data to be managed in a way that protects individuals for unnecessary sharing of their personal information. When in



any doubt Volunteers should discuss matters with the staff member responsible for their support.

## 15. Ending the volunteering opportunity

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

- An exit meeting takes place
- The volunteer is thanked for their commitment
- A reference is offered
- All expenses have been paid
- If a PVG was required, the supervisor, or their representative, needs to contact Recruitment and Selection Midlothian Council
- Volunteers personal details, held by Midlothian Council they volunteer will need to be updated accordingly and in line with current legislation
- Collect the volunteers photo ID from them and or any equipment, if they had been issued for this volunteering role
- Remove access permission to building entry and information systems etc.
- Ensure all clothing or equipment is returned.

## 16. Local Volunteering Sector/Networking

Midlothian Council works closely with the local voluntary sector which by definition is managed by unpaid volunteers, even where they then employ paid staff. Some examples are set out in the opening part of this policy. The Council is committed to partnership working with our communities and has a longstanding close relationship with the Volunteer Midlothian who have assisted in the drafting of this policy and agreed to act as a recruitment gateway partner for advertising volunteering options within the Council, in addition to myjobscotland.

## 17. Review of Policy

This Volunteer Policy will be reviewed every 3 years for relevance and revised as needed. Gaps in policy will continually surface as factors in the volunteering environment, the organisation, the community and the law change. The voice of volunteers will be an important part of reviews and updating.

## 18. Responsibility for Implementation

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

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<b>Name of Document</b>	Volunteering with Midlothian Council Policy Framework
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<b>Date of Next Review</b>	2022
<b>Policy Lead</b>	Community Planning Manager

## Appendix 1

### Commitment for Action

**Midlothian Council has committed to taking action on the following 5 objectives:**

- To enhance the range of volunteer opportunities with Midlothian Council;
- To improve the recruitment and support for our volunteers;
- To increase the diversity of volunteers to reflect our population profile;
- To recognise, reward and celebrate our volunteers;
- To continue to work in partnership with volunteer lead agencies both locally and nationally.

**The Council will:**

- Secure a champion for volunteering;
- Hold an annual volunteer recruitment open day;
- Provide taster volunteer opportunities;
- Increase opportunities for family friendly and youth volunteering with the Council;
- Celebrate volunteering through recognition schemes;
- Give volunteers the opportunity to contribute to service redesign and quality improvement.

## Appendix 2

### Volunteering with Midlothian Council

#### Frequently Asked Questions by Volunteers.

#### Why is there a new cross Council Volunteer Council Policy?

Volunteering is not new in the Council we have a strong tradition of citizens volunteering with us. We have launched the new policy to ensure consistency and quality across the Council.

Midlothian Council's vision is to increase volunteering opportunities and work in partnership with communities to provide services. Providing opportunities for volunteering is mutually beneficial to both the volunteer and recipient. There are added benefits for example increasing your social network, developing new skills or the sense of giving back to the communities we live in.

#### How do you know what volunteer opportunities there are with the Council?

Opportunities will be advertised through Midlothian Council – myjobscotland and Volunteer Midlothian through their website and networks.

<http://www.volunteermidlothian.org.uk/>.

Some more informal opportunities may be advertised locally for example volunteering in your child's school. If you have a skill you think would lend itself well to volunteering please contact us contact Volunteer Midlothian who we can put you in touch with the right opportunities.

#### Who can volunteer?

The majority of our opportunities are open to all. Although if the opportunity is with young people or vulnerable adults then you would be required to complete a PVG (protection of vulnerable groups). Also if the volunteer is not an adult then appropriate opportunities would need to be considered as part of the risk assessment.

#### Will I get paid?

No you would offer your time free of charge however travel expenses incurred can be claimed e.g. bus fare. 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?**

Yes you would be entered into the volunteer register and you would be covered by the Council's insurance policy. You will be required to adhere to the health and safety practices which help protect you. A risk assessment for any volunteer opportunities would be undertaken and shared with you.

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

It is not the intention of this policy to substitute paid staff by volunteers or treat volunteers as employees. Volunteering provides added value through an increased amount of activity or by providing services council staff do not.

### **Who will pay for a PVG if I need one?**

The Council will support you to apply and pay for your PVG.

### **Can I undertake more than one volunteer opportunity?**

Yes, but you would need to apply for each opportunity.

