



Volunteer Policy
Lichfield District Council

Policy Statement

Lichfield District Council is committed to providing opportunities for local residents to become involved in their local community. This involvement benefits both the individuals, who gain life skills, experience, make new friends and contribute to the society they live in, as well as benefitting the Council by providing an invaluable link between citizens and the services the council provides.

This policy is to explain how the Council will recruit, manage, support and train volunteers, and the rules and responsibilities which both the Council and volunteers will use as a framework to manage the relationship between both sides.

Volunteers will not be used by the Council to replace work which is done by paid employees, but there are a number of roles which have been developed to do work which will both provide an opportunity for volunteers to use their skills, and are also appropriate for them to deliver in the local community. These roles however are not prescriptive, and will be used flexibly to ensure the skills and experience the volunteer brings to the role used to best effect, whilst ensuring the Council meets its obligations to protect and safeguard the public and service users.

Consider the rules of the Safeguarding Policy when recruiting into any role.

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Definitions

The Council wants to encourage every person in society to become involved in their local community, but recognises that formal volunteering programmes do not suit everyone, and that some people prefer to have a more informal relationship with the service they volunteer with. The Council therefore has to find a balance between formalising arrangements to safeguard volunteers and the public, and allowing flexible arrangements to support individual wishes where they are more appropriate.

To make this distinction, the formal arrangements outlined in the policy apply to **volunteers**, who are defined as people who enter into an arrangement with the Council to undertake a specific role, or work on a specific project. These arrangements are not contractual, but formalise the relationship in terms of training, communication and support.

People who have a more casual relationship with the Council, so for example do not have a specific role, but undertake a sporadic and limited number of duties, are defined as a **helper**, so volunteer supervisors will have to consider when using such friends, the type, level and responsibility of work they undertake, particularly when this work brings the person into contact with the general public or service users.

Authorised volunteer workers / helpers are covered under the Council's liability insurance

The flow chart attached at Appendix A shows the difference between these 2 roles.

Recruitment (Consider the rules of the Safeguarding Policy when recruiting into any role)

The Council support the use of volunteers and helpers and to this end will promote the local need for volunteers through a variety of means such as, Council website, Lichfield & District Community & Voluntary Sector Support groups, word of mouth, partner agencies, Facebook etc.

Children volunteering

Volunteering is an excellent opportunity to gain work experience and this can help improve a person's chances of getting a job. There are however restrictions on Child Employment (volunteering or helping) you should contact the Personnel Department before you make any decisions on using a child volunteer.

Although Volunteers are not employees and there is no contractual obligation between the volunteer and the Council, in order to ensure safeguarding of the volunteer, the Council and the service users and public who will come into contact with the volunteer, a recruitment process will be used to meet these obligations.

- A Volunteer application form will be used to collect personal data about the volunteer (attached at Appendix B).

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- This will be reviewed by the officer supervising the volunteer, who will also be responsible for keeping the forms safe and under data protection rules.
- Volunteers will have an informal discussion with the officer to ensure they are suitable for the role, to ascertain any training and support needs the volunteer may have and to ensure the volunteer understands the scope and responsibilities of the role. A checklist for recruiting volunteers is attached at Appendix C.
- Volunteers will be expected to sign a volunteering agreement with Lichfield District Council which can be found in Appendix H.
- The officer should obtain at least one verbal reference for a volunteer see Appendix G.
- For certain roles volunteers will be required to obtain a DBS, and or other checks. It will be the managing officers' responsibility to ensure these checks are completed, and that the results are satisfactory for the role the volunteer is undertaking.
- The examples of **role descriptors** for volunteers are designed to provide a framework to ensure both sides understand the scope and limits of the volunteer role and the defined responsibility it carries. This is to ensure both the protection of the volunteer and the Council. These roles are only for guidance /not intended to be exhaustive, but it is important that officers do not create a widely diverse range of roles which become difficult to manage and control. Some examples of role descriptors are attached at Appendix D.
- For helpers there is no need to complete a recruitment process or sign the agreement in *Appendix H*. There will be a requirement for the supervising officer to undertake a risk assessment for any work where helpers are involved, to ensure the work is suitable, and there is no risk to the helper or those they come into contact with; or that where a risk is identified suitable mitigation measures are put in place. This may include ensuring the helper is always working with a volunteer or member of staff, appropriate instructions are given to the helper or the work they undertake is limited in scope and responsibility.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The Council has a clear, stated policy on equality and diversity, and this applies equally to volunteers. The Council encourages interest from all members of the community, regardless of race, religion or belief, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation. For more information see the Councils Equality and Diversity Policy.

Induction and Training

THIS WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MANAGER/OFFICER WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VOLUNTEER.

All volunteers will undergo an induction, to ensure they feel comfortable with the role they are undertaking, that they understand the relationship between a volunteer and the Council. A checklist for induction is attached at Appendix E. In addition any training relevant to the role will be provided by the Council.

Under certain circumstances the officer responsible may discuss a trial opportunity with the volunteer, to ensure the volunteer feels comfortable with the role and the Council is confident in the volunteer.

For helpers there will be a requirement to give full instructions about safety requirements, equality and diversity issues and rules concerning the operation of the workplace and scope of the work.

Expenses

The Council is keen to attract volunteers from every section of the community, and in order to assist this the Council will pay reasonable, out of pocket expenses for volunteers on production of appropriate receipts. This will normally include travelling expenses, but may vary depending on the role. The Council is aware of its responsibility to only pay legitimate out of pocket expenses in order to stay within tax, benefits and minimum wage legislation. Payment of expenses will apply to formal volunteer roles only. These claims will be made through the cashiers and cannot be made through payroll/Personnel Services

Supervision and support

Any employee having designated responsibility for volunteers will have this defined within their job description.

This will enable volunteers to have a named supervisor they should go to for support, to provide them with information and guidance and who will be responsible for dealing with any performance issues or complaints with regard to the volunteer.

Insurance

Authorised volunteer workers / helpers are covered under the Councils liability insurance. The purpose of the role descriptor is to set the boundaries of the responsibility of the volunteer, and officers responsible for managing volunteers. A volunteer / helper must only complete activities that are within the scope of their role descriptor for public protection, legal and insurance reasons.

Where an insurance policy excess applies then the “employing service” will be liable to pay this excess in the event of a successful claim being made against the Authority.

Further advice and guidance on this issue can be obtained by contacting the Councils Insurance Officer.

Health and Safety

Volunteers and helpers are covered by the Councils Health and Safety policies and procedures. The officer responsible should bring these to the attention of the volunteer at induction, ensuring the volunteer has adequate training and information to ensure they work safely, recognise and report risks and hazards before accidents happen and know what to do in the event of a health and safety issue arising. This is to protect both the volunteer when working at Council premises, and the public and service users who come into contact with the volunteer.

When undertaking a risk assessment for a specific project, activity or location, special attention should be made to situations where helpers and volunteers, are involved. This must be considered in light of particular risks which may exist from the involvement of less experienced people in the activities.

Further advice and guidance on this issue can be obtained by contacting the Councils Health and Safety Advisor.

Grievance, disciplinary issues and complaints

Grievances raised by volunteers about the organisation should be dealt with informally by the officer responsible for the volunteer in the first instance. If the grievance is about the officer, the line manager should undertake this role. If the matter is not resolved by this route, the volunteer can request that their issue is reviewed by the nominated officer responsible for volunteer work in the directorate (Service Manager). This is the final stage of grievance for volunteers.

If there is an issue with the performance, behaviour or capability of a volunteer this should be dealt with (again informally) by the officer responsible. If this cannot be resolved by a discussion with the volunteer the officer should refer this to their line manager, who may suggest additional training or support to help the volunteer, decide to give the volunteer a warning regarding their conduct, or in serious or unresolved cases, decide to stop the volunteer undertaking a role within the Council. A brief information sheet for volunteers is attached at Appendix F which should be covered with volunteers at induction.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are often viewed by members of the public and service users as being equivalent to employees in their dealings with them. Depending on the role of the volunteer therefore it is important that volunteers understand the need to keep information

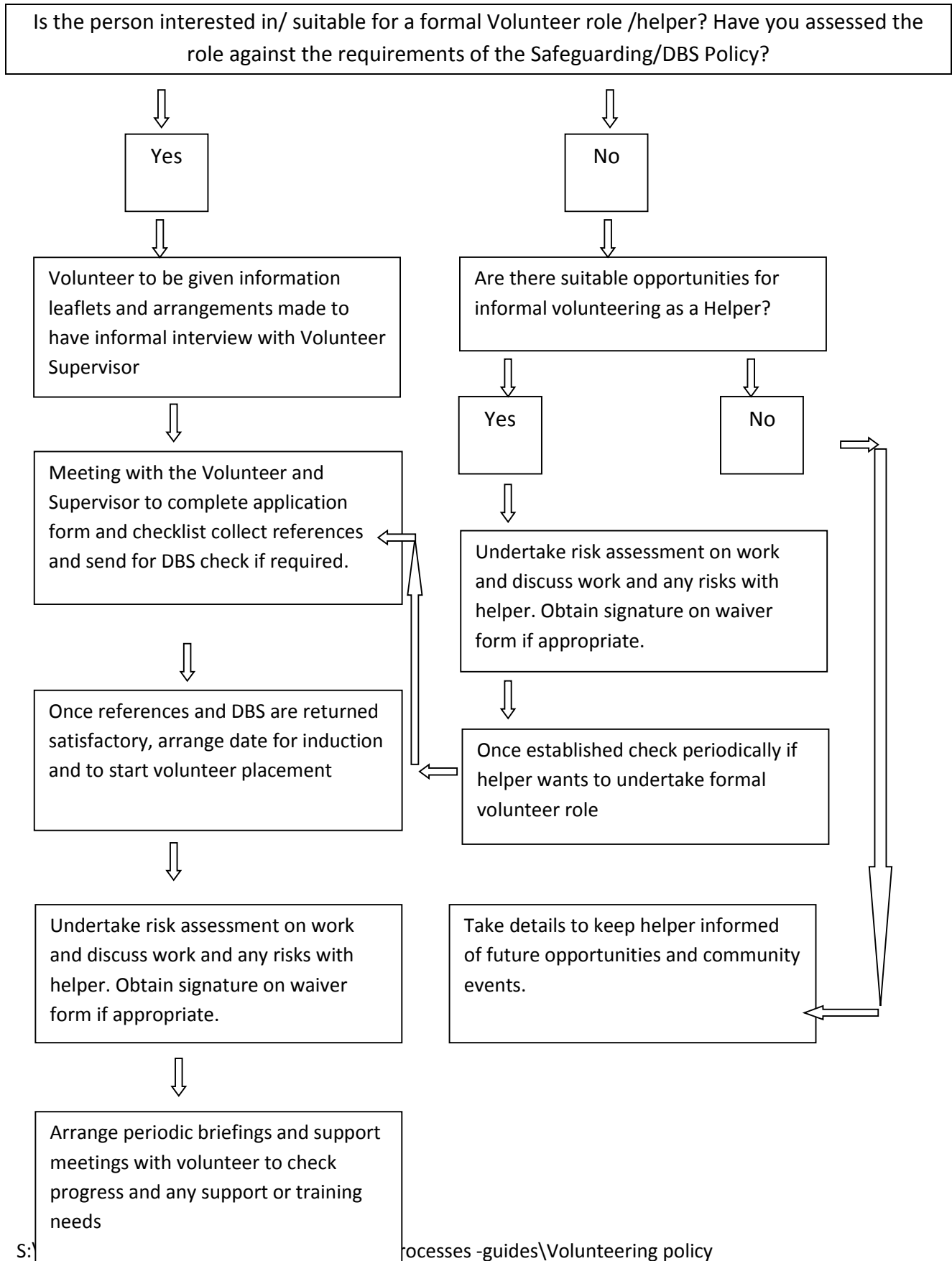
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secure and confidential, and act in a professional manner. This should be emphasised to volunteers at induction.

Appendix A

Volunteer /Helper Flowchart



Appendix B

Volunteer/ helper Application Form

Full Name	
Address	
Postcode	Date of Birth
Telephone Number	Mobile
email	

Next of kin / emergency Contact Details	
Name	Contact Number
Please give a brief statement about the type of volunteer work you are interested in:	
Do you have any special requirements to enable you to undertake volunteering with the Council?	
How did you hear about volunteering with the Council?	

Declaration

The Council takes very seriously its responsibilities for the safety and welfare of its service users, its volunteers/helpers and the organisation as a whole. Criminal records will be taken into account only when the conviction is relevant. Declaring a conviction will not prevent you from being considered for a volunteer role. Unless the nature of the work demands it, you will not be asked to disclose convictions which are 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

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Do you have any Criminal convictions you need to disclose ☐ Yes ☐ No

However there are certain roles in the Council which are exempt from the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and for these you are required to disclose all criminal convictions, including those which are 'spent'. Consideration for these roles will be subject to a satisfactory criminal records check through the DBS with the Disclosure & Barring Service before the volunteering opportunity is confirmed. This check will request details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as convictions.

Your Volunteer supervisor will inform you if the role you are interested in is exempt from these terms.

We will contact you if further information is required under our Safeguarding Policy/ Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS). If information is required under this policy you will not be allowed to start your voluntary work until we have received full DBS clearance

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 makes it a criminal offence to employ a person who does not have the right to work in the UK. This also applies to volunteers. The Act replaces similar provisions in the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. In order to volunteer therefore you must be able to demonstrate you have the right to work in the UK. To do this you must show a British Passport, a Birth Certificate issued in the UK or Republic of Ireland, or a document from a previous employer, Inland Revenue or other Government agency showing a National Insurance Number.

Lichfield District Council values your support and promises to respect your privacy. The data we gather and hold is managed in accordance with Data Protection (1998) Act. We will not disclose or share personal information supplied by you.

For completion by the Volunteer supervisor

Job Role / location for consideration

References received

NB you must obtain at least one verbal reference on a volunteer, see Appendix G for copy of this document Yes / No

References from prospective volunteer

It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to ensure they have complied with the Safeguarding Policy. A volunteer who requires a DBS clearance MUST NOT commence any work with LDC before the clearance is received. The recruiting manager will take full responsibility for ensuring this process is adhered to.

DBS Required Yes / No

DBS Form completed / checked date initials

DBS Returned date initials

Documents for Immigration and Asylum Act seen (copies on file)

Start Date arranged

Induction Arranged

Any special requirements?

Appendix C (Consider the rules of the Safeguarding Policy when recruiting into any role)

Volunteer Checklist

- Has it been clarified if the role is for a helper or a volunteer?
- Has the volunteer/helper completed the Volunteer application form?
- Has a risk assessment been carried out for a helper/volunteer?
- Has the volunteer received a copy of the role profile for the volunteer opportunity they are interested in?
- Does the volunteer/helper understand the remit of the role, its limits and responsibilities?
- What hours can the volunteer/helper commit to the role?
- Is this to be a regular, long term, casual or limited undertaking for the volunteer?
- Any special requirements
- Does the volunteer understand the impact on volunteering on any benefits? (See the Direct.gov section on volunteering for full details)

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/Gettinginvolvedinyourcommunity/Volunteering/index.htm>

Appendix D- Some examples of Roles Descriptors

(Consider the rules of the Safeguarding Policy when recruiting into any role)

Project Support Volunteer

These roles will be specific to the project being delivered and may utilise special skills that the volunteer has to offer and/or provide opportunities to expand on their experience.

Examples of projects may include:

- local surveys and research
- skills and training delivery
- environmental activities
- organising and running events
- activities with young or vulnerable people (DBS may be required)

These roles will involve

- project planning,
- diary management and co-ordination of resources
- Management of financial and other resources needed to deliver the project, including proper accounting for monies according to financial regulations
- Promoting and marketing the project
- Health and safety assessment and risk assessment for projects
- To undertake all duties in line with the Council's Health & Safety and Equal Opportunities Policies.

Volunteering with the Arts and Events Team

Lichfield District Council is looking for members of the public to act as arts ambassadors supporting the running of shows/ events. We are looking for people to act as stewards supporting the general public with accessing our services and enjoying their arts experience.

Volunteer Role Profile

- To support the Arts and Events Programme ensuring public safety and family environment.
- To provide stewarding services, ensuring customers are in a safe and hazard free environment
- To ensure the location is set up and if required move equipment to new location as indicated by the Duty Manager.
- To assist with all relevant administration in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

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- To undertake such other relevant duties as may be determined by the Duty Manager.
- To undertake all duties in line with the Council's Health & Safety and Equal Opportunities Policies.

Volunteer Person Specification

- Friendly, team player
- Community driven
- To work effectively with hirers and the general public
- Venue presentation – ability to recognise “quality” issues
- Flexible attitude to working hours, duties and locations
- Full Training Provided

Appendix E

Induction Checklist

Consider the rules of the Safeguarding Policy when recruiting into any role

Volunteer Supervisor Name	Supervisor	Volunteer
Contact Details		
Issue role and explain details of role to volunteer		
Explain hours / times for volunteering		
Explain arrangements for notifying supervisor / other volunteers if unable to attend (for example to open up buildings)		
Cover health and safety arrangements / risk assessments associated for the job role.		
Explain arrangements for claiming expenses		
Explain arrangements for supervision meetings / briefings and support during induction (e.g. progress meetings, trial period reviews)		
Equality and Diversity training		
Any other issues specific to the job role		

1 copy to volunteer

1 copy on file

Appendix F Volunteer Information Sheet

We would like to welcome you to LDC and express our thanks for the interest you are taking in our organisation. The contribution volunteers make is invaluable for providing a key link between citizens and the communities the Council serves.

This information sheet explains to you the commitment the Council makes to you, and what will be expected of you as a volunteer.

- As a volunteer you will be allocated a volunteer supervisor who will be your point of contact for the period of your volunteer placement. The name and contact details of that person will be on your Induction checklist.
- The Council will ensure you have the information and training you need to undertake your role. This may include on the job or off site training, briefing meetings and one to one supervision meetings. You are encouraged to actively take part in these opportunities, and give feedback and ideas to your supervisor about how the services can work better.
- Volunteers are not employees, and the Council will not reward you, financially or in kind, for the work you do in your volunteer role. The Council will, however, reimburse you for legitimate expenses you incur whilst volunteering.
- Whilst volunteering you are required to adhere to certain rules and constraints which are in place to safeguard you and the service users / members of the public you come into contact with. This will be different for each role, but will include issues such as Health and Safety rules about safe ways or working, confidentiality relating to personal and / or sensitive information you have access to, equality and diversity issues and rules regarding the use of Council property and premises, including financial rules about project budgets and petty cash spend. The rules which apply to your specific role will be explained to you at induction, but if you are unsure about any aspect of this it is critical you check with your supervisor.
- If you have a grievance or complaint about your volunteer role, you should discuss this in the first place with your volunteer supervisor. If this person is not able to resolve your problem, (or the problem is with this person) you can refer up to the Service Manager who will investigate and respond to your issue.
- If there is a complaint made about you as a volunteer this will be investigated by the Service Manager, who will give you feedback on the complaint and explain to you

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the response of the Council. This may include providing you with additional training and support, letting you know that an aspect of your behaviour or actions is unacceptable or, in extreme circumstances, ending your volunteer arrangement with the Council. You should be aware that this would be a last resort only, and the reasons for this will be discussed with you before such action is taken.

