

**OFFICIAL**



# **Community Volunteers Policy and Procedure.**

**Policy No. 14**

**June 2024**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Community Volunteers Policy &amp; Procedure</b>
<b>Authored by:</b>	<b>Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement.</b>
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<b>Implementing Officer:</b>	<b>Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement.</b>

# **1. Policy.**

## **1.1 Policy Statement.**

Cleveland Fire Brigade recognises that volunteers can bring diverse skills, perspectives and enthusiasm to help in the achievement of the organisation's corporate objectives. Cleveland Fire Brigade's policy statement establishes the commitment to provide a supportive and enriching environment for community volunteers.

Cleveland Fire Brigade is committed to:

- Promoting diversity and inclusion within the community volunteer roles. Cleveland Fire Brigade will create an inclusive environment where all volunteers are treated with dignity and respect. Community volunteer roles will operate on the principles of equal opportunity and within an environment free from discrimination. The selection of community volunteers will be based on their abilities, interests and the specific needs of the organisation.
- Providing clear and detailed descriptions of volunteer role profiles and responsibilities to ensure a mutual understanding and alignment with the Brigade's corporate objectives.
- Ensuring that community volunteers have access to a nominated manager to provide guidance, support and feedback. Regular check in meetings and support will be provided to address any concerns and acknowledge successful achievements.
- Providing appropriate training and development opportunities for volunteers to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- Maintaining the health and safety of community volunteers through the completion of risk assessments and provision of personal protective equipment for the activities that community volunteers deliver. Community volunteers will receive the appropriate level of information, instruction, training and supervision to maintain their own health and safety and those that may be affected by their activities.
- Receiving feedback from community volunteers as a means to continually improve the volunteer experience. Volunteers will also be encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions to help the Brigade improve the delivery of services.
- Recognising the contribution that community volunteers make to the achievement of the Brigade's corporate objectives. The Brigade's Rewards and Recognition Policy and Procedure (Policy No. 32) will be considered and applied, as necessary, to acknowledge the contributions of community volunteers.
- Providing regular communications to community volunteers to ensure that they are kept informed of organisational news and other volunteering opportunities.

- Providing clear guidelines on the expectations for community volunteers to adhere to the Brigade's PRIDE values and ethical behavioural framework, code of conduct and policies and procedures relevant to the community volunteer roles.

## **1.2 Policy Objectives.**

The objective of the Brigade's volunteer policy is to establish the arrangements for effective volunteer management and to ensure that volunteers contribute positively to the achievement of the organisation's corporate goals while also benefiting personally from their experiences. Furthermore, additional policy objectives include:

- Clarification of the expectations for volunteers regarding their roles, responsibilities, conduct and commitment to ensure that volunteers understand what is required from them and what they can expect from the organisation;
- Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements that any volunteers would need to comply with while working with the organisation, such as health and safety, data protection and equality;
- Protection of the rights afforded to volunteers including insurance, training, supervision and mechanisms for addressing grievances or concerns;
- Safeguarding of the organisation by setting clear guidelines and procedures to mitigate the risks associated with volunteer involvement such as liability issues, conflicts of interest and the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults;
- Promotion of accountability of both volunteers and the organisation by ensuring that processes for monitoring the performance of volunteers, providing feedback and recognising their contributions are established;
- Development of a positive volunteer experience by ensuring that they feel valued, supported and engaged in meaningful work that aligns to the organisation's corporate goals;

## **1.3 Scope.**

This policy applies to all functional areas and sections of the organisation. While the scope of the use of volunteers to support the achievement of the organisation's corporate goals applies throughout the organisation, it is recognised that some sections of the organisation may attract a greater interest for volunteers due to the specific nature of the services delivered.

## **1.4 Policy Category.**

This policy is categorised as Brigade within the policy and strategy framework.

## **2. Organising.**

### **2.1 The Cleveland Fire Authority (CFA) is responsible for:**

- Advocating volunteering throughout the communities of Cleveland;
- Supporting the use of volunteers to deliver community services by Cleveland Fire Brigade.

### **2.2 The Brigade's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is responsible for:**

- Approving Cleveland Fire Brigade's community volunteer policy and supporting procedure;
- Supporting the arrangements that create a positive volunteer experience and contribute towards the achievement of the Brigade's corporate outcomes;
- Monitoring the effectiveness of community volunteers through periodic updates provided by the Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement.

### **2.3 The Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Director of Community Protection is responsible for:**

- Encouraging the use of community volunteers that contribute towards the delivery of the Brigade's corporate outcomes;
- Supporting the representation of the Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement in regional and national volunteer networks and forums that monitor best practice throughout the voluntary sector.

### **2.4 The Senior Head of Prevention, Protection & Engagement responsible for:**

- Leading on the implementation of the Brigade's community volunteer policy and supporting procedure;
- Liaising with Human Resources and Communications to coordinate the recruitment and appointment of community volunteers to support the delivery of work activities;
- Representing the Brigade in any strategic level volunteer network, forum or meeting;
- Overall responsibility for the scheme to ensure that it remains within a reasonable cost envelope;
- Coordinating the scheme to ensure the right volunteers are utilised in the right place. This must be done in conjunction with the Head of Service who has requested the volunteer/s, but the final decision lies with the Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement;

- Monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of the use of community volunteers and their contribution towards the achievement of the Brigade's corporate outcomes. In the monitoring of the effectiveness of community volunteers, the recognised economic and social value of fire should be used to determine the return on investment from the use of volunteers ;
- Making arrangements for the development of a handbook to be provided to all community volunteers that includes information on the Brigade's values, the purpose of the volunteer scheme, rights and responsibilities, benefits of volunteering, support, training, confidentiality, expenses, insurance, health and safety, equality and diversity, safeguarding and the cessation of volunteering activities;
- Note: From the implementation of this policy and supporting procedure, there may be opportunities for a volunteer to take on the responsibility to deliver the responsibilities attributed to the Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement above. In these circumstances, the Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement will still retain the overall responsibility for the deployment of community volunteers, however, this would be delivered through a voluntary community volunteer manager.

## **2.5 The Head of Prevention and Engagement is responsible for:**

- Deputising for the Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement, in their absence, when required, to enable the community volunteer procedure and arrangements to be implemented as described below.
- The collation of information relevant for community volunteers for publication with the Brigade's community volunteer handbook
- Providing qualitative and quantitative performance related information on the use of community volunteers throughout the organisation. Performance data should include costs attributed to expenses, description of activities and, by exception, concerns raised from the use of community volunteers.

## **2.6 The Head of Human Resources is responsible for:**

- Liaising with the Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement, and Communications, on the recruitment and appointment of community volunteers to support the delivery of work activities,
- Ensuring that community volunteer documentation, such as application forms and volunteer agreements, are retained for periods of time described within existing retention schedules,
- Ensuring DBS checks are undertaken,
- Ensuring suitable references are received,
- Providing a suitable induction package which must include;

- (i) Values and Ethical Behaviours information,
- (ii) Employee Code of Conduct,
- (iii) Raising a concern.

More information can be found in the below procedure in section 11 (Volunteer Handbook).

## **2.7 Heads of Service are responsible for:**

- Assessing the benefits of the use of community volunteers within their areas of responsibility, developing role maps relative to their areas of responsibility and implementing the arrangements described in this policy and procedure, as necessary.

## **2.8 The Health and Safety Department are responsible for:**

- Arranging suitable Health and Safety training as part of their induction, such as IOSH Working Safely.

## **2.9 The Technical Hub are responsible for:**

- Providing relevant CFB uniform,
- Where required, providing relevant levels of PPE.

## **2.10 The Community Engagement Manager is responsible for:**

- Regular liaison with nominated managers to provide additional support if necessary;
- Development and availability of the Brigade's community volunteer handbook.

## **2.11 Nominated managers are responsible for:**

- Providing support and supervision to the Brigade's community volunteers.
- Nominated managers are also responsible for the allocation of specific tasks, the monitoring of their completion and corresponding recording of activities
- Ending the community volunteer agreement if it becomes apparent that any aspect of the agreement has been breached, performance of work activities is not to required standards and expectations or there is a conflict of interests<sup>1</sup> between the volunteer and Cleveland Fire Authority.

## **2.12 Community volunteers are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that they demonstrate the values and ethical behaviours described within the Brigade's PRIDE values and ethical behaviours framework;

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<sup>1</sup> Conflicts of interest occur when a volunteer's personal, professional, or financial interests interfere with their impartiality, integrity, or loyalty to the public interest.

- Raising any concerns that they may have on the delivery of their voluntary activities to their nominated manager;
- Provide reasonable notice to their nominated manager of any change of circumstances that may affect the delivery of any pre-arranged activities so that alternative arrangements could be made;
- Recording and maintaining accurate records of activities within the Brigade's data management systems, as necessary;
- Returning any assets, items of equipment or resources used on the cessation of voluntary activities.
- Notifying the nominated manager when they no longer wish to continue to deliver community volunteer activities, in line with the Community Volunteer Agreement.

### **2.13 Individuals are responsible for:**

- Supporting the use of community volunteers to assist in the achievement of the Brigade's corporate objectives.

### **2.14 Trade Unions are responsible for:**

- Supporting the implementation of this community volunteer policy and procedure.

## **3. Planning and implementing.**

**3.1** This policy establishes the Brigade's strategy for the use of volunteers to deliver community-based activities to support the achievement of corporate objectives. The policy devolves the responsibility to utilise community volunteers to Heads of Service and provides guidance on the required arrangements, such as recruitment, induction, support, monitoring, payment of expenses and the cessation of volunteer activities.

**3.2** This policy and supporting procedure is underpinned by existing Brigade working arrangements, including:

- The Brigade's PRIDE values and ethical behaviours framework;
- Health and safety policy
- Employee induction procedure;
- Dress and appearance policy;
- DBS checking policy;
- Employee code of conduct;
- Information governance policy;
- Rewards and recognition policy;
- Safeguarding arrangements;
- Social media policy;
- Arrangements for claiming travelling expenses and refreshments.



- 3.3 All policies and procedures required to support the implementation of the community volunteer policy and procedure will be available from the Brigade's key document framework.
- 3.4 The Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement will hold the Brigade's strategic responsibility for the use of community volunteers to help in the achievement of corporate goals. Where necessary, further guidance or training required to implement this policy and supporting procedure will be provided by the Senior Head of Prevention, Protection and Engagement.

#### **4. Resource Implications.**

- 4.1 It is not anticipated that community volunteers will require a significant amount of resources to enable them to deliver their roles, however depending on their role, some specific resources will be required to support the delivery of their voluntary activities, such as uniform.
- 4.2 Personal protective equipment will be provided to maintain the health and safety of community volunteers.
- 4.3 Other material and resources will be provided to support the delivery of community volunteer activities. This may include a digital tablet, a laptop and on some occasions, a safe and comfortable workstation.
- 4.4 Communication based resources will also be provided to community volunteers, as necessary, to support the effective delivery of their activities. These may include a mobile phone with messaging applications, an email address and receipt of regular internal communications.
- 4.5 Information and documentation will be provided to community volunteers. This will include the volunteer handbook that describes key Brigade policies and procedures and role specific information. Community volunteers will be provided with clear outlines of tasks, responsibilities and schedules to assist them in the delivery of their activities.
- 4.6 Community volunteers will be provided with the opportunities to engage and network with other volunteers and staff to assist in their awareness of the wider organisation and share their experiences, exchange suggestions and support for each other.
- 4.7 Community volunteers will be provided with a nominated manager to provide the necessary supervision for their activities and who can provide guidance as necessary. Newly appointed volunteers may be paired with more experienced community volunteers to support the conveyance of knowledge and experience of the organisation.
- 4.8 Community volunteers may be offered training opportunities to update their knowledge and skills commensurate to their roles.
- 4.9 On the cessation of community volunteer activities, all assets, items of equipment and resources that have been used to support the delivery of voluntary activities must be returned to the Brigade.

## **5. Equality Impact Assessment.**

- 5.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Equality Duties and Equality Act and other relevant legislation, this policy has been Equality Impact Assessed (EIA). It is believed that all staff should be able to comply with this policy without affecting their diversity. Wherever possible and when appropriate the Brigade will aim to meet the specific needs of individuals.

## **6. Monitoring.**

- 6.1 Monitoring of this document will be aligned to the organisation's register of policies and strategies, the key document framework.

## **7. Audit**

- 7.1 This policy will be audited in accordance with the procedure detailed within the Brigade's Assurance Framework.

## **8. Review.**

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed in line with the document review process, or beforehand if any legislative or other influencing factors change.

## **Procedure**

### **1. Introduction.**

- 1.1 Cleveland Fire Brigade recognise that crucial role that volunteers can contribute to the achievement of the Brigade's corporate objectives. The contribution of volunteers can help to expand the reach and engagement with communities, enhance the delivery of the Brigade's services and help to support a positive change for communities.
- 1.2 There are a range of roles that community volunteers may be used for, and from their appointment their activities should be closely supervised to ensure that an appropriate level of supervision is provided and that all concerns are addressed. The key procedures and considerations to support the delivery of community volunteer activities are described below, however, for any other decisions on how to integrate the use of volunteers within the Brigade, the alignment to existing policies and procedures should be the primary factor.
- 1.3 While the expected benefit from the use of community volunteers is an increase in the outputs and outcomes from the delivery of their activities, a key measure of the effectiveness of the use of volunteers is the qualitative understanding of the volunteer experience and their engagement in meaningful work that aligns to the organisation's corporate goals.

## 2. Background.

- 2.1 Against an increase in operational activity from both fire and non-fire related incidents<sup>2</sup>, many fire and rescue services supplement the delivery of their community based activities to achieve their prevention and safety related strategic objectives through the use of volunteers.
- 2.2 While fire and rescue service resources are allocated towards reducing the areas of greatest community risk, the use of volunteers are broadly used to deliver interventions for lower risk activities. Traditionally, fire and rescue service volunteers have been used to deliver routine activities such as assisting at station open days or other engagement events, however, a review of each of the fire and rescue service assessments completed by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) identified that a diverse range of Prevention activities are now delivered by volunteers.
- 2.3 Some examples of the broad range of activities that volunteers deliver in other fire and rescue services include:
- Boxing coach volunteers to provide diversionary fitness and engagement for youths identified as being involved in deliberate fire setting;
  - Canine friendly fire patrol volunteers who coordinate dog walks in moorland and countryside to and deter deliberate fire setting amongst youths;
  - Volunteer cadet staff who engage in activities that help guide young people in developing new skills and working as a team;
  - Post fire support team who provide a post incident clean up team across the service area, following minor domestic fires
  - Safer home visits quality assurance volunteers who provide a range of administrative tasks, including quality assurance telephone calls.

## 3. Scope.

- 3.1 Within the scope of this policy, and supporting procedure, a community volunteer is considered to be an individual who spends unpaid time doing something for the benefit of others, without being an employee or a replacement for paid staff.
- 3.2 Within Cleveland Fire Brigade, community volunteers may be attributed to any section or work activity undertaken by the organisation, however, by the nature of the work undertaken and engagement with communities, it is anticipated that community volunteers would primarily deliver prevention-based activities.

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<sup>2</sup> [FIRE STATISTICS TABLE 0102: Incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England, by incident type and fire and rescue authority](#)

## **4. Volunteers and Employment Law.**

- 4.1 Volunteers are not employees of the organisation and as such, are not subject to employment law and they do not have employment rights such as minimum wage, holidays and sick pay etc. Volunteers have no obligation to continue their activities and the organisation has no obligation to provide any voluntary roles.
- 4.2 Volunteers should not have a contract, either verbally, in writing or in practice, with either expressed or implied terms and conditions. To ensure that a contract of employment is not created with a volunteer, they should not complete any training that does not apply to their specific volunteer role, and they should never be told to deliver activities on a specific date and/or time.

