

Neath Port Talbot Safe and Well - Volunteer Policy

Introduction

NPT Safe and Well is a free service developed by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (Council) to support residents who have been told to self-isolate or shield themselves from the coronavirus. Volunteers are key to this service and this policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement. It is of relevance to all within the Council and will be regularly reviewed by the Safe and Well team to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of Council and its volunteers.

Commitment

The Council values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging and supportive.

Definition

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of the Council, unpaid and of their own free choice.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by the Council and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the Council cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a designated Community Lead for guidance and support. Community Leads have responsibility for the co-ordination of voluntary activity within the Safe and Well service, including contributing to volunteering policies and procedures and ensuring the welfare of volunteers.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are

acknowledged – both of what the Council expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the Council.

The Council expects volunteers:

- To be reliable and honest
- To uphold the Council's values and comply with organisational policies
- To make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
- To contribute positively to the aims of the Safe and Well service and avoid bringing the Council into disrepute
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Recruitment & Selection

All volunteers will undertake an informal interview over the phone and asked to produce a character reference. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) there may be other safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. Volunteers will have a clear and concise role description which will be regularly reviewed through support sessions.

Volunteers will receive induction training and will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence. Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the Council or referred to the Volunteer Centre at Neath Port Talbot CVS.

Training, Development, Support and Supervision

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the Council's relevant policies. The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the Council in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks.

It will be the responsibility of the designated Community Lead to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training. Training in the supervision of volunteers will be provided for all those who have direct responsibility for volunteers.

Insurance

The Council's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

Confidentiality

The Council will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the Council relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

The Council aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly. We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named Community Lead to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, the Council's Settling Differences Policy will be adhered to.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Council recognises the rights of volunteers:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- to receive adequate support and training
- to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to be recognised and appreciated
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- to know what to do if something goes wrong

Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

Other relevant documents

All volunteers will be provided with a Volunteer Guide to refer back to about their role, responsibilities and tips to keep themselves safe.

Implementation Date: 1st May 2020
Review Date: 1st September 2020