

# Volunteering



# Handbook

December 2014



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## **1. WELCOME TO VOLUNTEERING**

Welcome to East Ayrshire Council's Volunteering Handbook. The fact that you are reading this handbook suggests you have expressed an interest in volunteering within East Ayrshire Council and we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for doing so.

East Ayrshire Council is committed to volunteering and acknowledges the vital contribution which volunteers make to the organisation and the wider community, as well as the benefits to volunteers themselves.

The purpose of this handbook is to:

- provide information for individuals who have expressed an interest in volunteering
- offer practical advice to ensure that anyone who wants to volunteer can do so readily
- provide support and guidance where barriers to volunteering exist, and
- ensure that East Ayrshire Council can continue to operate a volunteer programme that embraces diversity and promotes equality and inclusiveness

If you do choose to volunteer within East Ayrshire Council we hope that you find it to be a worthwhile experience that will benefit your life as well as that of others.

## **2. BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering has a positive impact on individuals, organisations and the wider community. You may be thinking about volunteering for personal reasons or to benefit others, however whatever your reason, volunteering usually achieves both of these at the same time.

Some of the many benefits which can be gained through volunteering include:

- keeping fit and healthy
- meeting new people
- reducing feelings of isolation
- increasing motivation
- boosting confidence and self-esteem
- using your spare time effectively
- providing structure to your day
- helping you make positive life choices
- putting you in touch with like-minded people

- allowing you to try something that you have always wanted to do
- utilising your existing skills and knowledge
- acquiring new skills and knowledge
- integrating into a new community
- contributing to the vibrancy of your community
- helping towards a cause you believe in
- expanding your beliefs and values
- gaining valuable work experience
- enhancing your CV
- improving your chances of accessing further education
- improving your chances of accessing paid employment
- helping towards a change of career

### **3. INTRODUCING EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

East Ayrshire Council covers an area of 490 square miles from Lugton in the north to Loch Doon in the south. It has a population of approximately 120,000 in a mixture of urban, rural and isolated communities. Kilmarnock is the major urban area with a population of around 44,000. The rest of the population live in smaller communities ranging from a few hundred people to around 9,000 in Cumnock.

The vision for East Ayrshire Council is that:

*‘East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs.’*

East Ayrshire Council employs around 6,000 people who work across 3 departments: Educational & Social Services, Neighbourhood Services and Finance & Corporate Support.

In order to better plan, resource and deliver quality services that meet the needs of people who live and work in East Ayrshire, there is a commitment that East Ayrshire Council employees will work in partnership with other public sector agencies, voluntary organisations, local businesses and especially local people to jointly tackle major issues such as health, transport, employment, housing, education and community safety.

#### 4. VOLUNTEERING WITHIN EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

The definition of a volunteer currently used by the Scottish Government which has been adopted by East Ayrshire Council is:

*‘the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups or organisations, communities, environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken by one’s own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary.’*

Within East Ayrshire Council, volunteers can be divided into two categories: managed and non-managed volunteers.

The term managed volunteer refers to individuals who are recruited, supervised and supported by a named East Ayrshire Council employee and have been issued with a task description outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of the volunteer activity. Examples of Council services where there are currently managed volunteers include Vibrant Communities, Onsite Services and Road Safety.

The term non-managed volunteer refers to individuals who are currently active within East Ayrshire but are not recruited or supervised by a named East Ayrshire Council employee. Some non-managed volunteers may however receive support from an East Ayrshire Council employee. Examples of services where there are currently non-managed volunteers include the Council’s ‘Pick a Park’ programme, local Sports Clubs, Community Councils, Church Groups and Charitable Organisations.

The information contained within this handbook applies specifically to Council managed volunteers however some of the information may also be relevant to non-managed volunteers. If you are a non-managed volunteer it is advisable to check this information with the organisation you are volunteering with, as they may have their own policies and procedures which may differ from those of East Ayrshire Council.

In addition to this document, East Ayrshire Council has a Volunteer Framework which sets out the organisation’s commitment to involving and supporting volunteers. This document can be viewed at [www.eac.eu/volunteering](http://www.eac.eu/volunteering).

The Vibrant Communities team who oversees the application of the Council’s Volunteer Framework have achieved the Volunteer Friendly Award ([www.volunteerfriendly.org.uk](http://www.volunteerfriendly.org.uk)). This is a simple, user-friendly quality standard which supports, recognises and rewards groups who are good at involving and

managing volunteers. Staff from within the Vibrant Communities team will be working to support other Council departments to achieve this award in the future.

