



**Guide to  
volunteering**  
with Hertfordshire  
County Council



**Hertfordshire**

# The Value of Volunteers to Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire County Council provides a huge range of services to the residents of Hertfordshire, such as protecting vulnerable children and adults, maintaining roads and infrastructure and providing fire and community support services. Volunteers play a critical role in the services we deliver. They supplement the work of paid employees, adding value by applying their particular skills and abilities to projects and tasks that allows us to enhance our service delivery.



“*Everyone has something to contribute*”

Countryside and Rights of Way volunteer

Hertfordshire County Council has a proud tradition of working with volunteers and we currently have thousands of people volunteering with us in a wide range of roles. Whether it's maintaining and improving our natural environment or providing a carer with a much-needed break, the work you do is vital for the services we deliver and makes a real difference to communities across Hertfordshire.

Thank you for offering your time to help improve the lives and wellbeing of the people of Hertfordshire. Your effort is highly valued and we will work to ensure that your time as a volunteer is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

## The Benefits of Volunteering

People from all walks of life choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the local area and make a positive difference to the people around them. For others, volunteering offers a chance to get out, have fun, meet new friends and build a sense of community.

Volunteering can also bring about personal development. In addition to helping you gain work experience in certain areas such as archives, youth mentoring and conservation works, volunteering can give you a unique opportunity to earn qualifications and develop new skills relating to leadership, teamwork and communication. These skills are widely sought by employers and will be crucial for development in any career path.



“*I feel valued and that my contribution makes a difference*”

Archives and local studies volunteer

## Ways to get involved

Volunteering with Hertfordshire County Council will provide you with the opportunity to work in a variety of areas such as:

- supporting the work of Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies
- Health Walk leader
- sitting with an elderly or disabled person to give their carer a much-needed break
- helping out at a local event
- working with the Fire & Rescue Service to promote fire safety and prevention
- volunteering with Youth Work projects.

For more information about opportunities in your area, visit:

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/volunteering/browse-volunteering-opportunities/browse-all-of-our-volunteering-opportunities.aspx](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/volunteering/browse-volunteering-opportunities/browse-all-of-our-volunteering-opportunities.aspx)



## How we'll support you

Volunteers are at the very heart of Hertfordshire County Council and we are dedicated to making sure that your experience is enjoyable and that you are made to feel valued and appreciated for the work you do.

We will make sure that you:

- feel welcomed and are properly introduced to the role of the council and its services
- know what your role is and what you are expected to do
- know who you report to and who to talk to if there are problems
- feel part of a real team
- are treated with respect
- have the training you need for your role
- get the feedback you need to enable you to develop in your role
- are properly valued and thanked
- are trusted (with confidential information if necessary)
- have safe working conditions
- are treated respectfully by all HCC employees.

“*I get a lot of feedback together with much support and encouragement to certify my new skills with professional qualifications*”

Countryside and Rights of Way volunteer

## Induction and Training

When you start your volunteering role with us, you will receive an allocated volunteering supervisor who will give you an induction so you can be confident in your role. This induction will include information on the area you are working on, your role as a volunteer, and health and safety policies. Depending on your role and responsibilities, you may need to complete training to effectively undertake your tasks or as is the case for a very limited number of roles, wear a uniform or insignia. Your Supervisor will let you know if any training is required.

## Supervision and support

Providing support to our volunteers is very important to us and we want to make sure you are comfortable and confident in your role. Your supervisor will be an ongoing point of contact for any queries, questions or concerns throughout your time as a Hertfordshire volunteer. In addition, further training and guidance are also available should you feel unsure of what is required or how to fulfil your potential within a role.



## Equalities and diversity

At Hertfordshire County Council, we're committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity. We believe that no one should be treated less favourably than anyone else because of their gender, marital status, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. We value and celebrate the fact that our volunteers and our communities are all very different and we will do everything we can to make sure you are supported and treated equally and fairly.

