

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER - HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

21 June 2016

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

**SUPPORT DOCUMENTS TO THE DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE VOLUNTEER POLICY 2014-2019**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval for the adoption of two guidance documents to support the Countryside Service Volunteer Policy. These documents are:

- *A guide to Volunteering with Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service.* (Public) – see Appendix 1.
- *Guidelines for Managing Volunteers, 2015 – 2019* (Controlled) – see Appendix 2.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The Countryside Service has a long history of working with volunteers and community groups, generating 3,853 volunteer days in 2014-15 (valued at £800,186), which is typical of volunteering levels for the Service over the last 10 years. Not only has this helped to manage Derbyshire County Council's sites, trails, greenways and rights of way, and complement the work of Countryside Service staff, but it has provided an effective way of engaging with local communities: volunteering with the Countryside Service helps to transfer knowledge and skills into local communities; and raises knowledge and awareness of environmental and Council issues.

The role of volunteers is not to replace paid employment/posts that the Council has. These are additional services that are community focused, that local residents want to become involved in.

At a time of increasing pressure on Countryside Service budgets and resources, providing clarity and consistency across the Service on both the volunteering offer and the way in which volunteers are managed, it is vital to ensure high standards are maintained. The development of the *Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service Volunteer Policy 2014-2019*, and *Volunteer Agreement*, which were adopted at the Cabinet Meeting on 25 March 2014 (Minute No. 124/14 refers), provided the overall framework for the way in which the Countryside Service will work with volunteers. The

documents set out the County Council's key principles and objectives for working with individuals volunteering directly with the Countryside Service and provide a framework for best practice.

This report seeks approval for two further documents which will put 'flesh on the bones' of and support the implementation of the policy document. *A guide to Volunteering with Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service* is a public document featuring volunteer case studies and photographs. It gives an introduction to volunteering with the Service and provides information on relevant procedures. If adopted, and after subsequent publications approval, it will be available on the Countryside Service Volunteering Section of the County Council website and be printed for issuing to volunteers as required. *Guidelines for Managing Volunteers, 2015 – 2019* is a controlled document covering the same topics, but from a staff and volunteering manager's perspective. Its purpose is to provide staff with a Volunteer Management Handbook, hence ensuring that the same standards are applied across the Service.

Both documents have been developed following consultation with Countryside Service staff and key volunteers. The Directors of Human Resources and Legal Services have been consulted on the drafts and their comments have been incorporated into the documents.

The documents will be reviewed in 2019, along with the Volunteer Policy, to bring the revision for all three documents into line.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The Countryside Service Volunteer Policy agrees to pay expenses incurred during volunteering duties, but only in exceptional circumstances will the cost of travel from home to the volunteering base be reimbursed. Wherever possible, volunteers are transported in, and have access to, Countryside Service vehicles. The two support documents provide more details on the implementation of this part of the policy, but do not change it.

(4) **Legal Considerations** Procedures need to be in place to manage volunteers effectively and in compliance with any legislation or other County Council policies. The two support documents describe procedures which will ensure that the distinction between volunteers and staff remains.

(5) **Equality and Diversity and Human Resources Considerations** Volunteers from all backgrounds, including those from the protected characteristic groups defined in the 2010 Equality Act, will be treated with respect and encouraged to work within the County Council's equality and diversity policies. When people from protected characteristic groups enquire about volunteering, every effort will be made to find them a suitable volunteer role. The two support documents encourage volunteering requests from all types of people, regardless of their background or personal situation.

Volunteering is also an excellent way of giving individuals the skills and experience they need to gain employment, and is an established route into a countryside management career.

Managers of the Countryside Service that accept volunteers into their service should always follow set Countryside Volunteer policies and procedures to ensure all volunteers are treated equally.

(6) **Environmental, Health and Transport Considerations** The involvement of volunteers in the work of the Countryside Service has benefits not only for the sites and rights of way that the Council manages, but also for individuals and communities. This includes improved life satisfaction and self-esteem, and health/wellbeing benefits through increased activity.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, human resources, property and social value considerations.

(7) **Key Decision** No.

(8) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(9) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details – Steve Cresswell, extension 39660.

(10) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves the adoption of two guidance documents to support the Countryside Service Volunteer Policy. These documents are:

- *A guide to Volunteering with Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service.* (Public)
- *Guidelines for Managing Volunteers, 2015 – 2019* (Controlled).

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

A guide to

Volunteering

**with Derbyshire County
Council's Countryside
Service**



DERBYSHIRE
County Council
Improving life for local people

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countrysidevolunteering

Foreword

Volunteering is not only a great way of giving something back to the community, it's good for the individual too. It can make you more confident, increase knowledge and skills, and bring health benefits through raised activity.

Volunteers are important to us and we want to make sure they have support and guidance: that's where this Guide to Volunteering with Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service comes in. It will help you decide if volunteering is right for you and give you all the information you need.

So, whether you're just starting as a volunteer, or have been with us for some time, thank you for volunteering, many thanks for all your efforts: we really appreciate everything you do.



Councillor Dean Collins
Cabinet Member for Highways,
Transport and Infrastructure

Councillor Collins with volunteers from the Clay Cross group



Welcome to Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service

We manage the County Council's countryside sites and facilities, such as country parks, Greenways and public rights of way, as well as a wide variety of conservation and environmental projects and initiatives which help to protect and enhance Derbyshire's natural and built environment.

Volunteers make a real contribution to our work and currently we have over 150 volunteers registered with us. Most are involved in practical conservation and site management, but other roles include exhibition work, education, public rights of way surveys and helping at Countryside Service events.

The role of volunteers is not to replace paid staff, but to complement their work. Volunteers add value to the work of the Countryside Service and supplement its capacity to undertake additional and enhanced tasks.

Why volunteer?

People volunteer for different reasons: some want to improve their career prospects, while others want something fulfilling to do after retirement. Many just want to give something back to society or their local area.

We really appreciate the experience and enthusiasm that volunteers bring to the Countryside Service, but this is a two-way street: volunteering can give you new skills and knowledge, build confidence and make you fitter and healthier. You'll meet new people, make new friends and it's fun too!

Who is this guide for?

This guide covers volunteers registered directly with the Countryside Service. It doesn't apply to community-based volunteer groups that may work with us such as Ramblers and 'friends of...' groups.

Whether you have been a volunteer for many years or are just thinking about applying for the first time, we want to make sure you've got all the information you need to make volunteering a safe, enjoyable and satisfying experience.

This guide will help you decide if volunteering is right for you and provides useful information on important procedures for volunteers.



