

Volunteering Policy



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Issued: XXX Review: XXX

Version Control

This document is intended for:

- Council staff only School-based staff only Council & School-based staff

Version	Key Changes	Approved By

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not reflect a fundamental change or affect the spirit or intent of the document.

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1. Introduction

The Council recognises that some employees wish for an opportunity to develop professional and personal skills whilst helping local people, the community or improving the environment. By encouraging voluntary activities, the Council demonstrates that it values its employees, local groups and seeks to play a leading role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the communities that it serves as part of its commitment to community engagement. This policy is also intended to support, encourage and develop employees by facilitating their involvement in a wide range of community organisations.

This Policy sets out the requirements for implementing the Council's commitment to supporting employee volunteering.

2. Definition of Corporate Volunteering

Corporate volunteering is a workplace-based initiative whereby the Council provides support and encouragement for its employees to volunteer in the local community and for good causes. Volunteering is defined as a commitment of time and energy for the benefit of the community, environment, individuals or groups which can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and not for financial gain. The Council encourages its employees to volunteer by allowing time off during work hours which they use to volunteer at an establishment of their choice i.e. charities, community groups, schools, care homes, hospitals.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to Council staff only, regardless of length of service or type of contract with the exception of those employed on a relief basis.

4. Policy Statement

The Council is committed to playing its part as active corporate citizens by sharing our expertise, skills and resources and creating partnerships which have a positive impact on our wider communities. Accordingly, the Council encourages its employees to engage as volunteers in a broad range of social, environmental and economic initiatives in the communities of Blaenau Gwent as a means of enhancing the Council's community leadership role.

By actively supporting the community and continuing to be a socially responsible organisation, the Council believes that this scheme will bring real benefits to our customers, our communities and our employees.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Positively impact and contribute to the local community of Blaenau Gwent, continuing to be a socially responsible organisation by sharing our expertise, resources and creating partnerships.
- Support and encourage employees to volunteer to improve skills, personal development, health and wellbeing.
- Contribute to the recruitment and retention of staff providing access to further opportunities, staff motivation and the delivery of quality services.

Volunteering can provide a refreshing and inspiring break and have a great motivational effect on the individual, thus leading to improved business performance. Volunteering leave can also have a positive effect on the Council's ability to recruit and retain employees.

Volunteering can benefit the individual, community and the Council by providing opportunities for:

- Personal growth, where an individual can acquire new skills and knowledge that will have a positive effect on the Authority.
- Sense of pride and achievement which will impact employee satisfaction, morale and wellbeing.
- Employee engagement contributing to brand reputation, recruitment and retention.
- Access to skilled support and increased productivity and reputation in the community.
- Increased awareness and engagement with community issues.

5. Policy Entitlement

To support our commitment to being an "Employer of Choice" and to achieve the aims in the section above, it is the responsibility of the Council to give employees the opportunity to broaden their experience and acquire new skills by carrying out voluntary work. This will be achieved by granting a paid volunteering period of **one day per year per employee** which can be split into half days. Accrual of volunteering leave cannot be carried forward into the next year if not utilised by the employee.

If you would like to volunteer but unsure of an organisation to volunteer with, please contact Caragh Porter at Caragh.Porter@gavo.org.uk or 07483 128080 who is the Council's direct link to the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO). GAVO can support and guide you individually in finding an appropriate volunteering opportunity.

Where an employee wishes to apply for a period of unpaid, extended leave to undertake volunteering, please refer to our Sabbatical Policy.

Where possible, the Council will try to accommodate requests for volunteering leave but the needs of the service will always be paramount.

6. Employee Responsibilities

The employee responsibilities when requesting volunteering leave are:

- Volunteering to the best of their ability and representing the Council in a professional and positive way.
- Respecting the privacy, property and confidentiality of others.
- Ensuring they are aware of any safeguarding obligations and report any concerns.
- Notifying the organisation they are volunteering for and their manager with as much notice as possible if they are unable to attend the volunteering commitment.

7. Manager's Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the manager in relation to the Volunteering Policy are:

- Ensuring staff members, including new starters are aware of the opportunity to volunteer.
- To be as supportive as possible when considering employee's requests, however, need to ensure that volunteering will not disrupt or adversely affect service delivery.
- Ensuring there is no conflict of interest with the individual's role and does not promote extreme views.
- Ensuring the volunteering activity is of legitimate cause.
- Ensuring sufficient cover is in place while the employee volunteers.
- Submitting the request for volunteering form to the OD department in a timely manner.

8. Requesting Paid Volunteering Leave

To request a period of volunteering leave, the employee should speak with their manager to ensure they can be released from their work duties. The employee must complete a "[Request Form for Volunteering Leave](#)" and submit this form to their manager in advance of the leave.

The manager will consider the application with regards to the business needs of the Service and only on receipt of an approved form should the employee commit themselves to volunteering.

Abuse of the Provisions

Any abuse of the provisions of the volunteering policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Authority's [Disciplinary Code](#).

9. Further Considerations

- Issues such as insurance, health & safety and safeguarding will be the liability of the volunteering organisation while the employee is on volunteering leave.
- Any expenses occurred such as travel will not be covered by the Council.
- Any activities which cannot be shown to be of benefit to the local community, such as organisations who look to make profit, volunteering to support a friend or family member will not qualify under this scheme.

Request Form For Volunteering Leave



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Siroi

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

SECTION 1 – TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE

Name:

Staff Number:

Directorate:

Designation:

Date requested to volunteer:

Volunteering organisation and contact details:

Details of volunteering:

I have read and understood the Volunteering Leave Policy.

Employee's Signature:

Date:

SECTION 2 – TO BE COMPLETED BY LINE MANAGER/HEADTEACHER

The above request has been accepted.

Manager's Signature:

Date:

Print Name:

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO HRpayroll@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk