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# Volunteering Policy

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November 2021

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Independent Living

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**Approved by:** Housing Committee

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The aim of Stroud District Council's Independent Living Community HUBS is to promote the wellbeing of all older people in the Stroud district and help make later life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. Volunteers are an essential part of providing these opportunities.

1.2 Stroud District Council is committed to involving a diverse range of people in our work through both formal volunteering and other forms of community activity. We do this because we believe that:

- Volunteers, in their diversity of age, experience, cultural background and their involvement within communities, bring to our work a value which adds to our understanding of, and response to, older people's needs.
- Through the involvement of volunteers, we contribute to the building and support of active and sustainable communities based on mutual respect.
- The development and support of vibrant community networks and individuals within them is vital to the wellbeing of older people.
- We will work more effectively with and on behalf of older people by providing opportunities for people to use their skills, knowledge and experience through volunteering.
- As volunteers who reflect the diversity of their communities, bringing a different perspective to that of professional paid staff, which adds additional value to our work.
- People of all ages care about and want the opportunity to contribute to make later life a more fulfilling and enjoyable experience for everyone.
- Older people with whom we work value the involvement of volunteers.
- By introducing volunteers, we can offer opportunities for genuine involvement, learning and development for larger groups.
- Without the contribution of volunteers, we would only be able to achieve a small percentage of our work with and for older people.

1.3 A volunteer is anyone who freely chooses to undertake supporting our Independent Living Community HUBS through the giving of their time, skills and experience without financial remuneration beyond out of pocket expenses. It is support undertaken by choice and is unpaid.

1.4 Volunteers:

- help with the delivery of our services
- are active in projects and community-led activities supported by Community Services
- help raise funds to support our work.

1.5 We believe that our relationship with volunteers will be of mutual responsibility and commitment within which Independent Living Community HUBS/Stroud District Council and volunteers have both rights and responsibilities. We aim to ensure that volunteers enjoy their involvement with us and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives. Stroud District Council's Independent

Living Community HUB team will devote sufficient personnel, resources and training to support volunteers in their role.

## **2. Purpose of this policy**

2.1 Our purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- Highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers.
- Reflect the purpose, value, standards and strategies of Stroud District Council in its involvement of volunteers.
- Recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers in the Stroud district.
- Confirm Stroud District Council's commitment to involving volunteers in its work.
- Help to ensure the quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by volunteers.
- Acknowledge the current areas of volunteer involvement in the Stroud district.

2.2 Stroud District Council will appoint a Volunteer Co-ordinator to recruit, and deploy volunteers within the Independent Living sites and provide support.

## **3. Scope of the Volunteer Policy**

3.1 Unless specifically stated otherwise, the policy applies to all volunteers in all programmes and projects undertaken by or on behalf of Independent Living Community HUBs and site of operation.

## **4. Statement of principles of good practice**

### **4.1 General**

When involving volunteers, we will be guided by the following principles of good practice whilst taking into consideration confidentiality and data protection:

- Tasks will be clearly defined so that all concerned with volunteers' activities are sure of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Volunteer roles will complement the work of paid staff.
- Stroud District Council's Volunteer Policy will be reviewed annually, subject to any legislative or other local or national factors (e.g. pandemic) and consideration will be given as to how any changes will affect volunteers.
- Volunteer contribution will be recognised on an annual basis. This may include a celebration event free of charge to the volunteer.

## **5. Recruitment and Selection**

- 5.1 Volunteer opportunities will be promoted in a manner that ensures there is wide accessibility to the positions we offer. Stroud District Council's equal opportunities statement applies to the recruitment and selection of volunteers.
- 5.2 Prospective volunteers will be required to complete an application form. If required, the Volunteer Coordinator will provide support to complete the form.
- 5.3 People who offer to volunteer will hear from the Volunteer Coordinator within 10 days of their initial enquiry and will be offered an informal interview.
- 5.4 Potential volunteers will be asked to understand and agree the values and principles of Stroud District Council that inform the way in which we work.
- 5.5 Volunteers will be asked to sign a statement saying they understand the specific policies that affect them in their role and will be given help and assistance if needed to be able to do this. The statement will not form a legal contract between either party.
- 5.6 We will ensure that procedures are in place to explain, support and monitor good practice requirements for volunteers selected to work with vulnerable older people. Safeguarding is at the heart of all we do therefore all volunteers will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring service check.
- 5.7 Volunteers will be placed in activities which match their skills, talents and interests.

## **6. Support for Volunteers**

- 6.1 We will provide an induction programme and a review session for volunteers to assess the progress of their placements and resolve any problems at an early stage.
- 6.2 We will provide funding for volunteers' out of pocket expenses. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.
- 6.3 Volunteers will be given information on legislation and other policies which may affect them e.g. Health and Safety, Code of Conduct and Equalities. In these respects, volunteers will be treated in the same way as staff for liability purposes.
- 6.4 All volunteers will be offered access to support and supervision on a regular basis, with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- 6.5 All volunteers will be offered access to appropriate training to enable them to develop their capabilities, competence and learning in relation to their volunteering role.

- 6.6 Opportunities will be provided for changing/upgrading volunteer responsibilities as requested by the volunteer and appropriate to Independent Community HUBs needs.
- 6.7 Volunteers will be made aware of Stroud District Council's complaints procedure and whom to contact if they have a complaint about an aspect of their role.

## **7. Relationship with paid staff**

- 7.1 We will ensure that paid staff at all levels are clear about the role of volunteers and that good working relationships are fostered between them.
- 7.2 Appropriate training, support and resources will be provided for those who work alongside volunteers and for those who have a supervisory role in relation to them.
- 7.3 Volunteers will be given clear information about the roles undertaken by paid staff and of their value to Independent Living Community HUBS.
- 7.4 Stroud District Council will appoint a Volunteer Coordinator whose primary function is to recruit and place volunteers within the Independent Living sites and to oversee the implementation of this volunteering policy and ensure that Stroud District Council's volunteering practices are of a high standard.
- 7.5 In the rare event of industrial action by staff, volunteers will not be engaged to do the work of paid staff.

## **8. Relationships with Other Groups and Organisations Meeting the Needs of Older People**

- 8.1 In all our relationships with other groups, organisations or partners we will: promote volunteering as an important means of contributing to the building and support of active and sustainable communities based on mutual respect. promote good practice in volunteering.

## **9. Local Volunteering**

- 9.1 We will develop relationships with local organisations which support volunteering on the following principles:
- There is a need for a strategic approach to the development of volunteering locally.
  - There is a need to support the work of local volunteering in providing leadership in developing awareness of, and standards for, practice in volunteering.

This Volunteer Policy will be reviewed every 12 months.