



Volunteering Strategy



Introduction

Volunteers make a unique and valuable contribution to the people and communities throughout Angus. Over the years there has been an increase in opportunities in volunteering generally, and nationally volunteering has been promoted by a number of initiatives.

Volunteer Development Scotland, the national volunteering agency, together with CoSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), have, over the past years, encouraged local authorities across Scotland to develop an authority-wide volunteering strategy.

Following a wide consultation exercise, Angus Council approved this Volunteering Strategy in March 2004.

The establishment of this Volunteering Strategy, that contains a set of underlying principles and best practice arrangements, will as a result, provide a consistent framework for volunteering and volunteers working with the Council.

Angus Council recognises that volunteering is not only an essential resource in helping them achieve their own objectives, but also helps promote active citizenship and social inclusion.

1. Principles

1.1 **The general statement of principle is:-**

“As part of its commitment to supporting and promoting active citizenship, Angus Council recognises the important role played by volunteers in the work of its departments, and the valuable contribution made by volunteers to the local community in many areas of life, including social and community care, community development, the dissemination of information, environmental improvement, education, and advocacy.”

The Volunteering Strategy:

- defines volunteering
- provides a code of practice for Angus Council in engaging and working with volunteers
- provides a policy framework on volunteering and volunteers, and on which the relationship with Angus Council can be further developed

In relation to the underlying principles of this Volunteering Strategy Angus Council will:

- 1.2 recognise the unique and valuable contribution that volunteers make to the services of the Council, and its partners
- 1.3 recognise that the role of volunteers complements, but is not a substitute for professional services or paid staff
- 1.4 acknowledge the need to make appropriate resources available to support volunteers
- 1.5 ensure that all appropriate policies encourage volunteering in general
- 1.6 provide access to suitable training and support for volunteers, whether directly or indirectly
- 1.7 make provision for appropriate training and support through grants, and service level agreements, where appropriate

- 1.8 work in partnership with, and give recognition, support and publicity to the work of the Volunteer Centre Angus, as the key organisation for volunteering development in Angus
- 1.9 implement good practice with regard to the involvement of volunteers, and will expect organisations with whom we have service level agreements to adopt a similar model of good practice
- 1.10 use this Volunteering Strategy to inform and support other policies
- 1.11 encourage networking to co-ordinate work, promote good practice, and ensure quality of service to the consumer
- 1.12 in consulting volunteers, recognise the benefits of the involvement of the Volunteer Centre Angus, the local volunteer centre, and establish recognised mechanisms to engage with volunteers
- 1.13 recognise that volunteering and the voluntary sector can be mutually supporting and so acknowledge the benefits of the involvement of the voluntary sector and AAVO, the local Council for Voluntary Services, and establish recognised mechanisms to ensure that the voluntary sector is consulted on the wide range of issues that affect volunteers

2. Definition

Angus Council has adopted the definition contained in Scottish Office Circular 15/1995:-

“Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside one’s immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.”

There is no such thing as a typical volunteer, ranging from the young and not so young, equal numbers of men and women – from all backgrounds, races and beliefs. People volunteer for a variety of reasons, whether it’s to enhance skills, improve things, make a contribution to their community or to access social networks.

Volunteering takes place in all of the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. Volunteering activity within local government includes:-

Education

Parent Teacher Associations
Fund-raising
Classroom Assistance
Out of School Clubs
Sport
New Community Schools
School Boards
Youth work
Adult literacies
Community organisations and action groups

Community Education

Youth Work
Adult Basic Education Tutors

Housing

Tenants Groups/Associations

Social Work

Complementary/enhanced services to clients
Access to services

Leisure

Sport
Play Schemes
Libraries
Museums
Archive

Other

Community Councils
Angus Citizens Panel
Focus Groups
Children's Panel

3. Aims

3.1 The overall aim of this Strategy is:-

To develop and promote good practice in the involvement and support of volunteers.

More specifically, the aims of this Strategy are to:-

- 3.2 recognise and promote the importance, and value, of volunteering throughout Angus
- 3.3 set standards of good practice in working with volunteers
- 3.4 apply equal opportunities to volunteering
- 3.5 support the organisation and infrastructure of volunteering in Angus, and establish channels of communication with the volunteering sector
- 3.6 improve the accessibility and opportunities of volunteering
- 3.7 clarify the roles and responsibilities of both volunteers, and the Council
- 3.8 improve the quality of volunteering in all areas of the Council's, and its partners, work throughout Angus

4. Principles of Good Practice

The Council in engaging volunteers will accept the following principles of good practice:-

4.1 General

- i All employees can play an important part in identifying ways in which the work of the Council can be extended through the involvement of volunteers, and to ensure that these opportunities complement, rather than supplement, the work of paid staff.
- ii The tasks to be performed by volunteers will be clearly defined, so that all concerned with their activities are sure of their responsibilities.
- iii The views of volunteers, and those that engage volunteers, will be represented through established mechanisms such as Volunteer Forums and Volunteer Engager Forums.

4.2 Relationship with Paid Staff

- i Volunteers will not be asked to take on tasks formerly undertaken by paid workers whose posts have been made redundant, or hours have been reduced, or to work in an area, or in a way that contributes to any decrease in paid employment.
- ii Volunteers will not be utilised in times of industrial action to do the work of paid employees. They may continue with their regular work, but should not be asked to undertake additional duties.
- iii As far as possible, volunteers will have responsibility for carrying out particular tasks, and these tasks should 'add value' to existing services
- iv The Council will ensure that its employees, at all levels, are clear about the role of volunteers, and that good relationships are fostered between employees and volunteers.