## **5. Health, Safety and Welfare of Community Volunteers.**

- 5.1 Health and safety legislation protects employees and others who may be affected by their work activities, this includes volunteers who work on behalf of the Brigade. The significant risks should be identified, and effective control measures implemented from the risk assessments for the activities that volunteers deliver. Personal protective equipment must also be provided where it would reduce the risks identified from any risk assessment for activities delivered by volunteers.
- 5.2 Volunteers should receive training relevant to their voluntary roles, including the application of any emergency procedures. On their induction, volunteers must be familiarised with their working environment, safety procedures and the expectations of them to report any adverse safety events.
- 5.3 An appropriate level of supervision should be provided for volunteers. Regular support and one-to-one meetings should address any identified concerns and ensure that volunteers follow health and safety related procedures relevant to their roles.

## **6. Volunteer roles.**

- 6.1 Although the majority of volunteer roles are likely to support the delivery of community safety related activities, any support function throughout the organisation may utilise the services provided by volunteers to achieve the Brigade's corporate goals. Examples of roles for which volunteering activities exist include:
  - Arson and deliberate fire fuel identification and referral to the local authority;
  - Assistance to support the delivery of the Brigade's fire setter programme;
  - The provision of advice on slips, trips and falls;
  - Delivery of activities to support road safety;
  - Salvage and recovery following an accidental dwelling fire;
  - Support to the delivery of the Brigade's fire cadet units;

- Evaluation telephone calls after a safer home visit;
- Support to the delivery of community safety campaign events;
- Delivery of medium risk safer home visit information packs;
- Support at recruitment/community events;
- Station open day support (stalls/car park marshalling).

(the above list is not exhaustive and all requests will be considered by the Senior Head of PPE).

## **7. Recruitment of volunteers.**

7.1 The recruitment of volunteers would generally be completed in the following four key stages:

7.2 Develop a volunteer role description. Volunteer role descriptions should clearly outline what a volunteer role involves and can be used to allow potential volunteers to compare a role with their own skills and to determine whether they'd be suitable in a volunteer role.

7.3 A volunteer role description should include the following key areas:

- The role title;
- Aims and expectations of the role;
- An outline of the role's tasks and responsibilities;
- Role boundaries and any activities volunteers need to avoid;
- Specific policies and procedures that a volunteer would need to adhere to, in addition to any corporate wide policies and procedures, such as health and safety, equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Any specific items or activities where expenses would be paid;
- How the activities carried out by a volunteer contribute towards performance targets or measures of success
- Any essential and desirable skills and qualifications or required person specifications.

7.4 Advertising volunteer roles. The wording and imagery used to advertise volunteer roles can have a significant impact on the success of any volunteer recruitment campaigns. Adverts should include:

- The difference a volunteer would make to the communities of Cleveland.
- The Benefits of volunteering for the Brigade, such as training, opportunities for personal development or helping vulnerable people throughout local communities.

- The activities that would be covered by expenses.
- Whether any people with particular experiences or backgrounds would be appropriate;
- Where to find out more information, such as links to the Brigade website, further resources or other contact details.

7.5 Managing volunteer applications and interviews. The volunteer recruitment process may ask volunteers to complete an application form or write a covering letter that addresses the role description. Interviews should be based around questions that are directly related to the role.

7.6 Questions should give candidates the opportunity to show their transferrable skills through examples of previous experience and may include:

- The tasks involved in the role and how their skills and experience would fit it;
- Why they want to volunteer for the organisation and what motivates them;
- Interviews also provide the opportunity to discuss:
- Any requirements that an individual would need to meet prior to an appointment, such as providing references or evidence of the ability to drive.
- What the individual would get out of the role, which may include any training opportunities for personal development.
- How the individual could make the role work for them, such as flexible hours to allow for childcare.
- What resources and equipment the Brigade would supply and what they may need to provide for themselves.

7.7 Volunteer interviews should not be overly formal. Interviews should be a two way process as the volunteer needs to find out if the Brigade is right for them as much as the Brigade needs to find out if the volunteer is right for the organisation by assessing their motivations for volunteering.

7.8 Appointing volunteers.

- (i) When a volunteer is appointed, they will need to be given a provisional start date and undergo an induction, including Values and Behaviours input, health and safety awareness and any other specific expectations of the volunteer role.
- (ii) Any references should also be assessed.
- (iii) DBS checks relevant to the role must also be completed.

