

Hinckley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

# EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING POLICY

March 2019

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## **Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Employee Volunteering Policy**

### **What is the purpose of this Policy?**

- To set out the authority's commitment to supporting employees to undertake volunteering opportunities
- To set out the specific arrangements/procedures to enable employees to take up this opportunity
- To set out the requirements and expectations on employees in relation to volunteering opportunities
- To promote the benefits to the employee, community and the authority of an Employee Volunteering Policy

### **The Local Authority's Commitment**

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council recognises the contribution that an employee volunteering scheme can make to the wider community, enabling employees to 'give something back' to their community, whilst at the same time enhancing learning and development opportunities for its employees.

The authority also wishes to continue to enhance its relationship and support to the voluntary and community sector (VCS), and to work with the VCS in promoting volunteering opportunities, and securing take up. This is reflected in authority's corporate priorities.

The authority's commitment to supporting and enabling volunteering is set out in the **Borough's Volunteering Strategy**, this can be accessed via the HBBC intranet under key policies and strategies.

The authority will encourage its employees to take up opportunities, but recognises that volunteering is a matter of personal choice.

This policy applies to **all** employees of the council.

### **Why Employee Volunteering Can Make a Difference**

#### **Benefits to Employees:**

Employee volunteering can be viewed as one approach to enabling ongoing lifelong learning, by offering opportunities to enhance or develop new skills from working in a new and/or different environment

Volunteering can help build new networks, sometimes with staff from within the authority, but also with colleagues from other organisations, sectors, and the community.

Volunteering can improve life skills and self confidence by offering experiences outside normal comfort zones, and the chance to tackle new challenges in a supported way.

Volunteering can help employees to get a wider perspective of some of the issues in their local community, and a chance to contribute to an issue they really care about.

It can support an individual's health and wellbeing, as well as being very motivating and fulfilling to do something that helps others.

Volunteering can be extremely enjoyable, with a chance to do something completely different from your day job.

### **Benefits to the Local Community:**

The voluntary and community sector relies on outside support to meet the needs of the community it serves. Employee volunteers can contribute time, skills and enthusiasm to get things done. Skilled employee volunteers can not only provide the professional skills which voluntary organisations can struggle to afford, but also help the organisation's own staff to learn and develop

Employee volunteering schemes are part of the process of ensuring a broader range and number of people are enabled to become involved, and give back to their community

### **Benefits to the Council:**

HBBC recognises the importance of playing an active part in the local community, and sees employee volunteering as one way of enabling employees to get involved in community activities.

Employees will have the opportunity to develop and practice a wide range of skills: leadership, communication, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, project management and team working; all of which can be brought back to the authority.

Employee volunteering can help the authority and its staff to build on, and establish new and important relationships in the wider community, and to gain a closer understanding of the make up and needs of its community.

Employee volunteers make great ambassadors to enhance the reputation and profile of the authority, as an employer of choice and a great place to work.

Employees are the most valuable asset that HBBC has, it is important that employees feel valued by being supported to learn and develop, and through

recognition by their employer of the qualities, skills and expertise they have to offer to others. Employee volunteering helps to create a positive and supportive culture.

### **What support will be provided by the authority?**

The authority will grant a **maximum of 2 days paid time during a 12 month period** (this will be on a pro rata basis for part time employees). It is recognised that some activities that staff may wish to volunteer for will take place outside of normal office hours e.g. evening and weekend events, and therefore this time will be accrued as TOIL.

If an individual wishes to contribute more hours to volunteering activities, this will be in their own time. **Please note paid volunteering hours will be restricted to volunteering opportunities that are undertaken within the Borough area of Hinckley and Bosworth.**

The volunteering hours must be agreed **at least 4 weeks in advance** with the employee's line manager, and will be **subject to the manager's discretion**, and within the context of the need to maintain service levels, as always being the first priority.