4.3 **Recruitment, Selection and Placement**

- i Volunteering opportunities should be promoted widely, in ways that are accessible to all sections of the community. Individual opportunities should be publicised, as appropriate, and should draw attention to the benefits and experience to be gained from participation in volunteering.
- ii Volunteers will be recruited and selected in accordance with appropriate departmental volunteer recruitment and selection procedures. These procedures will complement Angus Council's Recruitment & Selection Procedures and Equal Opportunities Policy.
- iii The procedures, including disclosure checks, for vetting volunteers, who will be required to work with children and other vulnerable groups, will be clearly understood by all concerned.
- iv Placements will match the volunteer's skills, talents and interests with the Council's volunteering opportunities.
- v Once placed, the Council will expect volunteers to comply with existing policies and procedures.
- vi All volunteering roles should be described in terms of time, commitment, necessary skills, and actual duties.
- vii A clearly defined agreement between the volunteer and the department/service should be provided. It should be noted that this does not constitute a Contract of Employment.
- viii Either party has the right to discontinue a volunteering arrangement. However, an exchange of views as to why a volunteering arrangement is being terminated is considered desirable.

4.4 **Support for Volunteers**

- i The Council will provide, within available resources, financial, personnel, and other resources, for the adequate management of volunteers.

- ii Where appropriate, the Council will provide an induction period, and a review session, to assess the progress of the placement and to resolve any problems at an early stage. In addition, or alternatively, an induction pack will be provided, covering health & safety, legislation, confidentiality, policy and other information relevant to their work.
- iii The Council will provide funding for payment of reasonable, authorised, out-of-pocket expenses. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed, and how to make a claim.
- iv Each volunteer will have a specific contact who can provide information, encouragement and support on a regular basis. Any issues or problems should be discussed between this contact and the volunteer.
- v The Council will ensure adequate provision of insurance for volunteers, where appropriate.
- vi The Council will provide suitable training based on the volunteers role, skills, and previous experience, and the Council's requirements.
- vii The Council is aware that many employees give of their time, experience and skills as volunteers, and would continue to encourage this, given the benefits for the Council, the community, and the employee.
- viii The Council will help to raise awareness of volunteering by making its staff aware of any volunteering opportunities on the Council's intranet, in Angus Matters, etc.

4.5 **The Rights of Volunteers**

The Council in engaging volunteers recognises the rights of volunteers:

- To know what is expected of them
- To have clearly specified lines of support and supervision
- To be shown appreciation
- To have safe working conditions

- To be insured
- To know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
- To be paid appropriate expenses
- To be trained for the duties they are required to undertake
- To be free from discrimination
- To confidentiality
- To experience personal development through participation

4.6 **The Expectations of Volunteers**

The Council in engaging volunteers expects that volunteers will:

- Be reliable
- Be honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Attend training and support sessions where agreed
- Act with due care for their own safety and that of others
- Adhere to Council policies and procedures
- Carry out tasks in accordance with the aims and values of the Council
- Work within agreed guidelines and remits
- Be anti-discriminatory in their work, and promote equality of opportunity
- Honour the volunteering commitment they have made

4.7 **Purchasing and Funding Services involving Volunteers**

- i The Council in purchasing services involving volunteers will ensure that the role of volunteers is made clear, and that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management.
- ii The Council in funding services involving volunteers will ensure that funded voluntary organisations will adopt similar commitments to volunteering as contained in this Strategy.
- iii Information, advice and assistance will be available to voluntary management committees from the Volunteer Centre Angus.

5. Monitor and Review

As a Best Value Service provider, Angus Council is committed to continuous improvement, which will also assist the Council to develop strategies that achieve clear benefits for all Angus citizens. In this regard Angus Council will:-

- Report, on an annual basis, the level of volunteering within Angus Council
- Monitor the Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan, and report on a regular basis
- Review the Volunteering Strategy on a 4-yearly basis, or as appropriate

**VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY
Action Plan 2004/05**

	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
1	Submit final Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan to Strategic Policy Committee	16 March 2004	Policy & Performance Unit
2	Implementation of Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan	April 2004 onwards	All Council Departments
3	<p>Departments to develop procedures and/or guidelines, as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication of the Volunteering Strategy to all departmental staff • Service/Operational Guidance • Recruitment and Selection Procedures • Induction Programme and Induction Pack • Health & Safety – Risk Assessment • Insurance • Expenses • Confidentiality • Identification of appropriate departmental volunteering contacts • Arrangements to enable the views of volunteers to be represented <p>Note: Work already undertaken by Social Work Department in regard to the above will be of particular use to departments in drawing up their own procedures/guidelines</p>	April 2004 onwards	Chief Officers, with Personnel Services
4	Develop Volunteer Forums and Volunteer Engager Forums	December 2004	Policy & Performance Unit/Volunteer Centre Angus
5	Report annually on the level of volunteering within Angus Council	Commence March 2005	Policy & Performance Unit
6	Consider the development of a partnership Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan	March 2005	Community Planning Team
7	Monitor the Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan, and report on a regular basis	Commence March 2005	Policy & Performance Unit
8	Review the Volunteering Strategy on a 4-yearly basis	Commence April 2007	Policy & Performance Unit

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