Volunteer Case Study 1

"I first heard about the group from another volunteer and started back in 2014. I really enjoy volunteering outdoors, learning new things and working in a beautiful area with great people. I work in the conservation and estate management team, which fits in well with my studies for an Open University Environmental Sciences degree. It's all part of my plan to make countryside work my career."

Getting into volunteering

Volunteer roles

Role Descriptions give an overview of the kind of activities you can expect to be involved in, as well as any skills or experience needed and the time commitment expected. You can see a range of Role Descriptions on our website, but remember that not all roles are available at all of our sites.

Some common volunteering roles are:

- Estate and Conservation Team Volunteer: practical tasks on our sites, trails and rights-of-way, as part of a small team of volunteers.
- Ranger and Warden Support Volunteer: Assisting our rangers and wardens, often on a one-to-one basis, in a wide range of countryside management activities.
- 'Path Friend' Volunteer: Looking after your local footpaths and bridleways through regular checks and minor maintenance.
- Visitor Services Volunteer: assisting Countryside Service staff at events, festivals and in Visitor Centres.

Introductory meeting

You don't need a formal interview to become one of our volunteers, but we will ask you to come in for a chat about the role. Not everyone is suited to countryside volunteering, so this is a chance for you to tell us about yourself and why you want to volunteer. We'll also talk about the volunteering role and make sure that it's right for you and what you were expecting. If you're accepted as a volunteer, we'll ask you to complete our Volunteer Registration Form, unless you've already done so. We'll also agree a start date and tell you what you'll need to bring with you when you start: packed lunch, old clothes, strong footwear etc.

The Countryside Service Volunteer Agreement

When you volunteer for the Countryside Service, we'll ask you to abide by our Volunteer Agreement, which tells you what standards and support you can expect from us and what we ask of you in return.

You can see the Countryside Service Volunteer Agreement on the Volunteering section of our website. www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countrysidevolunteering

Do I need to provide references or have any checks made?

Some roles may require character references and/or a criminal record check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This would be for volunteers working unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults, or volunteers with access to information about children and vulnerable adults. We'll tell you if the volunteer role needs these checks.

I have a criminal record - can I still volunteer?

Just because you've had a criminal conviction, doesn't mean you can't volunteer. In fact, volunteering can be a great way of moving on with your life as it can improve skills, provide references and get you out meeting people. The type of volunteering you can do may

Getting into volunteering

depend on what your conviction was for and how long ago it was, but we'll try to find something for you, if we can.

You don't have to reveal your conviction if it is 'spent' and it is illegal for us to ask if you have any convictions. However, if a volunteer role involves working with children or vulnerable adults, you must reveal both spent and unspent convictions.

If I volunteer, will I lose my welfare benefits?

No you won't: people on benefits are still able to volunteer. There are three basic rules:

- You must inform your benefits manager before you start volunteering. You will probably have to provide details of the volunteering activity and any expenses.
- You can volunteer for as many hours as you like, as long as you still meet your conditions for claiming benefits: the old rule of 16 hours per week no longer applies.
- In general, refunding expenses does not affect benefit, but anyone receiving income-related benefits must declare the expenses and keep any receipts.

If needed, we can provide a letter for your benefits manager, explaining that you're volunteering for Derbyshire County Council and are not receiving any payments except for expenses (where eligible).

Do I need to be over 18 to volunteer?

Not necessarily. Many under 18's want to volunteer, for example as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. We'll try to accommodate you where possible but there can be restrictions on the activities carried out and the amount of time spent volunteering, particularly for those under 16. Also, some young people need more supervision than others and staff may not have the time available.

If it's agreed that you can volunteer, we'll produce a risk assessment identifying the level of support required and suitable tasks for you. It may be that some activities can only be observed from an agreed safe distance, for example the felling of large trees, use of plant/power tools and working by deep or fast-flowing water. We'll also need written consent from your parent or guardian.

Occasionally, a parent may wish to volunteer accompanied by their child. Again, a specific risk assessment will be required and it should be noted that supervising a child can reduce awareness of your own safety. Parents and their children may be asked to stop volunteering if Countryside Service staff consider them to be acting unsafely.

I have a health issue - can I still volunteer?

We need to know about any existing health conditions (we'll treat the information in confidence) in case you become unwell, but there are many volunteer roles you can carry out even with quite serious health conditions. Talk to us and we'll see what we can do.

Getting into volunteering

Examples include:

- Heart disease.
- Diabetes.
- Asthma.

We also need to know if you suffer from Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS), often caused through having worked with tools that vibrate. Typical examples of HAVS are Vibration White Finger and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Whilst not relevant to all volunteer roles, you should tell us if you suffer from these, or similar conditions.

Volunteers from vulnerable groups

Social Services and other agencies, such as community mental health teams, often approach the Countryside Service seeking volunteering opportunities for their clients. The input required from Countryside Service staff can be considerable, even when a carer is present to manage the volunteer's individual needs. For this reason it may not always be possible to accommodate them.

Each request, whether for a group or an individual, is assessed to determine the benefits for the Countryside Service and the volunteer, as well as the level of management and support required, before a decision is made.



Volunteer Case Study 2

"I first began volunteering as part of a local Day Centre's conservation group. I enjoyed it so much that I wanted to spend more time outdoors and asked to join one of the volunteer teams in my local area and became a member in 2007. I really enjoy working with everyone. It's good fun - we have a laugh!"

Essential information for volunteers

Induction and support

When you start volunteering with us, your volunteering supervisor will give you an introduction to the role.

This will include:

- The work of the Countryside Service.
- The site/area you're volunteering in.
- Your volunteering role.
- The Countryside Service Volunteer Agreement.
- Health and safety.

Your volunteering supervisor will continue to be your point of contact for help and advice throughout your time as a Countryside Service Volunteer and will make sure you receive the support you need to carry out your role.

Most training and development will be delivered 'in house' by Countryside Service staff as part of the volunteering day. Some volunteer roles may require specialist skills, for which training will be provided when necessary.

Solving problems

For the most part, volunteering is a positive experience. However, on rare occasions things can go wrong and we have a problem solving procedure to deal with these situations.

If you have any concerns, you should speak to your volunteering supervisor who will make every effort to resolve things fairly and without bias. However, if you feel the matter hasn't been settled satisfactorily, you can make a formal written complaint, following which a meeting will be arranged to discuss and hopefully resolve the issue.

On rare occasions there may be concerns over a volunteer's performance, attitude or behaviour. Again, this will be dealt with fairly and not in a confrontational or accusatory way, in order to identify any issues and agree steps to address them. This could include extra support, supervision or training. However, if concerns can't be resolved, we may have to end the volunteering relationship.

