



## Volunteering Leave Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

The Council values the importance of volunteering, both to the community and to employees. The Council is committed to actively supporting and promoting volunteering as an opportunity to contribute to the community, build and develop skills, knowledge, experience and resources and add personal value to fulfilling activities.

### 2. Background

Wirral residents, community groups and public, private and voluntary and faith organisations all play important roles to work collaboratively and make a positive difference to Wirral's communities. It is essential to recognise the value of these types of activities in creating community spirit and helping to make the lives of those around us that little bit easier.

Only through working together, will we be able to build strong communities and use our collective resources and creativity to provide local solutions to local problems.

To support this, the Council will promote volunteering and encourage employees to volunteer their help, time and support to make a difference to their local community.

Volunteering provides a range of benefits for the Council and its employees. Employees can take a more active involvement with causes that they care about, whilst at the same time gaining experience and skills to help with their personal development. It can also help the Council raise its profile in the local community and as a progressive employer. The main benefits include:

- Inspires employees to become more involved in their communities.
- Supports employee development in gaining new skills, knowledge and experiences.
- Provides opportunities to share skills, talents and creativity to support their local area and help build a stronger, more resilient Wirral.
- Improves employee engagement and advocacy of the Council.
- Employees take a lead in developing relationships and partnerships within the community.
- Sets a positive example to other organisations/business partners.

- Supports the health and wellbeing of the workforce.

The Council will encourage partners and other organisations to adopt this approach.

### 3. Key principles

Employee volunteering activity will meet the following principles:

- The volunteering activity will:
  - Support the learning and development needs of the employee;
  - Support the sharing of skills, talents and creativity; and/or
  - Support the Council's corporate objectives.
- The volunteering activity will add value/benefit to the local community.
- The volunteering activity will be with a registered charity, recognised voluntary organisation, or will be in response to a local crisis or need for local emergency aid. Employees are encouraged to use the Community Action Wirral Volunteer Centre Website which carries the unique Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation. For more information visit: <http://communityactionwirral.org.uk/volunteering-in-wirral/>
- Employees who commit to volunteering in the community may be supported up to a maximum of 2 days per 12 month period (14.4 hours). This may increase to up to a maximum of 5 days (36 hours) in the 12 month period before retirement.

Employee volunteers will receive the right support, resources and opportunities to ensure volunteering is a positive experience. This will include:

- Wirral Council will work in partnership with local communities to communicate and promote the diverse range and flexibility of volunteering placements Wirral has to offer.
- Employee volunteering events will be held to support and encourage the growth and sustainability of volunteering. Targeted events may be held to develop volunteering in certain areas of the workforce e.g. apprentices, graduates, senior officers.
- Access to networking opportunities where the value and benefits of volunteering will be recognised, promoted and celebrated.
- The positive contribution to the development of skills, knowledge and experience gained from volunteering will be recognised and valued within the Council's recruitment and selection policy and procedures.

## 4. Commitment to Equality

Please identify which, if any, of the following Equality Duties this policy addresses:

Eliminate unlawful  
discrimination,  
harassment and  
victimisation



To advance equality of  
opportunity



To foster good  
relations between  
different groups of  
people



This policy allows the Council to manage requests for time off consistently. It embeds an open and accommodating approach to any requests from employees who wish to contribute to their local community by volunteering.

## 4. Procedures

Requests for paid leave will be managed through the Council's existing special leave policies and procedures. An employee's request for leave must be submitted via Selfserve and approved by their line manager.

All requests for time off will be subject to the exigencies of the service and should not impact on delivery or incur cover costs.

Human Resources will monitor the categories of Special Leave that are recorded in the HR & Payroll system.

Any abuse of the Procedures within this Policy will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

## 5. Supporting Documentation

## 6. Related Policies

- Special Leave
- Annual Leave
- Flexi-Time

## 7. Consultation

The policy was approved by Employment & Appointments Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

## 8. Communication and Awareness

This policy is considered:

<p><b>Internal</b> [For Members, Officers and Contractors] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>External</b> [For our Residents, Customers and Service Users] <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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The Council will communicate the support available to employees via the Council's intranet and other forums. The Wirral Plan strategies clearly identify the value of volunteering in our community, and the Volunteering Strategy recommends that employers consider supporting employees to volunteer. Wirral Council therefore has an opportunity to lead by example in committing to this approach and encourage partners and other organisations to adopt the same approach.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

The table below sets out the ownership and review schedule for this policy. The Volunteering Leave Policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the Human Resources & Organisational Development Policy Review Programme. However it may be necessary to review as and when required, for example, due to legislative changes or if an issue arises around its effectiveness.

<b>Document Ownership</b>	
<b>Policy owned by:</b>	Assistant Director for Human Resources & Organisational Development
<b>Policy written by:</b>	Tony Williams, Acting Assistant Director
<b>Date policy written:</b>	27 June 2017
<b>Policy due for 1<sup>st</sup> review:</b>	June 2020

<b>Version Control Table</b>			
All changes to this document are recorded in this table.			
Date	Notes/Amendments	Officer	Next Scheduled Review Date