



North Hykeham Town Council

Volunteer Policy

This policy applies to volunteers undertaking work/duties on behalf of, but not directly employed by, the Town Council

1. Policy Statement

North Hykeham Town Council (NHTC) aims to strengthen the resilience, reach and voice of the voluntary and community sector in North Hykeham. Our vision is that there is a strong, sustainable and influential voluntary and community sector that is able to make a positive difference to people's lives in North Hykeham.

Volunteers play a crucial role within NHTC in helping us to provide services and support to the community, and want to make sure all our volunteers have a safe, rewarding and enjoyable experience. This policy reflects our commitment to volunteering for NHTC and sets out a framework of procedures and best practice, which we will endeavour to follow when recruiting and working with our volunteers, to ensure that both volunteers' and NHTC's expectations are met. We want to ensure that there are good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers, and that volunteers are well supported:

- Our role is to encourage voluntary activity, and therefore we want to take a leading role in the involvement of residents as volunteers to help deliver our services.
- We need people from all walks of life and all communities, who can bring their different skills and experiences to our work
- Volunteers bring a different perspective to the organisation, often reflecting the views of the local community
- Volunteers can also help to extend the services we are able to offer

2. Who is a volunteer?

A volunteer is any individual who undertakes unpaid activities on behalf of NHTC of their own free choice to give their time, energy, skills and expertise to support NHTC in providing its services. Work experience placements are different to volunteering and further guidance should be sought from the Town Clerk.

Volunteers may be involved in short or long-term activities or as a one off. Typical activities may include:

- Supporting fundraising or awareness raising events
- Involvement in direct delivery of our services and projects
- Working in our offices

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Each volunteer will be supported and supervised by a designated member of staff within the organisation. The designated staff member will provide guidance, support and supervision to the volunteer to ensure that the volunteering experience is a positive and rewarding one.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no contractual

obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability and a reciprocal set of expectations.

Volunteers can expect to:

- Have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- Receive adequate support and training
- Be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- Be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- Receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses
- Have opportunities for personal development
- Be recognised and appreciated
- Be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- Know what to do if something goes wrong

NHTC expects volunteers to:

- Be reliable, open and honest
- Uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- Make the most of opportunities given, e.g., for training
- Contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the Council into disrepute
- Carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

4. **Equality and Diversity**

NHTC is committed to the Equality Act 2010 and building a diverse organisation that is responsive to the needs of the community of North Hykeham and to the Council's stakeholders. It is committed to equal opportunities at all stages of recruitment, selection and volunteering. Where it is reasonable to do so, in accordance with the Act, we will be flexible with the tasks within role descriptions.

5. **Recruitment**

Recruitment will usually involve a standard application form, informal interview and the taking of references. Some roles may require further checks such as DBS checks which will be undertaken in accordance with the latest guidance.

Recruitment of volunteers for NHTC will be supported by the Town Clerk who will draw up role descriptions with the relevant staff supervisor. Opportunities will be advertised on our website, through signposting sessions, and via social media. All enquiries will be responded to within 7 days. NHTC will request at least one, if not two, references for all volunteers.

Where applicants are not able to be placed into their preferred role, they will be given feedback and the opportunity to discuss other possible roles with NHTC.

6. **Induction and Training**

To help ensure that volunteers are appropriately equipped for their role, each volunteer must undergo the appropriate induction and training process prior to commencing their role, alongside continuous training, where appropriate, whilst volunteering with NHTC. Each volunteer will be provided with relevant management and support. As a minimum, volunteers will receive an induction which will include:

1. An introduction to other volunteers and staff members

2. A tour of NHTC's premises with particular attention to the location of exits and the assembly point
3. Copies of NHTC policies in respect of Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Confidentiality, and Safeguarding
4. Expenses Form and verbal instruction as to its completion
5. Health and Safety procedures including verbal instruction regarding the Fire Evacuation Procedure
6. Housekeeping e.g., use of NHTC kitchens, location of toilets

In general, training will be provided by the volunteer's supervisor in an 'on the job' basis, but some roles may require formal training – e.g., in safeguarding issues.

7. **Taster period**

Each volunteer will be offered a six-week taster period. At the end of the period, they will meet with their supervisor. If both are happy with the placement they will continue in their role.

8. **Support and Supervision**

Each volunteer will have a named supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for training and supervising the volunteer, as well as giving feedback and answering queries. They will also plan work for the volunteer.

Volunteers and supervisors will agree on appropriate arrangements for catch-up sessions. This will vary according to the nature of the role and how often the volunteer comes in. We recommend that each project that involves volunteer holds volunteer meetings at least every quarter to allow volunteers the opportunity to speak with staff and other volunteers, as well as to raise any queries or concerns.

9. **Recognition**

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to share their views and opinions of their experiences of volunteering with us. NHTC will also provide appropriate recognition and occasions to celebrate volunteers and their work, on an individual and group basis, according to specific role(s), commitment and length of service.

10. **Health and Safety**

Volunteers must take reasonable care of themselves and others while volunteering for NHTC, and follow any health and safety advice and instruction given for their role. Volunteers should co-operate with NHTC on health and safety matters, and immediately report accidents/incidents (including near misses – accidents/incidents that may have led to injury). Volunteers should not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

NHTC will ensure that all volunteers are provided with the appropriate information, supervision and training required to enable them to complete voluntary work safely. This includes providing suitable systems and procedures and guidance is outlined in The Health and Safety Policy.

11. **Insurance**

NHTC provides Employers Liability, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity cover for all volunteers whilst working on NHTC activities. NHTC does not provide motor insurance cover. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering

agreement.

12. **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

NHTC will protect volunteer information in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Data will be held securely and confidentially and will only be accessed by authorised individuals. Please see our Privacy Policy on the website for further information about how we collect, manage and use the personal data of our volunteers. We will not pass information on without permission.

We expect all volunteers to comply with the Council's Data Protection Policy and associated policies. When using NHTC devices or IT systems as part of their role, volunteers must read, understand and sign up to our Information Security Policy prior to starting their role. When volunteering with NHTC, volunteers may become aware of confidential information about the Council, Councillors, its staff, and third parties. All volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality and should not disclose the Council's information during their volunteering services and any time afterwards.

All volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as staff, as laid down in any NHTC policy or by verbal instruction from their supervisor. Volunteers who will have access to confidential information will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Breach of confidentiality is taken very seriously and may result in us asking the volunteer to leave.