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

You will have a link Council employee who will help you with any issues. The 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 get a reference for my volunteering or participate in training?**

Yes, your key contact would provide this and you would also have access to appropriate training.

## Appendix 3

### Recruiting Volunteers

#### Frequently Asked Questions by Council Staff

#### **How do I create a volunteer opportunity in my service and how many can I have?**

You need to create a simple list of the role and tasks associated with the volunteer opportunity. You need to check you can pay small expenses from your departmental budgets for example bus fares. You also need to undertake a risk assessment of the role and tasks and share this with the successful volunteer. The number of volunteers within your service areas depends on the amount of staff time you have to support them and the budget available to pay expenses. You may need to discuss ideas with your manager where appropriate and make an informed decision with regard to numbers of volunteers.

#### **How do I advertise the volunteer opportunity?**

Opportunities will be advertised through Talent Link, Midlothian Council and Volunteer Midlothian through their website.

<http://www.volunteermidlothian.org.uk/>. An online template for the volunteering position is available on Midlothian Council's intranet. Some more informal opportunities may be advertised locally for example volunteering in a school.

#### **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 a PVG (protection of vulnerable groups). Also if the volunteer is very young then appropriate opportunities would need to be considered as part of a risk assessment. On average most regular volunteer opportunities would be suitable for those aged 16+ but this is not always the case other opportunities may be suitable for those younger than 16.

#### **Will volunteers get paid?**

No they would offer their time free of charge however volunteer expense incurred can be claimed for e.g. bus fare. It is important to us that any potential volunteer do not experience a barrier to taking part for example the cost of getting there by bus. You would 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 health and safety practices. A risk assessment for any volunteer opportunities would be undertaken and shared by the person creating the volunteer opportunity.

### **I'm concerned I could be accused of using a volunteer to do the job of an existing employee?**

Volunteering is flexible and voluntary. It is not the intention of this policy to substitute paid staff by volunteers or treat volunteers as employees. Volunteering provides added value through an increased amount of activity or by providing services council staff do not.

### **What support do I need to give a volunteer?**

You need to provide volunteers with a link to a Council employee who can give them support and advice. You need to induct the volunteer into their role. You need to meet with them to support and assess progress as frequently as is appropriate to the experience. You may also help volunteers access to appropriate training if available and affordable. You need to help volunteers resolve any issue and in some circumstances follow the formal process for resolving issues. In some situations you may have to stop the volunteering opportunity.