Full details of the problem solving procedure can be seen on the Countryside Service Volunteering section of our website.

Leaving Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service

We realise that personal situations change and that volunteers move on. We're happy to provide a reference or statement of achievement and may also ask for feedback on your volunteering experience.

Essential information for volunteers

Expenses

We don't normally pay expenses for travelling to and from the volunteering base and we try to match volunteers to their closest Countryside Service site. In exceptional circumstances we will pay travelling expenses from home. For example, if you're unemployed or on benefits and couldn't otherwise afford to volunteer.

We will reimburse expenses if you incur travelling costs as part of your volunteering role, or when attending training that isn't at your normal volunteering base. Wherever possible we transport volunteers in Countryside Service vehicles.

There is no tax liability if only genuine out-of-pocket expenses are paid and the payment is at a reasonable rate - i.e. mileage rates within limits set by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). You do not need to declare these expenses to HMRC.

Any expenses should be agreed in advance with your volunteering supervisor. You'll be given a claim form to fill in with the date, time and details of the journey, including the mileage. Expenses are paid directly into your bank account so you'll need to provide your bank details.

At the volunteering base, you will usually use staff parking areas. If you have to use a Countryside Service public car park we'll give you a 'day pass' to display in your windscreen.

Insurance

Like staff, Countryside Service Volunteers are covered by public liability insurance and personal accident insurance. These policies cover volunteers up to the age of 80. If you're over 80 and wish to volunteer, we will talk to our Insurance Section to see what's possible. There is no lower age limit for insurance cover, but death benefits are greatly reduced for minors and young students in full-time education.

Volunteers need not be under close supervision in order to be insured, but you must be carrying out duties in which you have been trained or instructed: you should not carry out unauthorised actions or duties outside of the Volunteer Role Description.

Driving vehicles

Volunteers are insured to drive our land-rovers and vans, subject to the following checks and controls:

- You must have an appropriate licence, which will be checked by your volunteer supervisor before the vehicle is first driven and then at least annually.



Volunteer Case Study 3

"I enjoy volunteering as it allows me to meet people and face new challenges. It also gives me a sense of achievement and greater confidence...should have done it years ago!"

Essential information for volunteers

- You will receive a vehicle induction and be made aware of relevant policies and procedures - e.g. vehicle checks, use of mobile phones, safe loading and driver behaviour.
- Your driving will be assessed by the volunteering supervisor or another competent member of staff.
- You should not undertake some driving operations without additional training and instruction - e.g. off-road driving. Some operations, such as towing a trailer, also require additional driving licence categories.
- You will also receive a letter outlining procedures, safe practice and what you can, and can't do.

If you need to drive your own vehicle as part of your volunteering duties, you will have your driving licence, MOT and insurance checked at least annually. Although volunteering is usually classed as 'Social, Domestic and Pleasure' rather than as 'Business Use', you should still inform your vehicle insurer.

Equality and diversity

Derbyshire County Council believes 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 respect and value diversity and will do everything we reasonably can to make sure volunteering opportunities are available to all. We aim to provide an environment in which everyone feels equally valued and will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, inappropriate behaviour or language. Derbyshire County Council's policy on equality and diversity can be found at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/equalities/equal_opportunities

Confidentiality

As a volunteer, you may come into contact with confidential information. You should not disclose or discuss such information with anyone outside of the Countryside Service.

Derbyshire County Council will ensure that any personal information you supply us with is treated in confidence. We must have your permission to store and use your personal information, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Volunteers give their permission for us to use and store information that is confidential but it will not be shared without their explicit permission to do so.

Your information will not be passed onto any organisation for the purposes of marketing or sales. You may request a copy of the information held on you by making a written request to us at any time. You may also request to have your information deleted at any time.

You can find out more about our data protection policies and procedures at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/working_for_us/data

Health and safety

Derbyshire County Council recognises that it has a duty of care to its volunteers and takes all reasonable steps to safeguard their health and safety. We carry out risk assessments for all volunteer roles and tasks, and ask that you follow any measures that may be in place to ensure the safety of yourself and others. If you are in any doubt about safe practice, discuss things with your volunteering supervisor.

You will receive health and safety guidance relevant to your role at induction and throughout your time with us. However, the following pages give guidance on key areas.

Fire procedures

You will be made aware of the fire and evacuation procedures you need to follow for the visitor centre or office at which you're based. This includes the location of fire exits, alarms and fire extinguishers.

Computers and display screen equipment

If your volunteering role involves using computers, you need to make sure that the chair, keyboard, monitor and desk are properly adjusted for you. Your volunteering supervisor will go through this process with you when you start in your volunteering role. If, as part of your volunteering role, you use computers for most of the day and you volunteer for several days each week, the County Council may pay for an eyesight test and subsidise the purchase of suitable spectacles.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

You will be provided with any PPE you may need for your role and, where necessary, trained in its use. PPE may be issued to you personally (you should return it if you leave your role) or issued from an equipment pool as required. If you are provided with PPE, please look after it and make sure that you use it.



Volunteer Case Study 4

"Having moved to Chesterfield in 2013, I investigated the possibility of voluntary work in the immediate area. It didn't take long to discover my local volunteer group and the work they do along the canal and Trans-Pennine Trail. I have learnt so much over the last two years, from woodland management to local history and the geography of the area. Of course, there is the added benefit of not needing to go to a gym each week!"

Health and safety

Clothing and footwear

You should dress appropriately for your volunteering role and have wet weather gear for outdoor roles. Volunteers in practical conservation and estate management roles should wear clothes they don't mind getting dirty. Some of our sites may be able to provide overalls for particularly messy work!

Footwear should be suited to the task. Normally this will be walking boots or similar sturdy boots with good grip, but for some tasks safety footwear with steel toecaps may be needed. Your volunteering supervisor will tell you when this is the case. Most sites have a pool of safety boots and safety wellingtons which can be disinfected before use.

Manual handling

In many volunteer roles you may need to lift and handle heavy loads, though machinery is used whenever possible. Your volunteering supervisor will guide you in this and arrange training if necessary, but basically:

- Work within your personal limits.
- Bend your knees when lifting, not your back, and look up as you start to lift.
- Don't twist or overstretch.
- Share heavier loads with others.

Specialist tools and equipment

We'll tell you if a volunteer role requires the use of special equipment and where necessary we'll train you to use it and provide appropriate PPE.

It is unlikely that we'd ask you to use power tools such as chainsaws and brush cutters, but sometimes volunteers have these tools and offer to use them. Before using these tools you would need to show us current certification and evidence of refresher training (typically NPTC/Lantra), have appropriate PPE and demonstrate your competence to the volunteering supervisor. We would also need to check that the tool complies with current standards and is in safe working order.