## **8. Volunteer agreements.**

8.1 The volunteer agreement outlines that arrangements between volunteers and the Brigade and should be used for all volunteer roles, from those short-term voluntary

arrangements to the roles that require a long-standing commitment. The aim of the volunteer agreement is to establish the arrangements and expectations of the volunteer and the Brigade, in addition to recognising the rights and responsibilities for both the volunteer and the organisation.

8.2 A volunteer agreement enables both the organisation and individual volunteers to know what to expect from each other. The volunteer agreement does not specify a set pattern of working hours or the reimbursement of benefits which may be interpreted as being a contract of employment. The volunteer agreement describes key information on:

- Induction arrangements and any specific training required for the role;
- The arrangements to provide ongoing contact and support for the volunteer;
- Contact details of a specific named manager from the organisation;
- Details on how to claim for expenses;
- Insurance cover for volunteers;
- Health and safety arrangements and how to report an adverse safety event;
- Policies and procedures relevant to the and activities to be carried out;
- An outline of the expectations from the role, such as the amount of time that activities may take to complete.
- The Brigade's volunteer agreement also specifies that it is not a contract of employment with the volunteer.

## **9. Training and developing volunteers.**

9.1 Good volunteer management is based on ensuring that volunteers are trained to fulfil their roles effectively. The amount of training required will vary and be dependent on several factors, such as the specific volunteer activities being undertaken, and the level of experience and competence required to fulfil their voluntary role.

9.2 Some potential volunteers may perceive volunteering as a route into employment within the organisation and may request training beyond their role. In deciding to support requests for additional training, the manager of the volunteer must strike a balance between the completion of voluntary work and the time taken to attend training courses to enable a proportionate and costed response to volunteer training requests.

9.3 Training for volunteers will be provided where necessary, and to establish a positive volunteer experience where they feel valued, supported and engaged in meaningful work that aligns to the organisation's corporate goals.

## **10. Support and supervision.**

- 10.1 All volunteers should receive regular support and supervision sessions which may vary from role to role and between individual volunteers, and on some occasions, volunteers may need additional training or in-role coaching. Support for volunteers can be provided by two means:
- 10.2 Informal support. It is likely that a considerable amount of support will happen on an informal basis and regular contact through email's, telephone calls and updates all provide the opportunity for a volunteer to access support whenever they need it.
- 10.3 One-to-one. A one-to-one catch up for most volunteers would be the most suitable way to ensure that they have the opportunity to give and receive feedback. This offers the chance for an open, two-way conversation and a structured programme of one-to-one support ensures that the ongoing provision of support is maintained.
- 10.4 The frequency of one-to-one support meetings will depend on the programmes of activity and the amount of time that volunteers contribute. Notwithstanding the frequency of support, it is important that volunteers know what to expect and that giving and receiving feedback is part of what the Brigade aims they will contribute to the organisation. One-to-one support meetings for volunteers may include the following areas for discussion:
- Choose an approach that accounts for the amount of time that volunteers and staff have available. A telephone call to maintain contact and offer any support may be appropriate for some volunteers, or a virtual (via Teams) or physical one-to-one support meeting may be more appropriate;
  - Feedback on their performance should be provided to volunteers;
  - Opportunities to discuss issues or concerns should be provided;
  - Any issues or concerns should be dealt with in a sensitive way.

## **11. Volunteer handbook.**

- 11.1 The volunteer handbook is an essential resource that provides community volunteers with the information that they would need to understand their roles, responsibilities and the Brigade's expectations. The information described within the volunteer handbook should include:
- A welcome message, brief history of the organisation and a brief description of the Brigade's mission, vision, values and ethical behavioural framework;
  - An outline of the benefits of volunteering and an explanation of how volunteers contribute to the achievement of the Brigade's corporate objectives;
  - Descriptions of the voluntary roles and responsibilities available throughout the Brigade and the expectations regarding attendance, punctuality, dress code and behaviours.
  - A summary of the Brigade's key policies and procedures, including the code of conduct, health and safety arrangements and how to raise a concern;



- Arrangements for supervision and support and the channels for providing feedback;
- Administrative details such as key contact information, an organisational structural chart that illustrates a volunteer's role within it and the necessary processes for claiming expenses and reporting adverse safety events;
- Cessation of the volunteer relationship that describes the steps to follow if a volunteer wishes to resign from their voluntary role and information about exit interviews if required.
- Additional resources such as frequently asked questions and links to additional material including websites, or training materials relevant to a community volunteer role.