East Ayrshire Council is committed to supporting, promoting and encouraging the involvement of Elected Members and employees in volunteering activities within community or voluntary organisations based within East Ayrshire or national voluntary organisations delivering services within East Ayrshire. This is known as Employer Supported Volunteering which contributes to the Council's Corporate Social Responsibility.

## **5. WHO CAN VOLUNTEER**

Within East Ayrshire Council, volunteering is open to all regardless of disability, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, religion, background or economic circumstances. It is recognised that everyone has something to offer but that some individuals may require additional support to realise their full potential. Further information and advice can be provided to assist anyone who may require extra support to volunteer and to help identify the roles which would be most suitable.

You can become a volunteer within East Ayrshire Council from the age of 14, however some volunteering roles have a minimum age of either 16 or 18. Further information is contained within the task description for each volunteering role regarding the minimum age requirement.

Within East Ayrshire Council there are volunteering opportunities available for anything from one-off events to those which require a more regular, longer term commitment. There are opportunities available at different times of the day, as well as in the evenings and at weekends, depending on what you want to do.

It is recommended that you think carefully about the amount of time you are able to give before choosing a volunteering role. Once recruited you will be expected to undertake your role at the agreed times and when necessary, inform your named contact as soon as possible if you are unable to attend. This is particularly important as some activities cannot go ahead if a volunteer does not turn up.

It is important that volunteering fits your needs as well as those of the Council. We understand that you may have other responsibilities, commitments or interests and as such may require flexibility in your volunteering role. Examples may include paid employment, caring for others or time off to

pursue other activities. As far as is reasonably practicable, your named contact will work with you to build flexibility into your volunteering role where required.

East Ayrshire Council benefits from the skills and experience which a wide and diverse range of volunteers bring to the organisation. As such, there has been a commitment to addressing the barriers which prevent some individuals from applying for a volunteering role such as low levels of literacy, concern about how volunteering could affect benefits claims, a criminal record, issues with providing appropriate references or forms of identification for a PVG check, a drug or alcohol addiction or a mental health illness.

Having a criminal record does not necessarily mean that you will be unable to become a Council volunteer. Depending on the nature of your criminal record, you may not be able to take up some volunteering roles but a variety of others will still be open to you. Further information and advice can be provided prior to you applying for a specific volunteering role.

## **6. EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS**

As a volunteer, you are expected to:

- carry out your volunteering role in accordance with the core values of East Ayrshire Council
- demonstrate a range of personal qualities including motivation, enthusiasm, honesty, reliability and commitment
- represent East Ayrshire Council in a professional manner
- comply with all East Ayrshire Council volunteer policies and procedures relevant to your volunteering role
- participate in induction sessions and training relevant to your volunteering role
- undertake your volunteering role at agreed times
- give adequate notice if you are unable to continue with your volunteering role
- raise any issues of concern relating to your volunteering role with your named contact

All East Ayrshire Council volunteers are issued with a Volunteer Agreement which outlines what you can expect from the organisation and what the organisation expects from you. In addition a Volunteer Task Description has been devised for each volunteering role which clearly defines the associated roles and responsibilities. There is a clear distinction between the roles of



volunteers and those of paid staff, to ensure that volunteering is not seen as a substitute for paid work.

## **7. APPLYING FOR A VOLUNTEERING ROLE**

Applying for and starting a new role can be the most daunting part of becoming a volunteer. Within East Ayrshire Council staff are able to support you through the entire process, so please feel free to request help if required at any point.

For most of the volunteering roles available within East Ayrshire Council we are looking for individuals who can demonstrate a range of personal qualities such as motivation, enthusiasm, honesty, reliability and commitment. Some volunteering roles may require you to have specific skills or a qualification however East Ayrshire Council can often provide any training which is required. Where specific skills or a qualification is required for a volunteering role, this information will be clearly stated on the task description.

You can view a full list of the volunteering opportunities available within East Ayrshire Council at [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk) or [www.eac.eu/volunteering](http://www.eac.eu/volunteering). If you are unsure about which volunteer role is right for you, why not come along to one of our Volunteer Information Sessions. These are held on a monthly basis and allow you to find out more about the volunteering roles available within the Council. In some cases shadowing sessions can be set up to allow you to decide if a specific role is the right one for you. (If you are offered shadowing sessions you will be required to complete a Criminal Convictions Form prior to attending the first session).