Accidents and first aid

Even with the best health and safety procedures in place, accidents can still happen. All of our offices and visitor centres have first aid kits and staff trained in first aid. Outdoor task leaders carry first aid kits and are first aid trained.

If you are injured, or have a near miss, get treatment and report the incident to your volunteering supervisor. They will complete an accident report form with you and, if possible, take action to reduce the likelihood of similar incidents occurring again.

Further information

You can find out more about Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service and volunteering in the following ways:

- Visit **www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countrysidevolunteering**
- Email us at **countrysideservice@derbyshire.gov.uk**
- Telephone us on **01629 533302**
- Talk to staff at your preferred site.

Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service

Guidelines for Managing Volunteers

2015 – 2019

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Introduction

This document has been developed to assist staff in the management and supervision of volunteers within Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service. It provides procedures and guidance on best practice, to give a consistent approach across the Service and facilitate a high quality and productive relationship. It should be read in conjunction with the *Countryside Service Volunteer Policy 2014 – 19* and *A Guide to Volunteering with Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service*.

What is volunteering?

Volunteers are people who choose to give their time and skills without payment for the benefit of society, local communities and individuals outside of the immediate family. This definition includes corporate volunteering and community-based volunteer groups, as well as individuals who volunteer directly with the Countryside Service. This document only covers the last group which includes:

- Regular estate/conservation management volunteers on a staff supervised task;
- Long-term volunteers routinely working with a paid member of staff;
- Access or wildlife surveyors;
- Volunteer site wardens;
- Visitor service volunteers assisting with events, children's activities, exhibitions etc.
- Volunteers assisting with 'admin' duties, cataloguing, archiving and digitising.

Work experience and student placements are not classed as volunteers and should be progressed through the Learning and Development team.

Community Payback is not classed as volunteering as participants are not choosing to give their time.

Getting into volunteering

The 'recruitment' process for volunteers should be less bureaucratic and formal than for staff, but it is still important that correct procedures are followed to ensure that the process is transparent, auditable and fair. Any correspondence during the recruitment process should be kept on the volunteer's file.

In some cases, specialist roles may be specifically advertised for. It may be necessary to short-list applicants and assess them against role criteria during the introductory meeting. Records should be kept and feedback given to unsuccessful applicants if requested.

Some volunteering roles, for example those with substantial access to children or vulnerable adults, may require a criminal record check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or character references. In such cases you will need to ensure you have all the information necessary to make the volunteer appointment.

See the section on DBS (page 10) and discuss with the departmental HR team as required.

All volunteer applicants should be treated consistently, regardless of their personal situation.

Volunteer Role Description

Role descriptions enable potential volunteers to know what is expected of them:— the activities they will undertake and the personal qualities they will need.

Volunteers are more likely to stay if they have chosen their role and it is easier to plan training and support if you know the skills required. Role descriptions (or their content) are also useful when advertising for volunteers.

A number of typical Role Descriptions are available in the Appendix at the end of this document.

Introductory meeting (volunteer assessment)

This is a chance for the volunteer to get an understanding of the volunteering role and for the manager/supervisor to get an understanding of the volunteer's suitability. It should be a discussion about the opportunity and not at all like a formal employee interview.

You may want to tell potential volunteers about:

- Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service and the role of volunteers
- The volunteering opportunity
- Training and support offered
- Your expectations of volunteers
- Time commitment

You may want them to tell you about:

- What they like about the idea of volunteering in this type of role
- What they hope to gain from volunteering
- Relevant skills, interests and experience
- Time availability
- Resources or reasonable adjustments they will need

By the end of the discussion both you and the volunteer should be in a position to agree whether you want to proceed further. If you don't think that the volunteer has the skills, experience or attitude to carry out the role you will need to explain this.

You may be able to direct them to volunteering opportunities elsewhere within the County Council or with other organisations.

It is good practice to do this in person, but always follow it up by letter or email.

Volunteer registration form

This allows us to gain administrative details as well as asking questions about people's experiences and their reasons for wanting to volunteer. Forms can be completed during or after an introductory meeting. Remember that forms can be off putting for people with literacy difficulties or for those where English is not their first

language. The standard form (see Appendix) can be modified with local contact details and volunteering opportunity information if required.

The Countryside Service Volunteer Agreement

A copy of this should be given to new volunteers. It sets out the Countryside Service's commitment to its volunteers and the standards we expect from our volunteers. It acts as a reference point for volunteers on required conduct and is a reminder to the Service that it should meet the standards of good practice that it has set itself.

The Volunteer Agreement is phrased in terms of hopes and expectations rather than obligations and is in no way contractual. It is unsigned but should include the volunteer's name and role title. Although both the Volunteer Policy and the Agreement state that 'neither party commits to any employment relationship being created either now or at any time in the future' it does not exclude volunteers from applying for jobs within the Countryside Service.

The Countryside Service Volunteer Agreement is available in the Appendix.

Induction, support and training

Like staff, volunteers will require support during their time with the Countryside Service. The level of support will depend on the volunteering role, but at the very least, volunteers will have the opportunity to discuss their role with their manager/supervisor. For the most part, this will be an on-going process, but volunteers should have a review three months after starting their role and then annually after that: it's an opportunity to talk about how things are going and agree any development needs. Where possible and to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy, reviews should be short, informal chats fitted into the volunteering day rather than a sit-down meeting. They may be as simple as asking if everything is ok: it depends on the individual.

You may not need to make any formal notes – most volunteers won't want them, but ask anyway – but make a diary note of the discussion.

Volunteer support and development begins at induction.

Induction

This will vary depending on the type of volunteering and the level of supervision, but all volunteers will require some form of induction to introduce them to the Service and their role within it. Volunteers should be made aware of relevant policies and procedures (e.g. health and safety codes of practice) and any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) issued. It is good practice for a signed record of the volunteer induction to be made and a copy given to the volunteer.

A Volunteer Induction Record is available in the Appendix and can be modified for different areas.

Training and Development

This will differ from volunteer to volunteer and will depend on the role they are undertaking, but all volunteers need appropriate training to enable them to operate safely and effectively.

In some roles, for example Estate/Conservation Management team member, volunteers will develop skills 'on the job', but in other situations training may be needed before the role can begin. An example would be a volunteer carrying out public rights of way surveys. However, new surveyors could go out with staff or other experienced volunteers to learn about the role while waiting for more formal training.

Most training will be delivered "in-house" by Countryside Service staff as part of the volunteering day, but some training, especially certificated training such as for a brush cutter, will have a cost attached to it. Such training would therefore only be given to a volunteer who had shown a regular commitment and where the needs of the Service necessitated it. Refresher training will be to the same time-scale as that for members of staff.

