

## **MORAY COUNCIL VOLUNTEERING POLICY**

(DRAFT April 2023)



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Moray Council recognises the enormous contribution that volunteers make in our communities – both informally through helping neighbours and more formally in terms of running groups and activities.

Moray citizens are happy to volunteer in many ways as evidenced by the community responses to emergency situations such the COVID pandemic or mobilising around extreme weather events. Volunteers also get involved in community councils and other representative forums as well as through participation in the many groups and activities which bring people together in our communities.

This Policy has a specific focus on direct Council volunteers as well as in enhancing links to community groups and volunteers involved in Community Resilience Planning.

['Volunteering for All'](#) the national framework for volunteering describes volunteering as

*"...the wide range of ways in which people help out, get involved, volunteer and participate in their communities (both communities of interest and communities of place). Volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary".*

This Volunteering Policy has been updated to reflect the breadth of volunteering opportunities and scenarios in Moray and outlines our commitment to

- **Encourage, support and celebrate those who volunteer to add value to key council services - everything from local befriending, supporting adult learners with literacy and numeracy through to supporting youth groups in initiatives like Active Schools and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.**
- **Working with community councils and other key community bodies involved in Resilience Planning to support them in developing Community Resilience Plans to help them in mobilising quickly and safely around emergency situations.<sup>1</sup>**

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***In terms of this policy when we use the term Moray Council we are also including Health and Social Care Moray, the integrated partnership with NHS Grampian working together to deliver a range of community health and social care services.***

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## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

Moray Council is committed to supporting and promoting volunteering opportunities in appropriate departments and roles. In terms of external procurement of services, the council will encourage the involvement of volunteers in line with this policy and contractual requirements as appropriate. We recognise that volunteers are a significant

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<sup>1</sup> [Storm Arwen Review – Scottish Government, January 2022](#) Recommendation 2 – 'Fuller integration of the voluntary and community sector into emergency planning and response'.

community asset and that volunteering is a demonstration of citizenship in action which benefits both the volunteer and the wider community.

Moray Council also recognises the part that volunteers play in civic society and community life and that we as a Council have an enabling role to play as a supportive partner. The Council will work directly with community based groups and individuals to maximise our joint responses to emergency situations building on the high levels of social capital that already exist within Moray

### **3. AIMS**

The overall aim of this updated policy is to continue to develop and promote best practice with volunteers **working directly with the Council**.

In addition the policy reflects the councils desire to work in in partnership with community councils and others community groups and volunteers in responding to emergency situations such as the pandemic or extreme weather events.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- This Policy serves as a clear statement of the Council's commitment to volunteering and of the expectations on our staff and services to provide a productive and safe environment for volunteers.
- Moray Council services will co-ordinate their approach to volunteering through a new cross service Volunteering Forum for all services using or planning to use volunteers. The Forum will also have input from officers leading on Resilience Planning with communities.
- Moray Council's direct volunteers will feel valued and respected and have access to training around relevant Council policies such as child protection, adult protection, health and safety, equal opportunities, etc.
- Moray Council will acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of its volunteers, including staff volunteers, during national [Volunteers' Week](#).

### **4. PRINCIPLES**

The Moray Council:

- Will never directly introduce volunteers to replace paid Council employees.
- Recognises that volunteers make a unique and valuable contribution to policy objectives and service provision and that they have a right to good quality support and developmental opportunities.
- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users, employees and communities.
- Believes that volunteering should be open to all and recognises that there can be financial barriers to volunteering. We will therefore ensure that out of pocket and authorised expenses will be offered and reimbursed in line with the Council's expenses claims process.

## 5. **SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This Policy applies to all Moray Council staff; volunteers and elected members. Services in Health and Social Care Moray will also adhere to this policy in relation to volunteer support and development.

## 6. **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers have a right to know what is expected of them in the context of their volunteering commitment which as stated in the Volunteering for All framework is a

*'...choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary'.*

We believe that direct council volunteers are entitled ...

- To know what is expected of them and who their main contact is.
- To have clearly specified lines of support and supervision along with the opportunity for more informal meetings and catch-ups with staff and other volunteers.
- To have safe working conditions which have been risk assessed and be insured in their volunteering role.
- To know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
- To have access to appropriate training for their role and personal development.
- To get feedback on their contribution and to be made aware of other volunteering opportunities they may be interested in exploring.
- To be valued and appreciated and not subject to any bullying or discrimination.

In return volunteers are expected to...

- Undertake PVG (Protecting Vulnerable groups) disclosure checks as required.
- Carry out their tasks in a way that corresponds to the aims, values and policies of the Council
- Operate within agreed guidelines and remits relating to their task
- Follow health and safety regulations and instructions
- Adhere to the Council's statements *or policies such as Equal Opportunities, Child Protection, GDPR/Data protection/Information Sharing and other relevant Policies and Procedures*
- Respect confidentiality and adhere to any policies and procedures associated with information sharing protocols that the Council may have entered into
- Attend training and support sessions where required

- Adhere to the employee code of conduct

## **7. VOLUNTEER ESSENTIAL INFORMATION HANDBOOK**

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Essential Information Handbook which will be updated as required.

The handbook includes information on

- Best Practice Guidance for Volunteering
- Clear explanations of roles which require a Protection for Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check to be carried out by Disclosure Scotland (funded by the Council)
- Volunteer Agreements - covering agreed tasks; expenses; support and supervision; induction and on-going training etc.
- Key Policies – information on policies such as Health and Safety; Data Protection; Equal Opportunities; Confidentiality; Child Protection; Vulnerable Adult Protection etc.
- Service specific information relevant to a particular strand of volunteering – for instance Boundaries and Safeguarding training specific to health and social care settings/

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**Current volunteering opportunities within the council can be accessed via the [volunteering page on the website](#).**

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## **8. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Moray Council is committed to ongoing monitoring and review of this policy and will carry out a formal review every 5 years, with the next review to take place in 2028. This policy and any updates should influence best practice within Council services

### **Community Engagement**

Working through local community planning structures, the Moray Council will actively engage with the wider community and key partners in order to raise awareness of this policy and seek their views, opinions and support, making any necessary amendments for improvement as required.

### **Equalities**

The Moray Council will actively encourage volunteering amongst those people and groups, who are more likely to be excluded from volunteering because of low income, race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or philosophical belief. We will work to remove any barriers to volunteering and match volunteers to roles where they can utilise existing skills and develop new ones.