



Isle of Wight Council
GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS
FOR VOLUNTEERS IN CHILDREN'S
SERVICES
June 2021

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 how the volunteer recruitment process will work for you and what our expectations are for new and existing volunteers.

Volunteering with us will provide you with opportunities to improve your skills knowledge and experience and to meet new people. You may be retired, in further education, employed or seeking employment. 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. The Isle of Wight Council really values the time that our volunteers give. This commitment makes a huge difference to individuals, council teams and services.

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 Services, Resilience Around Families Team (RAFT). Since we launched the scheme in August 2019, we have grown a team of around 50 volunteers and continue to recruit. We give our volunteers the opportunity to join one or more 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 tasks and will provide ongoing support and reflective supervision. You will also provide brief written notes of your interventions that will be uploaded to our recording system. The journey of each child is our focus, so we all have to be flexible to meet ever changing needs. Here are some examples of what may be available for you:

Youth Offending Team

- Sit on Referral Order panels and guide young offenders to repair damage they may have done, enhance learning, carry out community reparation activities.

Children in Care Team

- Carry out return interviews for children in care who have gone missing.
- Re-integration into education and role modelling support.
- Support through placement changes.

Leaving Care Team

- Allotment Project co-ordination in Ventnor.
- “Come Dine with Us” (support to purchase and prepare meals).
- Support younger people with their transfer to living independently, guiding and mentoring to set up their new home and routine.
- Support to access community groups.

Disabled Children’s Team

- Support children to engage in community activities.

Children’s Assessment & Safeguarding Teams x 4 (CAST)

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

Resilience Around Families Team (RAFT)

- Support workers to run groups, for example: substance misuse, mental health & trauma related issues.

Rights & Participation Team

- Event planning, Hearing Young People's Experiences (run monthly groups).

Fostering & Adoption (Permanence) Team

- 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.
- Befriending for children and adults under Special Guardianship arrangements, for example a child who lives with a grandparent.

One-off tasks

- An email is sent out to all volunteers weekly and includes news plus one of volunteering tasks that the teams have requested.

2. Core Values & Behaviours

People are at the heart of what we do. Everything that we do should be inclusive, open and transparent. Volunteering as part of a team and achieving the Isle of Wight Council's vision should be done in a way that is straight forward and positive.

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

Thank you again for making this first, important step and we sincerely hope that this will be a great opportunity for you.

After reading these guidelines, please email volunteers@iow.gov.uk to request an application form. We'll aim to respond to all emails in 10 working days, maximum 15. We understand that some 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'll also send you an Equality Monitoring Form, which will be kept separate from your application to respect your confidentiality. Finally, we'll 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. Your interview will be carried out via Microsoft Teams and we'll make it as relaxed and informal as possible to give us all an opportunity to get to know each other. We'll score each interview to make sure everyone is treated equally. If you're not invited to volunteer, we'll 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 may be contacted via email. At least one of these should ideally be your last employer. Again, we understand that some 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'll ask you to provide three pieces of ID to confirm your identity at your interview. 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. Clearance, Induction and Probation

Within 5 working days of your interview, we'll contact you with the outcome and details about what happens next. We'll provide you with details of your learning, request references and carry out your DBS check. At this point, you will start to decide which team/s you'd like to volunteer with.

Your probation period will be for six months. By then, you'll 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 6 months and is then deleted.

You'll 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 absolutely sure that you are really well prepared for your role and feel safe and supported. Your E-Learning in the first six months be:

Information Security Awareness

Data Protection Awareness

Safeguarding Adults

Safeguarding Children

GDPR Essentials

Equality & Diversity

Health & Safety Basics & Essentials

Prevent

Radicalisation

All volunteers will also be required to attend an online Safeguarding Foundation course, which is held over two consecutive half-days. There may be further training, depending on the volunteer stream/s you choose. There will be an online induction session run regularly for new volunteers by the Volunteer Coordinator.

5. **Conclusion**

Congratulations, you've nearly made it to the end!

We appreciate that we are asking for a large commitment of your time to actually reach the point where you're ready to volunteer. All of 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 and hope that your volunteering activity will add extra value to your studies. 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 or binding agreement between us, we would ask for a commitment of at least one year. The amount of time per week/month that you commit will depend on your availability and which team/s you are matched to.

You will continue to receive one to one to one support from the Volunteer Coordinator, who will also run group support meetings every month. This will be an opportunity for you to network with all other volunteers, express any concerns and ask for any further support you feel you need. The expectation is that you attend at least four of these meetings per year. We will reimburse any agreed expenses and encourage volunteers to take part in social events. 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 generally be added at no extra charge.

We do hope that this document has given you a flavour of what you can expect from us throughout your volunteering journey. This is an exciting time for Isle of Wight Council and an opportunity for you to support us as we move forward in more effectively supporting children and families living on our island.

Thank you once again for taking the time to read this and I very much hope that you will now email us and request an application form via volunteers@iow.gov.uk

With kind regards,



CHRISTOPHER MARTIN

Volunteer Coordinator