Formal training should be recorded and where requested, a statement of experience and the skills acquired, issued to the volunteer. A volunteer's on-going training needs should be addressed at the annual review meeting.

Training for staff

The Countryside Service Volunteer Policy states that 'staff supporting volunteers will receive suitable training.' This may lead to staff requesting courses in volunteer management. Each request should be dealt with appropriately through the 'My Plan' process and the most suitable type of learning agreed. For some this may be a formal course, but many staff will already have the skills required or can learn through job-shadowing etc.

Involving volunteers

A sense of involvement motivates us all and volunteers are no exception. Volunteers may have valuable comments and suggestions to make and, where appropriate to the role, could be invited to occasional team meetings and projects meetings.

Volunteers need to feel appreciated and that their role is of value. Volunteers should be thanked by the manager/supervisor at the end of their day and their contribution acknowledged. You can also thank volunteers by arranging special activities such as a summer barbecue or a visit to another site. Staff can also be included as it helps them to bond with volunteers.

Identification of volunteers

Volunteers should be identifiable as part of the Countryside Service, particularly if they are lone working, but at the same time they should be easily distinguished from staff. Depending on their role, volunteers can be issued with a 'letter of authorisation' which can be presented to members of the public etc. if requested. A *pro forma* Letter of Authorisation is available in the Appendix.

Given current financial constraints, it is unlikely that volunteers can be issued with volunteer-specific uniform, but 'pool' items can be issued for events etc. Volunteer signage placed on site when a task is underway is a good way of identifying volunteer team tasks. It identifies the group as part of the Countryside Service, but distinguishes it from other 'volunteers' such as Community Payback teams.

Solving problems

For the most part, volunteering is a positive experience for all parties. However, things can go wrong: a volunteer may have a complaint, or there may be a complaint against the volunteer. Alternatively, a volunteer's performance may have deteriorated. Procedures need to be in place to deal with such situations.

It should be remembered that volunteers are not covered by staff grievance and disciplinary policies/procedures. They are not covered by employment or equal opportunities legislation and only have the same rights as members of the public (See section on Policies and Procedures).

Therefore, less formal versions of the County Council's procedures are used so that any problems can be resolved openly, fairly and quickly. This will:

- Protect staff and volunteers;
- Minimise any disruption to staff and other volunteers;
- Demonstrate that the Countryside Service respects its volunteers;
- Protect the reputation of the Countryside Service.

Human Resources (HR) can be invited to any meetings held as part of the problem-solving procedure. If HR does not attend a meeting relating to concerns with a volunteer, departmental HR should be kept up to date with the issues to ensure managers have support.

The problem-solving procedure for volunteers is as follows:

Complaints by volunteers

Stage 1: Informal discussion

Initial complaints, whether against a member of staff, another volunteer or the County Council itself, should be discussed face to face with the volunteer and all reasonable attempts made to resolve the issue. If the complaint is about the volunteering supervisor, then the matter should be referred to another manager. Keep a diary record of the discussion.

Stage 2: Written complaint

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal discussion, they should make a formal complaint in writing to their supervisor (or another manager if the complaint is against their supervisor). This should be within one month of the Stage 1 meeting.

A formal meeting with Countryside Service managers will be held to discuss the complaint and a written record of the meeting produced. During the meeting the volunteer can be accompanied by a nominated person of their choice. Following the meeting, any further required information will be sought. After full consideration of the complaint, the volunteer must be informed of the outcome in writing.

Stage 3: Opportunity to appeal

Within one month of the Stage 2 meeting, the volunteer can appeal to senior management. Further meetings may be held if required.

Complaints and concerns about volunteers

Stage 1: Informal discussion

Discuss the complaint with the volunteer. There could be external factors influencing the volunteer's performance, behaviour or attitude. Could the issue be resolved with extra support, supervision and training? Agree a way forward and a deadline for reviewing the situation with the volunteer. Keep a diary record of the discussion and if the complaint was raised by someone else, keep them informed of the measures you are taking to try and rectify the situation. At the review discussion determine whether the grounds for complaint/concern have been resolved. If they have, make a diary note. If not, move to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal meeting

The volunteer should be written to inviting them to a formal meeting with Countryside Service managers to discuss the issue. The letter should outline the reasons for the complaint/concern and document any actions already taken. At the meeting, further objectives may be set to try to resolve the issue, or the volunteer may be asked to leave. The volunteer may be accompanied at the meeting by a nominated person of their choice. The outcomes of the meeting should be confirmed to the volunteer in writing.

Stage 3: Opportunity to appeal

Within one month of the Stage 2 meeting, the volunteer can appeal to senior management in writing. Further meetings may be held if required.

When a volunteer leaves

Whatever the reason for leaving, volunteers should be given the opportunity to feedback on their experience of volunteering with the Countryside Service. When requested, a written testimonial or Statement of Achievement should be given to volunteers on leaving their volunteering role and references supplied to other organisations as required.

Volunteers and the law

This section can do little more than provide a brief introduction to the legal issues around volunteering. For more information, please read *Volunteers and the Law* by Volunteering England:

http://www.volunteering.org.uk/images/stories/Volunteering-England/Documents/Publications/volunteers_and_the_law.pdf

If in doubt, look on Dnet and consult Legal Services and/or Human Resources.

The difference between volunteers and employees

It is very easy to treat a volunteer in such a way that they technically become an employee, with employment rights and entitlement to minimum wage. Although the risk is small, there have been a few employment tribunals and court cases where, following a dispute, volunteers have successfully argued that they were employees. The test is whether the individual is deemed to be working under a contract. In its simplest form, a contract is an agreement which involves:

- Payment (or receiving something of material value) in return for work, goods or services;
- A legally binding relationship between the organisation and volunteer.

The contract need not be written and payment could be training or other benefits if they aren't really needed to fulfil the volunteering role. To maintain a distinction between staff and volunteers, the following points should be considered:

- Use less formal language and 'volunteer friendly' words in any forms and documents intended for volunteers. For example:
 - **agreement** not **contract**
 - **role** not **job**
 - **reasonable expectation** not **obligation** or **responsibility**
 - **problem solving** not **grievance and disciplinary procedure**
 - **informal chat** not **interview**
 - **introductory** not **trial** or **probationary**
- It is okay to give thank-you gifts as long as they are small and without real value, for example a box of chocolates or bottle of wine. Make gifts occasional, or 'one-offs' so as not to create an expectation of reward.
- It's alright to invite volunteers to social nights etc. but don't give them free tickets to functions and events (unless they're involved in them) as it could be seen as a payment.
- Only offer training relevant to the role and make it available to all volunteers performing that role.

