

# Managers' Guide

## Support for managing staff who are volunteers – during COVID-19



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## Background

Many staff from across the council family, and in some instances out with the council, have volunteered to work in a different role during this pandemic - to help support the delivery of essential services.

Staff have signed up to join our volunteer programme by either registering with myjobscotland - and have been matched to business critical roles we have identified, or by volunteering directly through their own Service area to be redeployed accordingly.

As a manager you may now have found yourself managing volunteer employees from other areas of the business, alongside your own team.

This guide will support you to manage your wider team. It aims to deliver a set of key principles and create a consistent approach to managing volunteers across the council family. This process will help to reinforce the valued contribution of our volunteer workforce who are going above and beyond at this unusual time - to help us to continue to deliver essential services and keep our city running.

## Your Role

- **As a manager this briefing provides you with the key principles** to follow when managing your temporary volunteers. We may not have covered every aspect - so if you think anything is missing please escalate this to your service HR team for further support and review.
- **You are firstly asked to encourage any of your existing staff**, who are not currently carrying out essential work, to sign up and join our volunteer programme to help support other essential roles across the council. They can do this by registering at [myjobscotland](https://myjobscotland.gov.uk/) or discussing internal service opportunities, with you, their manager.
- We understand that this is a very challenging time for us all both professionally and personally and it is with thanks to our staff that we are able to adapt our ways of working to continue to deliver essential services at this difficult time. We have seen our volunteer staff become very flexible in order to undertake different roles. Some have changed working arrangements and are even working different hours to make sure the support is provided to those in need. **It is therefore really important that you communicate to your volunteer staff how much their contribution is appreciated.** Please make sure that they know that their volunteer role is fully supported and you can help with whatever training or support they need whilst carrying out this temporary essential role.
- **Please share the following key messages with your volunteer staff.** It is important that staff are clear and understand what they've volunteered for and what they can expect whilst

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carrying out their volunteer role. Please make sure that you continue to manage and reinforce the following principles throughout their volunteering journey.

#### Our volunteer principles:

1. When staff volunteer to perform in a different role, this is **an entirely voluntary process** and individuals can decline any job that they deem unsuitable whether that be due to the type of duties, conditions or their current personal circumstances.
2. **Care must be taken when matching a volunteer into a role.** An assessment should be made to make sure that firstly the individual has the basic requirements of the job and that the role isn't greater than their existing grade. Volunteers will be paid their existing salaries and therefore it is important that they are not performing a role greater than their salary. Take the appropriate support from your service HR team to ensure this.
3. **Whilst their working pattern or work location may temporarily be different**, individuals should not be asked to work more hours than their contracted position unless in exceptional circumstances. Those exceptional circumstances must be planned, budgeted for and approved by senior management, before any offer is made. Our current conditions of service apply in this regard. Volunteers are entitled to refuse this extra work.
4. **Employees will continue to be paid in exactly the same manner** and at the same rate as before, and only in extreme exceptional circumstances, would additional payments apply - for example night shift. Again these would require to be planned, budgeted for and approved by senior management, before any offer is made. Our current conditions of service apply in this regard.
5. **Volunteers should not find themselves in any detriment.** In your pre-placement assessment of the volunteer you will have already taken into account the volunteers' current core and non-core benefit package and working arrangements and have ensured that this would encompass no more than their current total remuneration from the council.
6. Managers responsible for the volunteering staff **must make sure that they have all the training, support, equipment and personal protective equipment they need to be able to perform the role** that individuals have volunteered for. This is important not only so they are prepared and able to do their best, but also for health, safety and insurance purposes.
7. If possible, the **same arrangements** (electronic or manual) should be followed when **requesting leave or reporting a sickness absence**. However **both** line managers (temporary volunteer manager and existing manager) should be aware of any periods of absence. This allows the accurate recording of the information and any adjustments to be made to service delivery.
8. **Treating employees and volunteers with consistency and a common approach is key.** As you are managing a team which can include core employees, volunteers from both

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within the service, and/or council family and maybe even from partner organisations, it is felt these principles will provide you with a common approach that should capture fair and sensible people management practices. Where there are any existing working practices, these should be considered as applying to everyone, focusing on fairness and equity for all. If you are unsure of any existing working arrangement and how it might apply, you shouldn't hesitate to involve your Service HR team.

9. To support the work force planning arrangements to balance our continued delivery of our Covid 19 service response with the return to business as usual arrangements, the organisation supports a 2 week notice period, for the volunteers return to work.