Issued to Volunteer

Date

Issued by

Supervisor

Specific Details of the Volunteer role

Detail below any specific issues relating the role the Volunteer will need to be aware of (e.g. dress code / PPE, issuing of keys or other property, computer access rules and restrictions)

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Appendix G

Guidance on obtaining telephone/verbal employment /volunteering references for volunteers

Although volunteers do not form part of Local Government Service it is best practice to obtain at least one verbal reference.

Purpose of the reference

- Verbal references should be used to help to confirm the decision of the officer supervising the volunteer and check factual evidence about the individual.
- By confirming past experience /work it may also assist in assessing the volunteers' future performance.

Whom to ask for a reference

- A reference should be from the current or most recent employer/voluntary organisation /group, teacher or suitable person for character reference.

When to ask for a reference

- References should normally be taken up after the interview process and only for the successful volunteer(s).
- Before contacting referees ensure that you have the volunteers consent to approach them.
- No start date may be agreed prior to receipt of references. (or DBS, risk assessments etc where applicable)
- Officer/s supervising the volunteer is required to obtain at least one verbal reference for any person they require to work as a volunteer.

Obtaining a verbal reference:

- Ensure that you verify the identity of the referee by asking them to confirm their, name, job title and organisation.
- Inform the referee that their reference will be treated confidentially unless they indicate that they wish it to be disclosed on request, or we obtain their explicit and written consent to disclose the reference, or we are obliged to disclose it by virtue of a statutory order.
- You should take full notes of the conversation on the form below
- A completed **Verbal Reference Form** must be signed, dated and returned to Personnel Services.

Unsatisfactory References

- If you are unable to obtain a satisfactory verbal reference the person CANNOT take up voluntary work for the authority.
- If you receive an unsatisfactory reference you should contact the Personnel Manager for further advice. **See attached for Verbal Reference Form**

Name of Potential Volunteer: ----- State where the volunteer will be working:

Does this type of voluntary work require a DBS check? Officers MUST assess this work and contact or check against the check list on the intranet. Where applicable obtain a DBS clearance before

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voluntary work can commence, it could be deemed a disciplinary offence if you do not adhere to the Safeguarding Policy.

Verbal Reference

Name of Referee: -----

ENQUIRIES	REFEREE'S REPLIES
How is this person known to you?	
Has this person ever worked with Children or Vulnerable adults or required a DBS check?	
If known through employment in what capacity?	
How long have you known this person?	
Are you related to this person? If 'yes' what is your relationship?	
Do you believe this person is suitable to carry out the work described? If 'no' why	
(If applicable) Does this person have any outstanding disciplinary / sickness records known to you?	
(If Applicable) Ask for comments on time keeping and general attitude to attending work or school/ college.	

All information given on this form will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act and may be disclosed to the volunteer if requested.

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Information recorded by Name: ----- Position: -----

Appendix H



Volunteer Agreement

This Agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.

Volunteers are an important and valued part of Lichfield District Council team. We want you to enjoy your volunteering with us and feel a part of the team/s you work are placed within. This Agreement outlines what can be expected from us, and what we hope for from you.

We commit to:

- Provide you with information on the work of Lichfield District Council pertaining to your volunteering role.
- Provide you with an induction and appropriate training for your volunteer role.
- Give you opportunity for meeting with a named person to discuss your volunteering.
- Respect your skills and individual wishes and do our best to meet them.
- Pay your expenses in line with our expense policy
- Provide a safe & healthy workplace.
- Keep you informed of any changes.
- Work to our equal opportunities and confidentiality policies.

I (insert volunteer name) will do my best to:

- Help Lichfield District Council (LDC) to fulfil its services
- Work reliably to the best of my ability, giving adequate notice if I cannot work as expected.
- Follow and adhere to LDCs policies, rules and procedures, including Health & Safety, Safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults, equal opportunities and confidentiality.

Signed :.....Volunteer

Signed:For & on behalf of LDC

Date:

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