Staff that volunteer

Some staff, for example Part-time Rangers, may also volunteer. Be careful to make a clear distinction between their paid work and voluntary role, even if there are many similarities. They should register as a volunteer and, as they are not at work, they should sign in as a volunteer.

Volunteers as replacements for staff

The role of the volunteer is to support, not replace staff. Volunteers should not be recruited to replace paid staff - to do so could be seen as exploitation of the volunteer and deprivation of someone's livelihood. The Countryside Service engages with volunteers not just to 'get the job done' but also for the added value that volunteering brings in terms of community and learning benefits. This will be our 'yardstick' in identifying roles suitable for volunteers.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Criminal record checks through the DBS are normally undertaken when someone will be working in a supervisory role with children or vulnerable adults, or have access to information about children and vulnerable adults. This is unlikely to be the case for the majority of volunteers.

It is illegal to request a DBS check just because you think someone has a criminal record. Although useful, a DBS check is not an effective tool on its own. The recruitment process and on-going supervision all help to establish whether a volunteer is suitable for the role. DBS checks are free for volunteers.

More information on DBS checks can be found

at: http://dnet/policies_and_procedures/human_resources/Criminal_Background_Checks/default.asp

Young volunteers

Child protection issues and legislation on working hours for children need to be considered when supervising young volunteers. Even where staff are DBS checked, working or travelling alone with under 18's could leave them open to false accusations, as no one would be present as a witness.

Where younger people do volunteer (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Awards) a specific risk assessment will be needed identifying the level of support required and suitable tasks for them to carry out.

Young volunteers should be supervised at all times but, under DBS rules, teaching, training or instruction of children should not be carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more) **or** on four or more days in a 30-day period. This is to minimise the opportunity for one person to build up a relationship with a minor. Therefore it is recommended that when young people are volunteering, supervision of them is undertaken by more than one person and that the supervising staff are varied as much as possible. For more information see the DBS link above.

Only light activities should be undertaken and they should be excluded from the area when 'hazardous' activities are taking place – e.g. tree felling (other than poles), use of plant/power tools and working by deep or fast-flowing water. Such activities may only be observed from an agreed safe distance. The risk assessment should also address any lone working issues for staff.

Written parental consent will be required for any volunteer under 18 years of age. Provide the parent or guardian with a copy of the relevant Role Description and be sure that they have a full understanding of the volunteer role. A *pro forma* consent form is available in the Appendix.

Children under the age of 14 may only volunteer under the supervision of a parent, guardian or responsible adult. Again, a specific risk assessment will be required and it should be noted that supervising the child may have an adverse effect on the responsible adult's awareness of their own safety. Furthermore, the responsible adult should be informed that they will be asked to leave the task, or stop volunteering, should staff consider them to be acting unsafely.

Volunteers with criminal records

Recruiting volunteers with criminal records shows a commitment to equality and diversity and can be a positive experience for all. Volunteering can help ex-offenders rebuild their lives and develop a sense of purpose.

A potential volunteer does not have to reveal their conviction if it is 'spent' and it is illegal to ask whether an applicant has any spent convictions. However, where a position involves working with children or vulnerable adults, the applicant is required to reveal both spent and unspent convictions.

Managers may well be cautious about potential volunteers who have criminal records, but each individual should be judged on their merits. The offence may have no relevance to an individual's ability to volunteer, but even people with serious convictions may be able to volunteer if appropriate safeguards and risk assessments are put in place.

The factors to consider when deciding whether to recruit someone with a criminal record include:

- The individual's suitability for the volunteering role;
- The individual's attitude and behaviour
- The nature of the offence;
- The level of risk they pose to people and property.

If a manager has a query relating to the criminal conviction/s of a potential volunteer, this should be discussed with the departmental HR team.

Volunteering England has produced a guide to involving ex-offenders in volunteering:

http://www.volunteering.org.uk/images/stories/Volunteering-England/Documents/Main-Documents/nacro_publication06.pdf

Volunteering Greater Manchester has produced a useful guide to volunteering with a criminal record: <http://www.volunteering-gm.org.uk/?q=node/33>

Volunteers from vulnerable groups

Other agencies, such as Social Services and community mental health teams, often approach the Countryside Service seeking volunteering opportunities for their clients. We should aim to accommodate these requests wherever possible, but not where this would compromise delivery of Countryside Service priorities: The input required from Countryside Service staff can be considerable, even when a support worker is present to manage the volunteer's individual needs.

Each approach, whether for a group or an individual, should be assessed separately to determine the benefits for the Countryside Service and the volunteer, as well as the level of risk management required. The volunteer manager would need to be sure that sufficient safeguards were in place for the group/individual and that a suitable risk assessment was provided by the agency or carer. It may be necessary to write a specific risk assessment, covering the topics outlined above in the section on young volunteers.

Volunteers on welfare benefits

People on benefits are able to volunteer, though benefits advisers sometimes say this isn't the case. There are three basic rules:

- The volunteer must inform their benefits manager before they start volunteering. They will probably have to provide details of the volunteering activity and any expenses.
- An individual can volunteer for as many hours as they like, as long as they still meet their conditions for claiming benefits: the old rule of 16 hours per week no longer applies.
- In general, refunding expenses does not affect benefit. However, anyone receiving income-related benefits must declare the expenses and keep any receipts.

It is good practice to give volunteers a letter that they can give to their benefits manager, explaining that they are volunteering for the County Council and are not receiving any payments except for expenses (where eligible).

Notional earnings

Choosing not to be paid for work is not the same as volunteering. In such cases, the wage an individual could have been paid is classed as 'notional earnings' and could affect benefits.

Policies and procedures

This section, although clearly related to the previous section on volunteers and the law, focuses on the operational systems in place for managing volunteers with the Countryside Service. As with the previous section, general guidance can be found in *Volunteers and the Law* by Volunteering England.

Legally, volunteers have only the same rights as members of the public and do not have the same rights as staff. However, it is good practice to apply the same

standards to volunteers as are demanded by law for staff, and to expect volunteers to comply with 'the letter and the spirit' of relevant policies and procedures.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Staff should be careful not to discuss confidential or sensitive issues in the presence of volunteers. However, volunteers will inevitably come into contact with confidential information and should be asked not to disclose or discuss such information with anyone outside the Countryside Service. At induction volunteers should be made aware of the County Council's policies on confidentiality and data protection. More information is available at:

http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/working_for_us/data/default.asp

Maintaining volunteer information

Volunteers' personal details, training records, accident reports etc. should be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the County Council's 'Information Safe Haven' guidance.