## How much time do you need to give?

The amount of time you need to commit to volunteering will vary greatly depending on your role and responsibilities. Some volunteering opportunities will require more flexibility than others. If you are unable to attend a session, we ask that you let your volunteer supervisor know in advance.

For more information about the time you need to commit, visit:

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/volunteer](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/volunteer)

## Moving on

We understand that personal circumstances change. If you no longer wish to continue in your role at any point, you are not obliged to do so. On leaving, we are happy to supply a reference or statement of your achievements and we may ask for feedback on your experience to improve our services.

**“ I love it, it gives me a real buzz  
and, of course, I am getting  
progressively fitter too ”**

Countryside and Rights of Way volunteer



## The Essentials

We ask our volunteers to:

- be good ambassadors for the county council and positive role models to other volunteers
- behave in a responsible and professional manner and adhere to the organisation's policies and procedures
- respect confidentiality
- be accountable and accept constructive comment
- talk to us and ask for help if it is needed
- give us honest feedback and ideas for improvement
- undertake work safely and report any concerns immediately
- never undertake a task that they are uncomfortable doing, or are not trained or capable of doing
- attend pre-arranged meetings and inform their supervisor if they are unable to do so.



**“ I get great pleasure from seeing them, knowing it makes such a difference to their lives ”**

Breakaway for carers volunteer

### Your expenses

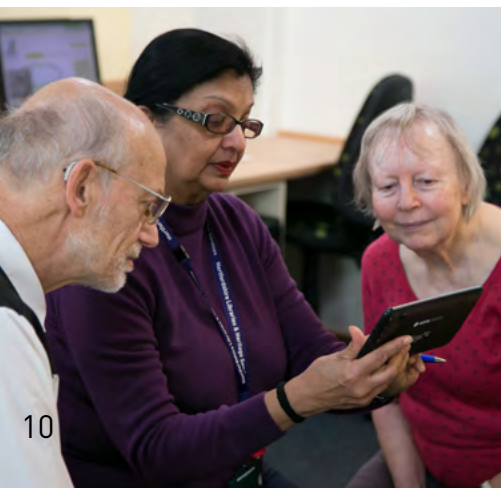
Depending on the area of your work, you may be able to claim for expenses you incur during your volunteering duties. All expense claims should be agreed in advance with your volunteering supervisor. All claims must be made within three months. If you are using your own car for journeys necessary to your volunteering role, you should keep receipts and provide a clear record of the time, date and purpose for the journey, so you can claim your mileage expenses. Before you start volunteering you should look into the potential expenses that could be available for your chosen area of work.

### Welfare and benefits

If you receive welfare benefits, you should be able to continue receiving these while you volunteer and receive out of pocket expenses, as long as you comply with the relevant regulations and policies.

For further information on how volunteering may affect your benefits, read the 'Volunteering and claiming benefits' guidance on:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/volunteering-and-claiming-benefits](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/volunteering-and-claiming-benefits)



**“ Our coordinator is brilliant. She's very helpful, proactive and responsive ”**

Services for Young People volunteer



## Travelling and Insurance

If your volunteer duties involve travel, we ask that you try to be as environmentally friendly as possible, by considering sharing transport with a staff member, another volunteer or using public transport where possible. If you need to drive as part of your role, you will be covered by our fleet insurance when you are driving one of HCC vehicles. However, for the insurance to be valid, you must comply with our policies on driving at work. We will check your driving licence to ensure that it is valid for the type of vehicle you will be driving. If you are driving your personal vehicle, you will need to ensure that your insurance covers your volunteering activities and that your insurer is informed of how you are using your vehicle.

Volunteers are also covered by HCC's Employer's Liability and Public Liability Insurance. Some areas of the county council also have personal accident cover for volunteers, if appropriate for the volunteering role. You can check this with your volunteering supervisor.

## Confidentiality

In the course of your volunteering you may have access to confidential information that could relate to the people Hertfordshire County Council supports. This should not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone not directly connected to our work. If you are concerned about another individual during your time as a volunteer, you should raise this with your supervisor.



## Data Protection

While volunteering for the Council, if you have access to any personal data, either of service users or other volunteers or staff, you must look after it in accordance with data protection law. If this is necessary for your role you must read and accept our Data Protection Policy and your supervisor must arrange data protection training for you along with any other induction training.

Hertfordshire County Council will look after any personal information that you share with us and will ensure that it is safe and secure. For more information about how we use your information, please visit: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/privacy)

## Working with children and vulnerable adults

For some volunteers who will be working in a role that is defined as undertaking regulated activity with either children or adults a criminal record check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) may be required. If a check is necessary, we will arrange this as part of your application process. If anything happens subsequently that may affect your DBS Status you must inform us immediately.

The council has a duty to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. If your volunteering role involves contact with young people or vulnerable adults, as one of our volunteers we ask you to be vigilant when it comes to safeguarding concerns. If during the course of your duties you witness an incident where there is an immediate danger, you should call the police on **999**.

“*My manager is always on hand for help or advice and always give me clear instructions*”

Countryside and Rights of Way volunteer

## Health and Safety

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of all our volunteers. We are committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment and to giving you the appropriate induction, training and supervision to maintain everyone's health and safety. As part of your induction you will receive information and training specific to your role. You should be aware of, and stick to, the health and safety measures that are in place.

### First aid

In the event of a medical emergency call **999**, but it is crucial that you are aware of where the first aid kit and accident book are, and how to contact the nearest organisational first-aider on site.

### Physical safety

If you have to lift and handle heavy loads, you must make sure that a full risk assessment has been carried out by your supervisor, and you have received the correct training.

### Working with chemicals and substances

If you need to use chemicals, check whether the area that you are volunteering in is covered by COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) regulations. Under these regulations, any substance that could be hazardous to health in the workplace must be identified and risk assessed.



### Working with computers and display equipment

We ask that you take a few sensible precautions when undertaking any work based on computers to make sure that chair, keyboard, monitor and desk are properly adjusted for you.

### Clothing

Always dress appropriately for the role you are undertaking, taking into consideration the weather conditions and the sites that you are based at. If you are provided with protective clothing for your role please ensure that you wear it.





## Smoking and e-cigarettes

Smoking is strictly prohibited in all enclosed public spaces and workplaces. Work vehicles are also required to be smoke free if they are being used in the course of voluntary work.

## Accidents and hazards

We all have an obligation to ensure that our actions do not put other volunteers, staff or the public at risk. If you are injured or you witness someone else being injured as a result of the work you are involved in, report this immediately to your supervisor. If you see a hazard or accident waiting to happen, please warn colleagues and your supervisor.

## Problems or complaints

Hertfordshire County Council has a problem-solving procedure in place in case anyone has a problem. If you have concerns, you should in the first instance speak to your volunteering supervisor, who will make every effort to settle the issue fairly and amicably. However, if you do not feel the matter is resolved satisfactorily, you should contact your department/ service manager who will take the issue further. As part of the problem solving procedure we ask you to provide feedback to improve the way we manage and support our volunteers.

On the rare occasion that there is a problem with a volunteer's behaviour or contribution, we will discuss the issues with the volunteer, and agree steps to address them. These could include additional role training or increased mentoring. However, if concerns cannot be resolved, we may have to end that person's volunteering relationship with us. You should contact your department/ service manager who will take the issue further. As part of the problem solving procedure, we ask that you provide feedback to help us improve.



## Next Steps

Thank you for your interest in being a volunteer. The work you do is vital to improving the communities throughout Hertfordshire.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to call us on **0300 123 4040** or you can visit our website [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/volunteer](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/volunteer)



“ *I love to see everyone's smiling faces and seeing everyone so happy* ”

Adult Day Service Volunteer





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