11.2 The content, publication and review of the Brigade's volunteer handbook shall be the responsibility of the Engagement Manager who will liaise with the Communications team to ensure the handbook is available to all community volunteers.

## **12. Volunteer expenses.**

12.1 Although volunteering is unpaid, an individual should not incur any expenses for the voluntary delivery of activities for the organisation. Research completed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations<sup>3</sup> describes that many people may choose not to volunteer as they're concerned that they'd be financially worse off and that a large proportion of volunteers didn't know that they could claim back their expenses. Furthermore, the payment of expenses helps to remove barriers for volunteers on low incomes or with little spare cash.

12.2 Expenses will be paid for any volunteer delivering activities on behalf of the organisation and will include costs for:

- Travel (to and from a place of volunteering);
- Meals and refreshments.

12.3 Expenses will be paid on receipt of a claim (with receipts where necessary) for volunteering activities in line with existing Brigade travel and subsistence procedures.

## **13. Cessation of community volunteer activities.**

13.1 Community volunteers may end the delivery of their activities at any time. On the cessation of their activities, their nominated manager must ensure that all assets, items of equipment that have been used to support the delivery of activities and resources are returned to the appropriate individual/section of the organisation.

13.2 On the cessation of their voluntary activities, all community volunteers will be offered the opportunity of an exit interview with an appropriate manager of the organisation. Where

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<sup>3</sup> Time Well Spent 2023: A national survey on the volunteer experience

appropriate, any recommendation from community volunteers ending their work activities will be used to improve the volunteer systems and process and the overall volunteer experience.

## Appendix two: Community Volunteer Agreement.

### Introduction:

We appreciate your commitment to us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding.

To make sure you have the best possible experience we have developed this agreement which sets out our commitment to you and what we hope you can contribute.



Cleveland Fire Brigade is committed to:

- Giving you a great volunteer experience;
- Being responsive to your requirements;
- Providing you with an induction;
- Providing support throughout your volunteer experience;
- Explaining the standards and behaviours we expect and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them;
- Providing a nominated person who will be your point of contact whilst volunteering;
- Doing our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us;
- Being flexible in relation to your volunteering hours, recognising your need for holiday time and other commitments;
- Honouring the time commitment you have agreed to give us and not to expect more from you unless offered and agreed;
- Providing and specific training required to undertake the role;
- Reimbursing agreed out-of-pocket expenses following procedures set out in our existing expenses arrangements;
- Providing adequate training and ensure you know what to do to stay safe, in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy;
- Providing adequate insurance to cover for volunteers whilst undertaking volunteering approved and authorised by us;
- Ensuring that all volunteers are treated fairly and in accordance with our PRIDE Values and Ethical Behaviours Framework;
- Trying to resolve fairly any issues or difficulties you may have whilst you volunteer with us before they become problems. In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issue in accordance with our corresponding policies and procedures;

- Follow up on any feedback or questions you may have regarding your involvement as a volunteer.

I, [Volunteer Name] agree to volunteer with Cleveland Fire Brigade and am committed to the following:

- Performing my volunteering role to the best of my ability;
- Working as agreed in my volunteer role description;
- Following the Brigade's policies and procedures relevant to my voluntary role;
- Familiarising myself and to ask if I'm not sure about what to do to stay safe whilst volunteering;
- Managing any data in line with the Brigade's Information Security Policy;
- Informing their nominated manager of any conflict of interest that may arise from their personal, professional or financial interests that may interfere with their impartiality, integrity or loyalty to the public interest;
- Meeting time and other commitments as agreed but when unable to do so to give reasonable notice so that other arrangements can be made;
- Providing references and to agree to DBS checks as required;
- Return any loaned equipment when ending my volunteering.

This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be stopped at any time by either party.

Signature of volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature on behalf of Cleveland Fire Brigade: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

When completed, the volunteer should retain a copy of this volunteer agreement, and another copy should be retained by the Brigade's Human Resources section.