Key points are:

- Keep hard-copies in a locked filing cabinet or drawer;
- Dispose of old records and notes by shredding;
- Keep electronic records on the DCC server - data should not be stored on local hard drives.

There are no clear guidelines as to how long records should be kept after a volunteer leaves, but three years is reasonable. The Limitation Act 1980 sets three years as the limit for personal injury claims. Records for young volunteers should be kept for three years after they become 18.

Any equality and diversity data gathered about volunteers should be held separately and anonymously. Volunteer managers should not disclose such information to other staff or volunteers

Equality and Diversity

All volunteers and potential volunteers should be treated equally and fairly throughout their involvement with the Countryside Service. If required, reasonable adjustments can be made to assist the volunteer in carrying out their duties. All staff and volunteers should receive appropriate equality and diversity training/guidance to ensure under-pinning knowledge and core skills.

An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the Countryside Service Volunteer Policy to assess any possible effects on the Protected Characteristic Groups defined in the 2010 Equality Act. The following actions were identified:

- Any literature about volunteering should be in an appropriate format/language and address the potential barriers to volunteering by the protected groups. It should also promote the benefits of volunteering. Any images used should dispel the perception that the countryside is mainly for white/middle class people

- When people from Protected Characteristic Groups enquire about volunteering we will make every effort to find them a suitable volunteer role. They will be assured of a safe and supportive environment in which to volunteer and encouraged to work within their own limits.
- Carry out a periodic review of how we are engaging with the volunteers (potential or actual) from Protected Characteristic Groups to ensure that this work remains high profile

Derbyshire County Council's policy on equality and diversity can be found at:
http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/equalities/equal_opportunities/default.asp

Volunteers and copyright

Some volunteers may use their skills to produce educational and interpretative materials, guided walk leaflets, exhibition art etc. In all such cases, copyright for the work remains with the volunteer and is therefore different to when materials are produced by staff, where the copyright is owned by the employer. In order to use, reproduce or adapt these works in the future, volunteers need to either assign or licence their work to us.

Assignment

This would transfer full ownership of copyright to Derbyshire County Council for any works produced and is the preferred option. The volunteer should sign a letter stating that copyright for their work is being given to DCC and that their work may be used, reproduced or adapted by DCC as required.

It is normal to make a nominal payment for the copyright. The right to make money from the work (economic rights) is normally signed over with the copyright. However, the moral right to be identified as the creator of the work and to object to any derogatory treatment of the work would remain with the volunteer unless explicitly waived.

A Copyright Assignment letter is available in the Appendix.

Licencing

The volunteer would retain the copyright, but allow DCC to use the work within the terms of the licence. This option could be explored if the volunteer declined to assign copyright. Legal Services would need to be involved in drawing up the licence, which would identify the work covered, how the work could be used and the duration of the licence.

Expenses

National guidelines say that volunteers should not be out of pocket as a result of volunteering. This may be particularly important to those on a low income or benefits, who may otherwise be unable to volunteer. Not paying expenses in such circumstances may be perceived as a contradiction of the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity.

However, it is not financially feasible to pay all expenses at this time. As a compromise, we will reimburse eligible expenses incurred during the course of volunteering duties, but only in exceptional circumstances will we reimburse the cost of travel from home to the volunteering base.

We will only pay travelling expenses (including car parking fees where appropriate) in the following situations:

- The potential volunteer is unemployed or on benefits and has indicated that they couldn't otherwise afford to travel to the volunteering base.
- A volunteer incurs travelling costs attending training, where the training is not at their usual base.
- A volunteer incurs travelling costs as part of their volunteering role. This could be a Public Rights of Way surveyor.

Volunteers using Countryside Service car parks may be given a 'day pass' to exempt them from the parking fee. Alternatively they may park in areas designated for staff. Wherever possible, volunteers are transported in Countryside Service vehicles.

Expenses should be approved in advance by the volunteer's manager and should be only for costs incurred. Expense payments that exceed the actual cost could be seen as payment for work. Claims should be made monthly on the *Travel Expenses Form (Non-Employees)* available in the Appendix and should be supported by Fuel VAT receipts where appropriate.

Expenses are paid directly into the volunteer's bank account, so the volunteer will need to provide their bank details using a *Volunteer Vendor Details Form*. Details from this form can then be used by the volunteer's manager to complete and submit an *MD5 – Non Orderpoint Vendors* form. These forms enable the volunteer to be set up as a vendor and should be used if future expense claims are anticipated. If the volunteer is receiving one-off expenses then they can be paid as a one-time vendor removing the need to complete the forms. One-off means once in their entire time of volunteering, not once a year.

As the forms are subject to change, make sure you use the latest versions, which are available at http://dnet/forms/finance/master_data/default.asp. Old versions may not have the correct information on them and can be rejected.

There is no tax liability if only genuine out of pocket expenses are paid and the payment is at a reasonable rate – i.e. mileage rates within limits set by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for staff. Neither the volunteer, nor the County Council needs to declare such expenses to HMRC.

It is reasonable to expect a volunteer to provide their own meal and drink (i.e. a packed lunch) as they would have to eat regardless of whether they were volunteering or not. We may provide drinks such as tea, coffee and squash for organised tasks.

Cash Handling

The County Council's Fidelity Policy, which covers employee dishonesty, does not apply to volunteers. Therefore there would be no cover if an individual was able to defraud the Council by paying money into another account, or by stealing large amounts of cash over a period of time. Smaller amounts of cash (up to £1,000) stolen in one incident are covered under the Council's Money Policy, but these are usually opportunist thefts and are not normally perpetrated by staff or volunteers actually in the role of handling cash.

However, there may be situations when it would be useful for a volunteer to handle cash, for example assisting in a visitor centre shop or selling parking/event tickets to free up staff at busy times. This is permissible as long as certain conditions are met:

- The volunteer is judged trustworthy, either through references or length of service;
- The volunteer has cash handling skills (or receives appropriate training) and understands our procedures;
- Records of training and instruction are kept;
- The total amount of cash handled between reconciliation periods is less than £1,000;
- Volunteers deal only with cash and are not involved with debit or credit card transactions;
- Volunteers are not involved in placing orders or making payments;
- Staff are vigilant for suspicious behaviour and/or unexpectedly low takings;
- Staff are involved in reconciling any takings and there is an audit trail for the cash.

Insurance and risk management

Insurance

Countryside Service volunteers are covered by the County Council's public liability insurance and personal accident insurance. These policies cover volunteers up to the age of 80. The Council's Insurance Section should be notified if any volunteers are over 80 years of age. There is no lower age limit for insurance cover, but death benefits are greatly reduced for minors and young students in full-time education.

