



NLC ACTIVE PARTICIPATION POLICY

**LIVE
LEARN
WORK
INVEST
VISIT**

“Volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one’s own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary.” Scot Gov

NLC’s Commitment to Volunteering

Volunteers are trained, supported and empowered to fulfil a range of opportunities all with the common goal of improving the lives of residents across North Lanarkshire.

We are committed to ensuring that volunteers enjoy the best possible experience whilst volunteering with us. We hope that volunteers feel fulfilled, valued and clear about the opportunities available to them.

Management will provide advice and guidance on best practice when working with volunteers which helps to ensure that volunteers are represented at every level. Each volunteer will have a volunteer supervisor allocated to them to ensure that they enjoy the best possible volunteering experience and as a source of information and guidance for the role.

This volunteer policy ensures fairness and consistency in our approach to volunteer recruitment, selection and supervision. It means that decisions are not made ad-hoc and that all volunteers are treated fairly and equally.

The policy is also important from the volunteers’ perspective as it ensures that they know how their volunteering contributes to the aims and objectives of the service in which they are based.

Volunteers will know what they can expect from us and what we expect of them.

Context & Definitions

This policy is designed for volunteers who carry out an agreed opportunity within one of our venues within NLC. It outlines the principles on which the relationship between volunteers and the organisation are based and provides basic information about volunteering with us.

It is also to provide information and guidance to staff in the involvement and supervision of volunteers within their service area.

The following definitions apply to opportunities described in this policy:

- A Volunteer is anyone who, without payment, performs an activity at the direction of, and on behalf of, NLC
- A Champion is the member of staff who supports and supervises the volunteer
- The council team will take responsibility for coordination of the volunteer involving activity in their service area and will also be responsible for safeguarding
- The Service Manager will take responsibility for the involvement of volunteers across all service areas.

Role

The role of Volunteers is to supplement, not replace staff or the duties normally done by them, and volunteers will only be asked to undertake tasks for which there is enough support/supervision.

How do you become a volunteer

NLC accepts volunteer applications from all communities. People volunteer for a wide variety of reasons, bringing with them their experience, skills and dedication.

All volunteers will be asked to complete a standard volunteer application form. Informal interviews are carried out to ensure that the person is suitable to become a volunteer. If a volunteer role involves working with or supporting children, young people, or vulnerable adults, that person will be required to undergo either a Disclosure Scotland check or obtain PVG membership (dependent on the role).

Having a criminal record will not automatically prevent you from volunteering within the programme. The person responsible for safeguarding will discuss any convictions and a decision will be made as to whether or not you are suitable to volunteer.

We have no upper age limit for volunteers. There is a minimum age restriction of 16 to ensure we do not put younger volunteers at unnecessary risk.

Information will be provided regarding the service, the roles within and some of the work you will be involved in as a volunteer. However, what you will be doing can change from day to day as that's what makes volunteering fun and interesting.

Equal opportunities and diversity

It is our policy to recruit the best people with the right skills, knowledge and experience and to provide equal opportunities for all.

It is a key priority for the organisation not to discriminate against any person because of race, colour, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, disability or age.

We will request you to provide one referee and we will ask them for a character reference as part of the volunteering application process.

There is no obligation with volunteering and the volunteer arrangement can be withdrawn by either party at any time.

Induction

All Volunteers will receive a general induction covering housekeeping issues, health & safety, the nature and purpose of the organisation and requirements of the volunteer activities. This will be tailored to the individual's volunteering activity.

Volunteer Agreement

All Volunteers will be asked to sign an agreement between themselves and NLC. This is not a contract of employment but a list of responsibilities for both the volunteer and the volunteer's Champion or supervisor and sets out both our commitment to and our expectations of volunteers.

A copy of the signed agreement is then uploaded to the Volunteer's profile on our Volunteer Database by a member of NLC staff.

Support & Supervision

NLC Volunteers will be directly supervised by their designated volunteering supervisor. In some services a Lead Volunteer will offer this support.

Volunteers will receive regular support sessions and will also be invited to attend volunteer development sessions.

The level of supervision and support will differ according to the volunteer role.

NLC is committed to valuing volunteer contributions and providing meaningful volunteering roles.

Problem Solving

The relationship between NLC and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that we are able to maintain our agreed standards of service to our customers.

It is also important that volunteers enjoy their volunteering activity. All problems and complaints will be treated confidentially and will only be discussed with those directly involved in resolving them. We will deal with problems and complaints openly, fairly and quickly to protect volunteers and ensure minimal disruption to NLC services and customers.

If a problem arises during the volunteer engagement, we would discuss our concerns, try to resolve the issue or if ongoing we would end your volunteer agreement.

Training & Development

Training will differ according to the volunteer role. We endeavor to provide full training so that volunteers feel happy and confident in their role.

Besides core training for each role, there are ongoing eLearning modules, talks and training sessions for staff and volunteers to access should they wish. For some roles we expect volunteers to complete annual refresher training.

The purpose of this is to ensure that all volunteers have up to date information and are providing a consistent service across Lanarkshire.

NLC will discuss training and development needs appropriate to their role.

Volunteer Responsibilities

In order to meet our commitments to improve the lives of NL residents, we expect high standards from everyone involved in service delivery and support, whether they are paid staff or volunteers.

In return we would ask volunteers to:

- Always treat staff, customers and fellow volunteers with respect, consideration and appreciation
- Act in a professional way when representing the organisation in public
- Act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone

- Provide as much notice as possible if they are unable to fulfil their volunteering commitment, or if they no longer wish to be involved in the project
- Adhere to the duties laid out in the volunteer role description
- If volunteers don't fully understand their role and responsibilities to ask a member of the project team for guidance

Media Comment

Any contact with volunteers from the media should be directed through to the NLC Corporate Communications Team.