Where the line manager and volunteering line manager cannot agree on this due to individual service priorities, this will be escalated to the volunteering team to facilitate an agreement through the Service HR Managers.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will volunteers still be required to do work associated with their core role?	This will be subject to any essential work requirements.  The volunteer should discuss this with their line manager and come to an agreement with you on their volunteering hours before they start.
Will employee details be changed on SAP?	Details will not be changed on SAP for the duration of the volunteering role.
My employee doesn't work a 35hr week, can I give them full time work?	No. If successful the opportunity will be based on current contracted hours of work only.
My employee has flexible working, will they be required to change their work pattern?	No, we will aim to facilitate all work life balance arrangements, however if the volunteer is open to a temporary adjustment to these to better meet the volunteering services requirements, then you should find agreement on this with the volunteer and keep any agreed change within their current contracted hours.
How do volunteers report absence?	Volunteers should follow the absence reporting procedures by notifying you as their volunteering line manager, they should also notify their line manager so that recording can take place.
How do volunteers request a holiday?	In the first instance they should request this with their volunteering line manager so they can manage the operational requirements. Once approved, they must advise their line manager for recording purposes.

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What if volunteers incur out of pocket expenses during whilst volunteering?	There should be no unnecessary out of pocket expenses for them during their volunteering and where this is deemed essential you will have planned and budgeted for this in advance for example, mileage allowance for volunteer drivers.
Will volunteers be expected to use their own vehicle during volunteering?	If the role requires use of their own vehicle, this will have been highlighted to them before they agreed to the volunteering opportunity. Where this is needed they are required to provide the necessary copies of driving licence and insurance documents to the volunteering line manager before being able start.
Will volunteers return to the same role after volunteering?	Yes, this is a temporary volunteering opportunity where upon its completion employees will return their previous role within the council family.
Will volunteers be paid the same rate whilst volunteering?	All their current pay arrangements will remain the same as managed by the principles outlined above.
Will volunteers get an essential workers letter? (In case they are stopped by the Police.)	This will be issued as required by the volunteering line manager.
Is there a dress code for volunteers?	It's important they feel comfortable at work, maintaining a smart/casual appearance where possible. Where they will be required to wear PPE the volunteering line manager will advise volunteers on any suitable dress code for that area.
What if the employee no longer wants to volunteer or would like to alter their hours?	<p>They should discuss this with the volunteering line manager to agree any changes to their hours or last operational volunteering shift. Once agreed, all changes should be advised to you, for their return to service. Where they can give advance notice of this, it will be more helpful for everyone to make those adjustments and plans.</p> <p>If your volunteer is from the corporate pool, please contact your volunteering team contact. If they are from within your service, please contact your service HR team.</p>

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Will volunteers get PPE?	Yes PPE assessed as necessary for a role will be provided by the volunteering line manager in line with Health and Safety advice.
Will volunteers get training?	Yes any specific induction or training required for the role will be provided prior to their commencement directed by the volunteer line manager.
Are there any insurance implications for employees carrying out volunteer work across the council?	As an existing employee, once they have been given the necessary training in their volunteering role in relation to health and safety and the operational requirements, they will be insured by our existing policy.
Will volunteers be working overtime?	It is the intention to utilise core hours only for volunteers, where there is a need beyond the contracted hours established by the volunteering line manager, this may be offered as outlined in our principles.
Will volunteers be compensated for travel if they have to travel further than their normal place of work?	No, Travel to and from work is not recognised as business travel within our conditions of service. Volunteers should be matched as best as possible to a work location as close to their home.

### Health and wellbeing

Employees and volunteers who, with goodwill, have volunteered to deliver an essential service role, may need additional support during this time. **A tailored health and wellbeing pack** is available for you to issue to staff and volunteers in these front facing COVID-19 response roles.

The pack provides guidance on general health and wellbeing aligned with the golden pathway of Scottish Government resources. It also provides a **specific support exercise** created by our educational psychology team for your volunteers.

Your volunteers will also have access to the NHS helpline, specifically for those employees facing the front line in this pandemic. **We urge you to please make sure that your volunteer team engages with these health and wellbeing resources – provide them the time to access the information.**

Where any of these measures are not enough, we can provide further dedicated responses for your team through our employee assistance provider – Workplace Options. Please contact your service HR team for more information.

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### Useful links

- [Call for staff volunteers – to support critical functions](#)
- [Guidance on Annual Leave provisions during Covid-19](#)
- [Covid-19 FAQs](#)