Once you have decided which volunteering role is the right one for you, the application process is as follows:

- complete an application form
- attend an informal interview
- provide names and contact details for two reference requests
- where required, complete a PVG Scheme Record Check or a Disclosure Scotland Check

Don't be put off by these procedures – they are in place to help ensure that you are fully informed of all aspects of the volunteering role that you are interested in. When applying for a volunteering role you will have your application dealt with as quickly as possible, however please be aware that obtaining references and PVG/Disclosure Scotland checks can sometimes take



a few weeks. If the Council is unable to accept you for a volunteering role, a full explanation will be provided.

## **8. REFERENCES**

Wherever possible you will be asked to provide the names and contact details for two reference requests, however in certain circumstances one reference request will be acceptable. Your referees should not be members of your family but may include a health professional, education provider, previous/current employer or similar. If you are unsure as to who to use as a referee further information can be provided.

## **9. PVG AND DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND CHECKS**

Volunteers who carry out regulated work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults as part of their normal volunteering role will be required to complete a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme Record Check. Individuals who are asked to use the Council's computer systems as part of their volunteering role and are not a PVG scheme member will be required to complete a Basic Disclosure Scotland Check. These checks provide details of your criminal convictions, or state that you have none, and are used to enable East Ayrshire Council to make safer and fairer recruitment decisions. Results of these checks will be treated confidentially and procedures are in place to ensure that the information is known only to specific members of the Council.

You do not have to agree to a PVG or Disclosure Scotland check however refusal will affect your suitability to undertake certain volunteering roles. East Ayrshire Council cannot run a PVG or Disclosure Scotland check without your permission. If you are worried about any information which may appear on your PVG or Disclosure Scotland check, it is a good idea to speak to someone prior to completing the form.

East Ayrshire Council will cover all costs associated with PVG Scheme Record Checks and Disclosure Scotland Checks if either are required for your volunteering role.

## **10. VOLUNTEER EXPENSES**

East Ayrshire Council is committed to identifying and meeting the costs of involving volunteers and as such there is a process in place for you to claim back out of pocket expenses relating to your volunteer role. You will be provided with clear information regarding exactly what expenses can be

claimed and the process for making a claim before you commence with your volunteering role.

Vibrant Communities will reimburse:

- Travel costs to and from the place of volunteering – the commuting rate (25p per mile)
- Travel costs in the course of volunteering – the standard rate (45p per mile)
- Motor Cycle Rate (25p per mile)

Payment of expenses will normally be paid by direct bank transfer into your bank account. If you do not have a bank account arrangements can be made for you to receive expenses in cash.

## **11. CLAIMING BENEFITS WHEN VOLUNTEERING**

It is unlikely that volunteering will affect your benefits however there are some rules that anyone in receipt of benefits should follow before going ahead with voluntary work. As such we would strongly recommend that if you are in receipt of any benefits you should inform your advisor of your intention to volunteer and keep them up to date with any changes in your circumstances. Further information can be found on the Job Centre Plus leaflet 'Volunteering while getting benefits'.

## **12. INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

Due to the diverse range of volunteering opportunities available across the Council, the induction and training provided for volunteers will vary depending on the nature of the role. As a minimum there is a commitment that you will be provided with:

- a comprehensive induction programme which will be completed prior to commencing with your volunteering role
- an ID badge and where appropriate a uniform that you should wear when undertaking your volunteering role
- relevant mandatory training and associated refresher courses as and when required
- access to the Learn Pro site which will allow you to complete e-learning courses
- access to optional learning and development opportunities

### **13. SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION**

All East Ayrshire Council volunteers are provided with a named contact who will act as your supervisor for the duration of your volunteering experience. Your supervisor will keep in contact with you in a number of ways including telephone, email and face to face meetings.

Support and supervision ensures that communication between you and your named contact takes place on a regular basis, you have the opportunity to express your views, your training and development needs are identified and any issues are dealt with quickly. It can also highlight personal issues which you may be experiencing e.g. stress, anxiety, depression, bereavement or substance misuse and where appropriate you can be made aware of the support services available to you.

### **14. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

East Ayrshire Council is committed to its responsibilities to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of volunteers and other persons who may be affected by the activities, operations or undertakings of volunteers.

