

Volunteering Policy

Most recent update: 02 April 2025

The contribution of volunteers is highly valued by Cheshire West and Chester Council's (CW&C) Skills and Employment Service and the opportunity to be supported by a volunteer can make a real difference to a learner's/customer's confidence and progress, as well as to the volunteer and the service overall.

Volunteer roles include:

- Classroom support
- Skills and Employment Hubs support

CW&C Skills And Employment Service Is Committed To The Following

- Volunteers to have a defined place in the structure of the team.
- Volunteers to be integrated and valued for their contribution to the work of the team.
- Recognise the individual skills each volunteer brings to the role.
- Volunteers to feel supported and informed through comprehensive induction and ongoing support.
- Encourage volunteers to develop and build on existing skills and knowledge. This will take place through sharing good practice within the team and also external training as appropriate.

Recruitment

- Opportunities to volunteer will be promoted to existing service users who have benefitted from participation and where volunteering would support their continued development.
- Potential volunteers will be sent a Volunteer Role Description appropriate to the role they have expressed an interest in.
- Potential volunteers will complete an application form.
- Potential volunteers will be invited for a meeting/training session to hear more about the role. They will then decide if it is right for them, and we decide if they are right for us.
- Potential volunteers will be asked for two references.
- We will carry out a DBS check for all volunteers working with us at our expense.
- Risk assessments will be carried out regarding all volunteer placements with the service.

The CW&C Skills and Employment team seek to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds that reflect the makeup of the local community and is committed to the values outlined in the Skills and Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement.

Induction And Training

- Volunteers will have a Volunteer Agreement and Role Outline which shows the expectations and support offered by the team. This is not a contract.
- Volunteers will receive a CW&C ID badge identifying them as an official council volunteer.
- Each volunteer will receive basic training specific to their volunteering role and will be offered opportunities to gain qualifications, as appropriate. They will also receive information about health and safety, equal opportunities and British Values.
- Each volunteer will receive training about the Prevent Agenda and will be expected to undertake the Prevent Training module through i-Learn.
- Each volunteer will initially volunteer on a trial basis to ensure both the team and the volunteer are happy with the role.
- Opportunities to volunteer will depend on meeting the needs of the CW&C Skills and Employment Service as and when they arise and placements will be arranged accordingly. Volunteers will be made aware of volunteering opportunities that may be available elsewhere.
- CW&C Skills and Employment Service cannot guarantee there will always be a placement available for individuals wishing to volunteer.
- A volunteer agreement will be signed for each type of volunteering in which the individual is involved.

Support

- Volunteers will be allocated a named contact person in CW&C Skills and Employment team depending on the type of volunteering they undertake. Volunteers can contact this person by email, phone or arrange to visit them at their office to discuss any issues.
- Volunteers will receive a comprehensive induction prior to taking on their volunteering role.
- Volunteers will be offered regular support and will be invited to volunteer team meetings to get together with other volunteers, undertake any additional training that is appropriate to their role and listen to guest speakers.
- Volunteering is an opportunity to develop work-ready skills with a view to progression to paid employment so time spent volunteering with us will be regularly reviewed to ensure the role remains in the volunteer's best interests.

Expenses

- All volunteers will have their agreed expenses reimbursed.
- In order to claim expenses, an expense form must be completed and given, along with any bus tickets or parking charges, to the named Skills and Employment member of staff line managing the volunteer.

Insurance

Volunteers who are managed by the Council are covered by the Local Authority's combined liability insurance policy. This can be divided into two main categories:

- Employer's Liability – injury to employees and volunteers through negligence by the Council occurring in the course of the employment/activity undertaken on behalf of the Council.
- Public Liability – injury or damage to property of a third party as a result of negligence by the Council, including the actions of its staff and volunteers.

The council is responsible for the actions of its employees/volunteers in the course of their duties and will take all reasonable precautions to prevent or minimise accident, injury, loss or damage.

Motor Insurance It is the responsibility of volunteers to insure their own vehicles and notify their motor insurance company that they will be undertaking journeys in the course of their volunteering. It is essential that their policy permits this and that appropriate insurance is held.

Health And Safety

- Each volunteer will have access to health and safety information/guidance as part of their induction.
- Each volunteer will undertake basic health and safety training via iLearn.
- Volunteers will be aware of general health and safety and personal safety.
- Volunteers will know how to report an accident or incident that they or the learners may be involved in and be fully aware of our Safeguarding policy.
- Classroom volunteers will only support adult learners in a timetabled taught session supervised by a tutor
- Volunteers will not be left in sole charge of an individual or group of learners.
- Volunteers are strongly advised not to undertake any additional support activity outside of agreed sessions (eg arranging additional sessions with learners/clients on a 1:1 basis either at a public venue or an individual's home).

Diversity

- CW&C Skills and Employment Service will uphold the commitment to equal opportunities and diversity as detailed in the Skills and Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (available on request).
- Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of the values of this policy.

Problem Solving

- It is important that CW&C's Skills and Employment Service is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the people who use it and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.
- CW&C Skills and Employment Service will try to solve any problems at the earliest possible stage and therefore needs a commitment to ongoing, open and constructive dialogue.

Confidentiality

- Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.
- When a volunteer starts they will have the Council's Confidentiality Policy (available on the council intranet site) explained to them and the opportunity to ask any questions.

This Volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It will be reviewed on a yearly basis to adapt or improve it.