



Isle of Wight Council

GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES OCTOBER 2024

1. Introduction

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to contact us. Your volunteering journey with us is just beginning. This document will tell you more about the volunteer scheme, how the recruitment process will work and what our expectations are for new and existing volunteers.

The Isle of Wight Council really values the time that our volunteers give. Their commitment makes a huge difference to individuals, council teams and services. Volunteering with us will provide you with opportunities to improve your skills knowledge and experience and to meet new people. As the largest employer on the island, we are committed to supporting you through your volunteering journey.

Volunteering opportunities are available to all individuals regardless of race, gender, sexuality, disability, religious belief, or age. We can all make a difference.

Being a volunteer is very different from being an employee:

- You give your time for free.
- You do not have a contract of employment so there are no set working hours.
- The volunteering opportunity could be terminated by either side without notice. We will offer support and guidance if you are struggling and ask that you give us as much notice as possible if your situation changes and you are not able to meet your commitments.

Our volunteering service sits within the Children's Social Services, Targeted family support team. We give our volunteers the opportunity to join one of our teams and support them with the great work they do supporting vulnerable children and families on our island. Each team offers a range of volunteering streams and will provide ongoing support and reflective supervision. The journey of each child is our focus, so we all must be flexible to meet ever changing needs. On the next page is some examples of what may be available to you. Please note each team has different requirements and some may already have their full quota of volunteers, so though we hope to match you with your preferred team we do also need to meet service needs.

Youth Justice Service

- Sit on Referral Order panels and guide young offenders to repair damage they may have done, enhance learning, carry out community reparation activities.
- To volunteer with youth justice, you will need to undertake additional induction training- details of this will be provided once you have completed the children's support and protection service volunteer induction.

Children We Ware for Team

- Facilitate return conversations for children in care who have gone missing.
- Re-integration into education and role modelling support.
- Transporting children to and from school, contact or appointments.

Next Steps Team

- Support with projects such as 'Come Dine with me' 'Have your say day.'
- Support young people with their transfer to living independently, guiding, and mentoring to set up their new home and routine.
- Support with completing the AQA independent living skills.
- Support to access community groups.

Children With Disabilities Team

- Support children to engage in community activities.
- Befriending children and/or parents/carers on an ongoing basis.

Children's Support and Protection Service x 6

- Support and direct families to create more ordered living environments.
- Support with form filling/benefit claims.
- Support to access community activities/build networks.
- Looking after children to enable parent/s to attend appointments/meetings.
- Transporting children to and from school, contact or appointments.

Targeted Family Support Team

- Support workers to run groups, for example: substance misuse, mental health.
- Befriending/buddying children in a particular area of interest.

- Transporting children to and from school, contact or appointments.

Fostering And Adoption Service

- Support with marketing, covering stands, mailouts, admin.
- Look after children while carers attend appointments.
- Help with transporting children to school if there are clashes with carers' children's needs.

Early Help

- Provide support to children and families who have not yet reached the threshold for Social Worker intervention but would benefit from support to avoid further intervention.
- Examples of tasks may include support with completing paperwork, budgeting, support to access groups/activities, attending appointments with family, taking children to the park to provide respite- this is not an exhaustive list as anything can come up!

Virtual Schools

- Buddying/mentoring children
- Exam Coaching
- Transporting children to and from school, contact or appointments.

As well as volunteers being matched to teams, one-off tasks are emailed out on a weekly update to volunteers, these may be further volunteer opportunities from one of the above teams, a one-off task or ongoing support for a set number of weeks. You can opt to just be available for one off task and not match with a team, but regular involvement is expected.

2. Core Values & Behaviours

People are at the heart of what we do. We want our volunteers to be part of a team that is productive, joined up, involved in co-designing and co-creating services, truly valued, respected, and diverse.

The Isle of Wight Council's core values can be summarised under four key headings:

- Customer and community focused.
- Effective and efficient.
- Working together.
- Fair and transparent.

These are some of the behaviours that we expect from our volunteers:

- Being clear, honest, and unambiguous.
- Doing what you say you will do, when you say you will do it and communicating the outcome.
- Responding to colleagues and customers appropriately; acting courteously, respectfully, and positively and being well-presented.
- Listening to people and giving correct, timely responses; knowing and understanding appropriate methods of communication.
- You may see or hear things in workplaces across the council that are confidential. Sharing personal information without permission is unlawful and in breach of the Data Protection Act.
- Safeguarding children is at the core of our work.
- Please ask questions and ask for support if you need it. Never suffer in silence. We want your time with us to be productive, helpful, and stress-free.

3. The Recruitment Process

After reading these guidelines, please email volunteers@iow.gov.uk to request an application form. We will aim to respond to all emails in ten working days. We understand that applicants may not have been employed for a while, may be retired, or have recently left education but would appreciate as much detail as you can give. We will also send you an Equality Monitoring Form, which will be kept separate from your application to respect your confidentiality. Finally, we will send you a declaration of criminal offenses form as all successful applicants will undergo a DBS (police) check free of charge. Please email these three forms back to us via volunteers@iow.gov.uk.