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

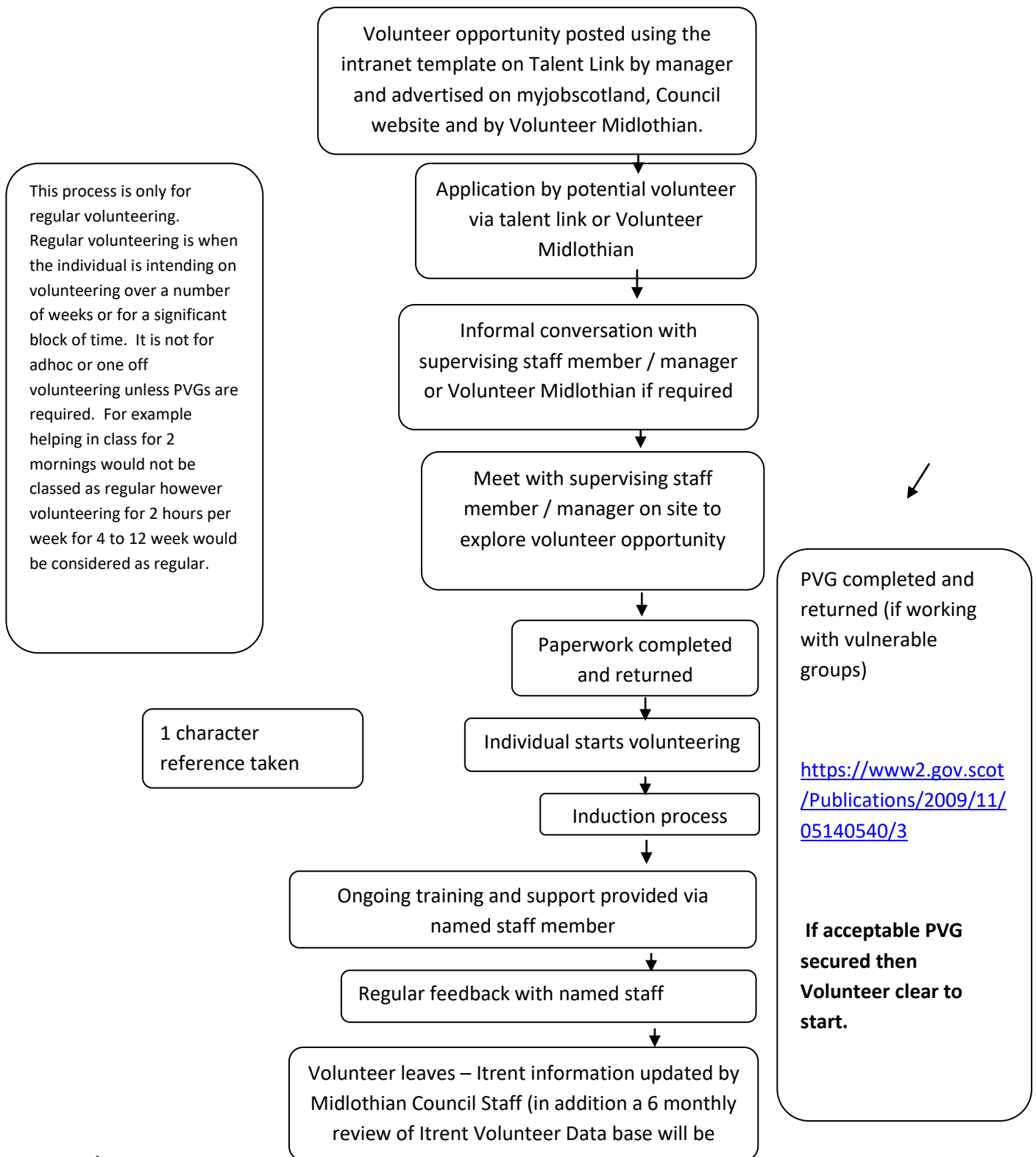
The policy has clear steps in place to support and resolve issues. In exceptional circumstances volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering or Council staff may be subject to formal policies of the council.

### **Can I give a reference for Volunteers?**

Yes, the link Council employee can provide this. Guidance on the provision of references is available from HR Services.

## Appendix 4

The Council operates the following process for volunteers.





## Appendix 5

### Volunteer Charter

This Volunteer Charter describes the arrangement between Midlothian Council and the Volunteer. The Council is grateful for the support you are offering through Volunteering. We will do our best to make your volunteer experience with us as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.

Your role as a volunteer is [*state nature and components of the volunteering role*] and starts on [*date*]. This volunteering role is designed to [*state how the volunteering role benefits the organisation*].

#### You can expect Midlothian Council to provide:

##### 1. Induction and training

- To provide clear information on the volunteer role and guidance on key policies including confidentiality;
- To provide an induction on the work of Midlothian Council, (*insert service area*)..... its staff, your volunteering role and the induction and/or training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role.

##### 2. Supervision, support and flexibility

- To discuss expectations and details of the role;
- To provide a named person who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any successes and problems;
- To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us;
- To demonstrate our appreciation of your volunteering;
- To support your learning and development.

##### 3. Expenses

- Any expenses must be agreed in advance. Please keep all your receipts to be submitted with your travel expenses claim.

##### 4. Health and safety

- To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our Council Health and Safety Policy;
- To ensure you feel able to take holidays and breaks.

## 5. Insurance

- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst carrying out their volunteering roles which have been approved and authorised by Midlothian Council.

## 6. Equal opportunities

- To ensure that all volunteers are supported in accordance with our Council Equal Opportunities Policy.

## 7. Problems

- To try to resolve fairly any problems, complaints and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with Midlothian Council;
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the procedures set out within volunteer policy.

### As a Volunteer I will:

- Help Midlothian Council by undertaking the following role \_\_\_\_\_;
- Perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability;
- follow the organisation's procedures and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients;
- Maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients;
- Comply with all policies relating to IT and Network systems where access is provided;
- Attend appropriate training and support sessions where appropriate;
- Let you know if I can't volunteer or wish to change the arrangement;
- Provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to a PVG check being carried out where necessary;
- Engage in feedback to improve the volunteer experience improve services and influence strategic redesign of services.

**Both parties acknowledge the expectations outlined in the volunteer charter, this is not a legal obligation but one of good practice. This agreement is about volunteering and not employment.**

Signed.....

Date.....