



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Our mission

City of Ely Council's mission is to work with the people of our city, celebrating its traditions and making Ely an even greater place to live, work, visit and enjoy.

The purpose of this policy

By adopting this policy, City of Ely Council aims to:

- highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers
- reflect the purpose, values, standards, and strategies of the Council in its approach to involving volunteers
- recognise the respective roles, rights, and responsibilities of volunteers
- confirm its commitment to involving volunteers in its work
- establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers
- ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the tasks carried out by volunteers

Why do we involve volunteers?

We recognise that volunteers have a vital role to play within our organisation, and that their contributions, combined with the support of paid staff, enable us to deliver our services:

- volunteers add value to the Council's work through their gifts of time, knowledge, skills, and experience
- volunteers bring a different perspective to our organisation, often reflecting the views of the local community
- volunteers help to extend and enhance the services we are able to offer

Principles of volunteer involvement

The involvement of volunteers within City of Ely Council will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- volunteer opportunities will complement, rather than replace, the work of paid staff
- volunteer tasks will be clearly defined, to ensure clarity of respective roles and responsibilities

- volunteers will be provided with regular opportunities to share ideas/concerns with a named contact
- volunteers can say 'no' to anything they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- volunteers will be treated in a respectful, non-discriminatory manner in accordance with City of Ely Council's Equality and Diversity policy
- City of Ely Council will comply with the Data Protection Act in the use of data held on all volunteers

Volunteers can find further information on what they can expect, and what is expected of them, in City of Ely Council's volunteer information pack, available on request.

Recruitment

City of Ely Council aims to identify worthwhile and satisfying opportunities for volunteers and adheres to its equality and diversity policy when recruiting and selecting volunteers.

All potential volunteers will be asked to complete a volunteer application form, and written role descriptions will be provided, outlining time, commitment, necessary skills, and the duties required of that role.

There is no minimum age for volunteers, though some roles may not be available to volunteers under the age of 18 for legal reasons (such as serving alcohol). In accordance with City of Ely Council's safeguarding policy, any volunteer under the age of 18 must prove written parental/guardian consent.

Informal interviews will be held with all prospective volunteers to ensure that their skills, interests, and suitability are matched to the best role/roles available. City of Ely Council reserves the right to ask for referees and a DBS check (which is free to volunteers) if the role requires it.

Induction and training

After a successful interview, volunteers will be invited to attend induction training, covering general Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, and Safeguarding. In addition, there may be on-site/venue-specific Health & Safety, Fire and Emergency Evacuation procedures, and volunteers will be introduced to their service manager/supervisor.

All role-specific training will be provided to ensure that volunteers are comfortable and confident within their role/s.

Expenses

City of Ely Council will reimburse any reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred by volunteers, which have been agreed by a senior member of staff or volunteer supervisor.

Support and supervision

The overall support and supervision of volunteers is carried out by the volunteer supervisor, but volunteers will also be given details of a named contact within the services/departments they support.

Volunteers will be made to feel welcome, valued for what they offer and given regular opportunities to discuss concerns/ideas/feedback. After a three-month settling-in period, volunteers will be invited to attend a one-to-one catch-up meeting to ensure that their volunteering expectations are being met.

City of Ely Council will supply a reference to any volunteer seeking other voluntary work or paid employment, on completion of the three-month settling-in period.

Health and safety

City of Ely Council will, as far as practicable, provide a safe environment for volunteers to carry out their roles, in accordance with City Council's Health & Safety Policy.

Problem solving

City of Ely Council acknowledges that sometimes problems do arise; volunteers should report any such problems to the Volunteer Supervisor. If the problem cannot be resolved through informal discussion, then it can be taken up formally through the relevant City Council channels. Volunteers will be made aware of the procedure for this during their induction.

In the unlikely event that the problem cannot be resolved to mutual satisfaction volunteers are free to end their volunteering with the City Council. In this event an exit interview will be offered.

Recognition & appreciation

City of Ely Council is always keen to thank and recognise volunteers for their contributions and support. Social media, the volunteer newsletter, awards evenings, and social events are just some of the ways in which the City Council will demonstrate its appreciation.

Monitoring and review

City of Ely Council will be responsible for regularly reviewing and updating the Volunteer Policy to ensure that it is always in accordance with volunteering best practice and the Equal Opportunity Policy.

Reviewed and approved 22nd May 2023

Signed

Cllr C Phillips, Chairman of the Council