In relation to health & safety, you will be required to:

- familiarise yourself with the contents of the risk assessment which has been completed for your volunteering role
- undertake mandatory and refresher training
- follow procedures for reporting and recording incidents, accidents and near misses

Whilst undertaking your volunteering role, you will be covered under East Ayrshire Council's Public Liability Insurance. It is important to note that if you carry out any duties that are not part of your volunteering role you will not be covered under the Council's insurance policy and also that your personal belongings, possessions and vehicles are not covered.

### **15. RECOGNISING AND VALUING VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTIONS**

Although no financial reward is given, there are a number of other ways in which East Ayrshire Council is able to demonstrate both formally and informally that your input is appreciated and valued including:

- saying 'thank you' and providing positive feedback

- ensuring you have the opportunity to express your views and ideas about your volunteering experience and contribute to decision making processes
- celebrating your achievements at recognition events, in the local press, on the Council website and through social media
- planning social events
- nominating you for local and national awards
- providing you with the opportunity to access the range of discounts already offered to paid employees

You will also be made aware of the various award schemes which your volunteer hours may count towards e.g. the Saltire Awards.

## **16. WITHDRAWING FROM A VOLUNTEERING ROLE**

For a number of reasons you may find that you no longer wish to or are unable to continue with your volunteering role. In this situation we would ask that you contact your named supervisor giving as much notice as possible of your intention to leave.

Your named supervisor will discuss with you your reasons for leaving and will also determine if there is anything which would encourage you to continue volunteering e.g. more flexibility in your volunteering role, advice on childcare issues or volunteering whilst on benefits, additional training, more regular supervision or support with a personal issue.

If your decision is still to withdraw from the volunteering role, your named supervisor will ask for some feedback regarding your volunteering experience and any ideas you have on how volunteering within East Ayrshire Council could be improved. You will also be asked about any help or support which the Council could provide for the future e.g. references or advice on how to move into another volunteering role, training or employment.

## **17. PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

East Ayrshire Council works closely with the Volunteer Centre and the Council for Voluntary Organisations (CVO) within East Ayrshire to ensure that there is a consistent approach to volunteer development across the authority.

### **Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire**

The Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire can provide information for voluntary groups in East Ayrshire who are looking for volunteers or for individuals who wish to volunteer. Services include:

- access to local and national databases of volunteering opportunities
- drop-in centre in Kilmarnock and Cumnock for people wishing to volunteer
- advice and training sessions on PVG and Disclosure Scotland checks for individuals and groups
- hints and tips on recruiting and retaining volunteers

### **East Ayrshire Council for Voluntary Organisations (CVOEA)**

East Ayrshire Council for Voluntary Organisations (CVOEA) can provide information for voluntary groups in East Ayrshire or for individuals who wish to volunteer. The services provided include:

- assistance with funding applications
- assistance with development of constitutions
- access to trust fund information and fund finder
- access to typing services and photocopying facilities
- training for management committee and volunteers

<b>Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire</b>  28-30 Grange Street Kilmarnock KA1 2DD  Tel: 01563 544765 Email: <a href="mailto:volunteer@eav.org.uk">volunteer@eav.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.volunteerscotland.net">www.volunteerscotland.net</a> (click on the East Ayrshire link to find out what volunteering opportunities are available locally)	<b>East Ayrshire Council for Voluntary Organisations (CVOEA)</b>  Belford Mill 16 Brewery Road Kilmarnock KA1 3GZ  Tel: 01563 574000 Email: <a href="mailto:info@cvoea.co.uk">info@cvoea.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.cvoea.co.uk">www.cvoea.co.uk</a>
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## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information regarding volunteering within East Ayrshire Council please contact Vibrant Communities on 01563 576720 or email [vibrantcommunities@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:vibrantcommunities@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

This document is also available, on request, in braille, large print or recorded on to tape, and can be translated into Chinese, Punjabi, Urdu, Gaelic and Polish.

Ma tha sibh airson fiosrachadh fhaighinn ann an cànan sam bith eile, cuiribh brath thugainnaig an t-seòladh a leanas.

اگر آپ یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہائی ٹیپ کیجیے دیے گئے پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

閣下如需要這份資料的其他語言版本，請透過以下的地址與我們聯絡。

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To request a copy in an alternative format please contact Vibrant Communities on 01563 578105 or email [vibrantcommunities@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:vibrantcommunities@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

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