Social Media

Volunteers must not mention that they volunteer for NLC on their own social media accounts.

Volunteers are expected to ensure that any information or opinions they share on social media platforms protect NLC's ethos.

Any offensive or derogatory comments about NLC, its staff or customers and service users via personal social networking pages are unacceptable and will terminate the Volunteer Agreement.

Identification

Identity badges will be provided for Volunteers where appropriate for their role. These must be returned to NLC upon the termination of the Volunteer Agreement.

Volunteers will be asked to provide us with an emergency contact, who we will contact in the unlikely event of an emergency.

Health & Safety issues

We are committed to looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone who volunteers for us.

Any activities carried out on a voluntary basis are covered by the same health and safety legislative requirements as those carried out by paid employees.

It's therefore important that volunteers understand and accept their personal responsibility towards promoting and maintaining health and safety standards in order to provide a safe working environment for all.

It's important that volunteers:

- Carry out duties without endangering either their health and safety or that of colleagues, third parties and/or the general public
- Comply with all relevant instructions and procedures relating to safety and follow guidance provided by NLC
- Comply with any adjustments or amendments required to allow you to carry out your role safely
- All tasks undertaken should comply with relevant Health and Safety procedures

Incident / Accident reporting

Volunteers should always report any accident or incident to a member of staff to ensure that

NLC procedures can be followed.

Violence at work The Health and Safety definition of work related violence is:-

“Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”

Any incident of verbal and or physical abuse encountered by Volunteers while undertaking their role must be reported to a member of staff.

Personal Safety

All Volunteers are expected to be careful in relation to their own personal safety. Training and information on Personal Safety will be part of the induction training.

Insurance

Once the Volunteer agreement is signed, Volunteers are covered by NLC's liability insurance policies including public and employer's liability. This is on the basis that Volunteers are working under the appropriate staff member's supervision and guidance and the tasks have been agreed.

Disclosure Scotland: Membership of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme

Due to the nature of our work with young people and vulnerable adults, NLC may ask Volunteers to become members of the DSPS or have an update check done if already a member.

NLC will cover the Volunteer expenses associated with joining the PVG scheme or having an update check done in volunteering posts where membership of the PVG scheme is required,

Volunteers must not start their role until PVG scheme membership is confirmed by Disclosure Scotland.

Child Protection

Every volunteer will be briefed on child protection and what to do should you become concerned about a child's welfare with a staff member who will follow the agreed Child Protection procedures.

The work of Volunteers and staff within NLC is covered by the Company's Child Protection policy and a copy should be downloaded and printed for each new Volunteer.

This will be covered during the Volunteer Induction and a place on the company's Child Protection training course should be organised, where appropriate, as soon as possible.

Expenses

Volunteers with NLC should not be out of pocket because of their volunteering.

NLC is committed to offering inclusive opportunities for NL residents. Travel expenses, can with prior agreement with their volunteering supervisor, be accessed as this should not be a barrier to active participation.

Tickets and receipts must be provided in order to reclaim this money.

Equalities

NLC will not discriminate against any person because of race, colour, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, disability or age.

There is a module covering equalities in the Volunteering Core Training.

NLC will try to do as much as it can to support people who may need extra help to be able to volunteer, or who may have additional requirements.

Some examples might include a sign language interpreter for a deaf volunteer, prayer room space and breast-feeding areas.

Volunteers should let their supervisor know what they need so that they can do their best to help.

Absence

Should a Volunteer be unable to attend their volunteering opportunity on any day, they must let their lead volunteer, or a member of staff know as soon as possible so that they can arrange replacement cover.

Ending a Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers can stop volunteering at any time and should let their supervisor know as soon as possible. Identification badges and other equipment must be returned to a member of staff within 7 days.

Where a Volunteer was required to be a member of the PVG scheme the HR team must be informed that the Volunteer is no longer volunteering.

Our volunteer roles are subject to review to ensure that the roles compliment current work and support the needs of the organisation.

Volunteer roles may be available for a defined period with the possibility of continuing them if mutually agreeable. We recognise that volunteers may wish to stop their role and that they can do so at any time.

The reasons for standing down may be sought, usually through an exit interview, which will remain confidential. However, findings will help staff to reflect on and where necessary improve the volunteer experience.

If appropriate, the volunteer will be offered the opportunity to stay in touch with the project and the chance to be involved with NLC at another time in the future. If requested, a volunteer can obtain a written reference from their staff member after they have been involved as a volunteer for a minimum of four months.

Circumstances may arise, such as illness or a personal or family event which means it could be advisable to take a break from volunteering responsibilities. Please let the project team know if this arises and we will support you as best we can. When a volunteer leaves, we thank them for their contribution in our volunteer eNewsletter.

Confidentiality

Volunteers must maintain confidentiality during their time with the project. For this reason, volunteers are invited to sign a confidentiality agreement. This means that confidential information about people we support, volunteers, employees and our work is kept private, unless sharing this information is required by law. Any breach of confidentiality will be treated very seriously and in accordance with the volunteer problem solving procedure.

In line with data protection rules, NLC Volunteers should not have access to client or customers' details, unless where it is appropriate for their role.

Where this is the case, Volunteers are expected to keep all such information confidential in line with data protection legislation.

Any breach in this confidentiality will be treated very seriously and in line with our volunteer problem solving procedure.

Boundaries

Clear boundaries are important for staff, volunteers and service users. They enable us to carry out a service according to agreed expectations and ensure that everyone receives the same quality of service.

We realise that staff and volunteers may sometimes have contact with clients in a personal capacity – as friends, family or colleagues. In this situation, please take care to avoid discussing the volunteering activity and to maintain confidentiality where appropriate.

If you have any concerns at all, please speak to a member of staff as soon as possible.