It is not necessary to 'sign in' to be covered by insurance, but it is good practice to do so.

Further information on insurance can be found at:

http://dnet/policies_and_procedures/finance/insurance_risk_management/insurance/default.asp

Staff to volunteer ratios

It is important that an appropriate staff to volunteer ratio is set to enable volunteers to work safely and to the correct standard. This will vary depending on the individuals involved, their experience and the nature of the task, but it is suggested

that a ratio of 1:8 should not be exceeded. In practice, the ratio may well be determined by the number of seats in the vehicle!

Independent working

Volunteers need not be under close supervision in order to be insured, but they must be carrying out duties in which they have been trained and/or instructed. Volunteers should not perform unauthorised actions or actions outside of their role description.

Independent working is based on an assessment of the volunteer's ability and competence from staff having worked with the volunteer on a number of occasions.

Volunteers as task leaders

Volunteers with considerable competence and experience may be considered suitable to lead volunteer tasks. However, in order to do so they would need first-aid training as a minimum and possibly training (in-house) in group leadership and risk management

Volunteer groups

Community-based volunteer groups which have been asked to carry out work for and on behalf of the Service, are also insured as volunteers. This only applies when the work is carried out for free, or for expenses only. Any group that is paid for work or services requires its own insurance cover. This will be covered in more detail in the *Countryside Service Policy for Working with Community Groups*.

Health and Safety

The 'duty of care' is a general legal duty on all individuals and organisations to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to people. It has been developed by the courts over many years. Health and Safety law lays down the County Council's duties to its employees. However, the law also imposes further responsibilities on an employer with regard to people not in their employment, such as volunteers and other members of the public, who may be affected by work activities.

Regulations place a duty on the Council to assess the risks to employees and others who may be affected by the work activities and introduce control measures, as appropriate, to reduce these risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

All volunteer roles should be risk assessed and volunteers should be given relevant information and training in risk management. The *Guide to Volunteering with Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service* gives key information for volunteers, but more health and safety guidance can be found in the *Employees' Health and Safety Handbook* at http://dnet/working_for_us/your_wellbeing/environmental_services/health_safety/employees_handbook/default.asp

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE should be issued without charge and where necessary, volunteers should be trained in its use. To reduce the risk of cross contamination, it is preferable for PPE to be issued to the individual and its issue recorded.

Where this is not possible, for example occasional use by different groups, PPE should be washed, cleaned or disinfected after use. Anti-perspirant, deodorant sprays containing anti-bacterial agents are available for footwear. Disinfectant hard-surface wipes can be used on eye wear and hard hats. For shared use it is preferable to buy hard hats with plastic 'sweat' bands rather than those with fabric covered bands.

There is more information on PPE in GCP4 Personal Protective Equipment V2.0 at http://dnet/working_for_us/your_wellbeing/environmental_services/health_safety/gcp/gcp4/default.asp

Driving Vehicles

County Council vehicles

Countryside Service volunteers are insured to drive County Council vehicles, but the following checks and controls should be made:

- An appropriate licence must be held, which must be checked before the vehicle is first driven and then at least annually. A record of these checks should be kept;
- Vehicle induction training must be carried out and the volunteer made aware of relevant policies and procedures – e.g. vehicle checks, use of mobile phones, safe loading, driver behaviour;
- The volunteer's driving must be assessed by the volunteer manager or a competent member of staff;
- Volunteers should only undertake driving operations for which they are trained and competent e.g. off-road driving. Some operations, such as towing a trailer, also require additional driving licence categories.
- The volunteer should receive a letter outlining procedures, safe practice and what they can and can't do. *Pro forma* letter text is available in the Appendix.

Use of personal vehicles

Where a volunteer uses their own vehicle in their volunteering role, for example when carrying out Rights of Way surveys, they are subject to the same controls as staff and should have their licence, MOT and insurance checked at least annually. Although volunteering should be classed as 'social, domestic and pleasure' rather than as 'business use', volunteers should still inform their insurer.

Derbyshire County Council's *Transport Code of Practice 2010* and other information can be found at:

http://dnet/working_for_us/travel_information/default.asp

Recording Volunteer Involvement

In order to quantify the work of volunteers, we need to have recording systems in place. Volunteer figures (as 6 hour long days) should be entered quarterly into the Countryside Service Master Performance Monitoring Sheet which can be found under the relevant year at [J:\Planning-and-Environment\Divisional General\Countryside Quarterly Reports](#)

Figures entered should be auditable. Evidential records will need to be kept, such as signing-in sheets, Service Level Agreement (SLA) reports, or emails documenting hours on site by volunteer wardens/surveyors, Friends groups etc.

Area teams should enter figures for Countryside Service volunteers on each of their sites. They should also enter figures for public rights of way/access volunteers and volunteering by other groups such as The Conservation Volunteers (including the SLA), Parkwood and corporate volunteers. Please remember that Community Payback, work experience and student placements are not classed as volunteers and should not be included. The HQ team at Shand House will enter figures for BVPI Public Rights of Way Ease of Use surveys, SLA work not organised by area teams and group work not organised by area teams.

For recording purposes, there are three categories of volunteer:

- **Unskilled.** Covers most volunteers as they are assisting staff and are guided by them.
- **Skilled.** Volunteers with training and experience in a particular field. They can operate with minimal support and make decisions within a defined framework. E.g. BVPI PROW surveyors.
- **Specialist.** Volunteers with qualifications and experience in a particular field. They will typically be using skills from their paid occupation in a voluntary capacity. E.g. a university ecology lecturer conducting a grassland survey as a volunteer.

Appendix

Role Descriptions, forms and other documents. Double-click to open

Estate/Conservation Management Team Volunteer Role Description



2015 10 02 Estate
and Conservation Te:

Ranger/Warden Support Volunteer Role Description



2015 10 02 Ranger
Warden support Volu

Visitor Services Volunteer Role Description



2015 10 02 Visitor
Services Volunteer.doc

PROW Volunteer / Path Friend



2015 01 29 Path
Friend volunteer.doc

Volunteer agreement



2014 04 11
Volunteer Agreement

Copyright assignment *pro forma*



2015 02 03
Copyright assignator

Volunteer registration form



2015 02 03
volunteer registration

Volunteer Parental Consent form



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Volunteer parental co

Letter of Authorisation



2015 02 02 Letter of
Authorisation.docx

Vehicle procedures letter



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procedures letter.doc

Volunteer induction record



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volunteer induction re

Travel expenses Claim Form



2015 02 02 Travel
Expenses Claim Form