The authority will communicate opportunities for volunteering through the intranet, staff newsletter, staff briefing sessions, workspace, etc. The HBBC Strategic Leadership Team will support in the identification of appropriate HBBC volunteering opportunities i.e. community clean ups, tidy gardens, Borough wide events, etc. however these will be put forward as suggested ideas that employees may wish to take up.

Employees will also be encouraged to access the Hinckley & Bosworth developing Volunteering Hub Service, overseen by Next Generation as part of our local Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership arrangements – an on line and drop in service for finding out what volunteering opportunities are available within the Borough. Contact Next Generation on 01455 632984, or visit the VCS Partnership website at <http://nextgenhinckley.org/>

### **What is expected of Employees?**

Whilst being supported by the authority, it will be the responsibility of employees to organise their own volunteering activities.

Once a volunteering activity has been identified and the employee has made contact with the voluntary organisation/charity, the employee should complete **an Employee Volunteering Request Form, attached at Appendix 1**, and forward this to their line manager.

The employee and line manager will arrange to meet and discuss the application, subsequently, if the line manager supports the application, time off will be authorised. However, all decisions are at the line manager's

discretion, reserving the right to decline the application, for reasons which could include service needs, planned changes, etc.

Once agreed the employee should agree specific times and dates in conjunction with the line manager and the voluntary organisation.

Once agreed or declined a copy of the Employee Volunteering Request Form should be forwarded to HR for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

### **Conditions of Volunteering Activities Supported by this Policy**

An employee who wishes to participate in a volunteer activity in the community must adhere to the following conditions:

- Time away from work must be agreed with their line manager in advance, and reasonable notice of the request must be given (**at least 4 weeks in advance**).
- Employees must complete the **Employee Volunteering Request Form**
- Reasonable notice is required to allow both the individual and their line manager to organise any necessary cover within their team.
- The volunteering activity should not bring the Council into disrepute.
- The volunteering activity must not conflict with the employee's work for the Council for example, acting as a Treasurer for a charity that you have regular contact with in your council role. Employees should seek further advice from their line manager if they are concerned about potential conflicts of interest.
- Employees must complete the **Employee Volunteering Feedback Form**, following completion of their volunteering activity.

As an employee of the Council it is important to adhere to Council's policies and procedures including:

- The Code of Conduct.
- Employees must also respect confidentiality when undertaking voluntary activity. In practice, this will mean being aware of sensitive or confidential information disclosed.
- Time taken for voluntary activities must be recorded as 'Volunteer Hours' on timesheets
- Employees who accept a volunteering activity are expected to attend and meet their commitment. If an employee fails to attend a pre-agreed volunteering activity they will need to explain their non-attendance to their line manager. If non-attendance is due to sickness absence, then it must be reported by the usual sickness absence notification. Please refer to the Sickness Absence Reporting Requirements. If no reason for the absence is provided for the employee's non-attendance, this should be treated as an unauthorised absence and no payment for the time not worked will be made.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Evaluation of the Employee Volunteering Policy and programme is essential so that we can improve and build on it.

The authority will monitor and evaluate its impact to ensure long term success. Therefore, employees must complete the **Employee Volunteering Feedback Form, attached at Appendix 2**, and forward a copy to the HR Team, to review whether our Employee Volunteering approach is successful and worthwhile.

It is the responsibility of the line manager and the employee to monitor the number of volunteering hours undertaken.

### **Health and Safety**

If an employee undertakes a volunteering activity, they will be automatically covered by the Council's Public Liability Insurance and the Council's Employer's Liability Insurance.

However, employees may need to undertake a risk assessment and have any additional health and safety training that is relevant to the activity i.e. manual handling. The employee must check with the voluntary agency, whether this is a requirement prior to the volunteering commencing.

### **DBS Checks and Process**

If employees are going to be working with children, then the Disclosure and Barring Service process must be undertaken before any volunteering activity can commence. Employees must check and be advised by the voluntary agency, whether this is a requirement prior to the volunteering commencing.

**For any questions regarding the Employee Volunteer Policy please contact the HR Team.**