Interviews are held face to face, we aim to make them as relaxed and informal as possible to give us all an opportunity to get to know each other. We will score each

interview to make sure everyone is treated equally. If you are not invited to volunteer, we will aim to provide information about other volunteering opportunities on the island and will give you constructive feedback.

Applicants will be asked for details of two referees on their application form who will be contacted via email. At least one of these should ideally be your last employer. Again, we understand that applicants may not have been employed for a while, may be retired, or have recently left education. We would still ask for at least one reference from a professional who knows you well and a personal referee, who is not a family member or close friend. We will only contact your referees if you are successful in your interview.

We will ask you to provide three pieces of ID to confirm your identity at your interview. When you are invited to interview, we will provide you with details of what to bring. If you are not successful, these will be deleted from our system. If you wish to re-apply, we will consider a new application after a period of 3 months.

4. The Induction Process

Within five working days of your interview, we will contact you with the outcome and details about what happens next. We will provide you with details of your learning, request references and conduct your DBS check.

Your probation period will be for six months. By then, you will have received all the support you need to be confident in your volunteering role. If you disengage with the scheme for a period of at least 3 months, we reserve the right to carry out an informal review and withdraw you from the scheme.

All personal data is held securely in accordance with GDPR. If you leave the scheme or are unsuccessful at interview, your data is held for a period of 12 months and is then deleted.

You will be given an ID badge and will be provided with login details to access all your E-Learning via the Isle of Wight Council Learning Hub. This has an extensive range of

courses available to you as a volunteer, many of which you can choose to complete to support your own ongoing personal and professional development.

We want to make sure that you are well prepared for your role and feel safe and supported. Your E-Learning, to be completed in the first 3 months includes:

Information Security Awareness

Data Protection Awareness

Safeguarding Adults

Equality & Diversity

Health & Safety Basics & Essentials

Prevent and Radicalisation

Professional Boundaries

All volunteers will also be required to attend a Safeguarding Foundation course, which is a one-day course. There may be further training, depending on the volunteer stream/s you choose.

Some of the training courses have a mandatory refresher date, courses will pop up on your learning hub when they are due to be updated. The Volunteer Coordinator is available to offer support with completing your e-learning.

You will be set up on our “Wightcare” system and will be provided with a unique PIN that you can use to call in at the beginning and end of a volunteering task if you are unsupervised. Wightcare would call you if you did not log out at the allotted time then follow up with calls to one of my colleagues then if necessary to your emergency contact.

5. When you are Volunteering:

We ask all volunteers to sign a volunteer agreement which will be sent to them by the volunteer coordinator.

A weekly email is sent out to all volunteers which may include updates and information, training opportunities and further volunteering opportunities. The Volunteer Coordinator is available to offer support and you can request an individual catch up as

and when required. We hold a monthly volunteer support session, where volunteers get together for a chance to meet up, talk about their experiences and updates from the service may be shared.

A few tips for when you are organising a volunteer task with a member of staff at children's support and protection service:

- Make sure you note down all the key information for example location and timings
- If you are going to be transporting children ask about accessing car seats- there is car seat guidance which can be sent to you and training which must be completed prior to accepting a transporting task
- Ask the worker for their contact details so you can contact them should you have any concerns, or any problems arise when completing the task.
- Ask for a second contact number to use if they are not available (perhaps the Assistant Team Manager should you have a safeguarding concern)

Volunteers are able to claim travel expenses for when they are volunteering, keep a log of the miles you do and the date you do them as well as noting which team you complete the task for on a word document and send to volunteers@iow.gov.uk Expenses should be claimed monthly. You may be able to claim some additional expenses this will be dependent on the task and only possible after agreement from the team you are volunteering for.

If you use a car for any reason other than travelling alone to and from a volunteering task, **it is essential that you have business cover on your insurance.** This is often included in policies and can be added at no extra charge. This will be checked alongside your driving license during the induction period and then on an annual basis by the volunteer coordinator.

6. Conclusion

We appreciate that we are asking for a large commitment of your time to reach the point where you are ready to volunteer. All the above courses are certificated, free of charge and will be great assets to your own personal and/or professional development. It may even be that volunteering is the beginning of a longer journey with the Isle of Wight Council and that you may eventually join us as an employee.

We recognise that some of our volunteers may be studying in a related area. We must however emphasise that as a volunteer, you are not an Isle of Wight Council employee. As such, we will not be able to formally engage with your current/anticipated places of study regarding placements and potential sponsorships.

Although there is no contract, we do ask for a commitment of at least one year. We do ask you during your induction, to sign a volunteer agreement which will be sent to you after a successful interview.

Thank you once again for taking the time to read this document- should you have any further questions please email volunteers@iow.gov.uk