

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET MEETING**

**25 March 2014**

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE  
VOLUNTEER POLICY 2014-2019 (JOBS, ECONOMY AND  
TRANSPORT)**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval for the adoption of a Countryside Service Volunteer Policy and associated Equality Impact Analysis following an extensive consultation exercise.

(2) **Information and Analysis** Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the work of the Countryside Service but volunteering also brings additional benefits for the individual and for local communities.

For the individual, volunteering can improve confidence and self-esteem, increase knowledge and skills, and bring health benefits through raised activity. As many of our volunteers are retired, this can help in achieving the County Council's priorities for keeping older people fit and active.

Local communities and economies benefit from volunteering in two ways: firstly, by helping to manage the Countryside Service's sites, rights of way and Greenways, countryside access and facilities are improved, both for residents and visitors, and opportunities for tourism are increased. This can help meet the County Council's targets for economic regeneration. Secondly, the individual qualities considered above, and the links created between the County Council, volunteers and other groups, can raise the 'social capital' of the community in which volunteers live.

Over the last three years (2010/11 – 2012/13), volunteering with the Countryside Service has generated an average of 4,090 volunteer days per year, with an equivalent value of £775,537 per year. The Countryside Service target for 2013/14 is 4,840 volunteer days.

The Countryside Service currently works with volunteers in two ways: firstly, with individuals volunteering directly with the Service and secondly, with community-based volunteer groups working for and on behalf of the Service.

## **Public**

This Policy sets out the proposed key principles and objectives for working with the first group and provides a framework for best practice. It is intended that the Policy is reviewed and updated as necessary, for example, to comply with changes in the law, and will be underpinned by guidelines for volunteers and managers. Best practice guidance for working with community-based groups will be produced at a later date.

Volunteers are members of the public and, hence, will be managed in a different way to employees.

It is intended that the Council enters into an Agreement with individual volunteers. The purpose of the Agreement is to set out the role/duties the volunteer is being asked to undertake, the time the volunteer can offer, what the volunteer can expect from the Council and confirmation that this is a Volunteer Agreement. The volunteer will be expected to adhere to relevant Derbyshire County Council policies, which include Equality and Diversity, health and safety and policies relating to confidentiality and data protection. The Agreement will not be legally binding and is not intended to create an employment relationship: the volunteer has the opportunity to withdraw their services at any time. The Volunteer Agreement is given in Appendix 2.

The role of volunteers is not to replace paid staff, although volunteers may carry out tasks that a paid worker also does in order to expand their skills and experience. The Countryside Service engages with volunteers in recognition of the wide range of skills which they bring for the benefit of the community.

In preparing the document, the Countryside Service has worked closely with the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Legal Services, as well as the two Local Access Forums for the County which have a statutory advisory role in strategic access and outdoor recreation issues. Informal discussions have also taken place with some of the Countryside Service's key volunteers, and with partners with which the Council has Service Level Agreements (eg Peak District National Park Authority, Groundwork and The Conservation Volunteers).

At the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Economy and Transport held on 9 July 2013 (Minute No. 21/13 refers) approval was given for the publication of the draft Volunteer Policy for a six week public consultation. The consultation was carried out from 29 July 2013 to 6 September 2013, by publishing the Draft Policy on the County Council's website and distributing it to interested groups and organisations. Comments received have been incorporated into the document to produce the final version of the Policy presented here. The Policy under consideration is given in Appendix 1.

Subsequent documents for volunteers and managers will provide further detailed guidance.

## Public

An Equality Impact Analysis has been carried out on the Policy and was approved by the Departmental Equality Group on 6 January 2014. The assessment is given in Appendix 3.

(3) **Financial Considerations** National guidelines state 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.

Whilst it is not financially feasible to pay all travelling expenses to all volunteers, this Policy proposes to pay expenses incurred during volunteering duties. Only in exceptional circumstances will the cost of travel from home to the volunteering base be reimbursed. Essentially, this formalises the current approach and, hence, would maintain the cost of expenses at current levels, approximately £1,100 per annum (£0.45 per mile). Wherever possible, volunteers are transported in, and have access to, Countryside Service vehicles.

(4) **Legal Considerations** There would be no legal obligation on the volunteer to carry out any commitments and the undertaking of a particular task would remain at the discretion of the volunteer. Volunteers should not be given any expectation of remuneration and the "Volunteer Agreement" would set out the role the volunteer expressed a willingness to provide rather than create a legally binding relationship. In particular, it is not intended that this would constitute a contract of employment nor that the volunteer would acquire any employee rights.

(5) **Equality and Diversity 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.

Any literature produced to support the Policy will be in an appropriate format/language, with images that dispel the perception that the countryside is mainly for white, middle class people.

During the induction process, it will be made clear to the volunteer that they should treat all employees, clients, other volunteers and members of the public with respect, regardless of their backgrounds and beliefs and that volunteers should expect the same in return.

(7) **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

## **Public**

individuals and communities. This includes improved life satisfaction and self-esteem, and health benefits through increased activity.

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

(8) **Key Decision** Yes.

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

(10) **Background Papers** Countryside Service Draft Volunteer Policy 2013-2018, report to Cabinet Member - Jobs, Economy and Transport on 9 July 2013. Officer contact details – Steve Cresswell, extension 39660.

(11) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That Cabinet approves the adoption of the final version of the Countryside Service Volunteer Policy 2014 - 19, Volunteer Agreement and associated Equality Impact Analysis.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**

# **Derbyshire County Council**

## **Countryside Service Volunteer Policy**

**2014 - 2019**



## **Introduction**

The Countryside Service is responsible for the management and promotion of Derbyshire County Council's countryside sites and facilities. This includes country parks and other recreational facilities, Greenways, public rights of way and a wide variety of conservation and environmental projects and initiatives.

Whilst helping to protect and enhance Derbyshire's natural and built environment, these projects and initiatives also play a significant part in offering wider tourism opportunities for visitors and the communities of the County, hence supporting the local economy and generating economic growth.

The County Council believes that volunteering is an important aspect of society and wants to make sure that opportunities to volunteer are worthwhile, rewarding and open to all.

For the individual, volunteering can improve confidence and self-esteem, increase knowledge and skills, and bring health benefits through raised activity. Volunteers make a valuable contribution to the well-being of our society and environment, making Derbyshire a better place to visit, work and live in. Local communities and economies benefit not only from improvements to countryside access and facilities, with consequent increased opportunities for tourism and economic growth, but the links created between the County Council, volunteers and other groups, can raise the 'social capital' of the community in which volunteers live.

There are many volunteering opportunities within the Countryside Service. Although the majority of volunteers are involved in practical conservation and site management, other roles include exhibition work, education, public rights of way surveys and helping at Countryside Service events.

The Council recognises that the skill and enthusiasm of volunteers makes a significant and valuable contribution to the work of the Service. In the three year period between 2010/11 and 2012/13, volunteering with the Countryside Service generated an average of 4,090 volunteer days per year. During the period of this Policy, it is proposed to increase volunteer involvement.

This Policy will standardise the way volunteers are managed across the Service and provides a base on which to build their involvement. It sets out the Council's key principles and objectives for the involvement of volunteers with the Countryside Service and provides a framework for best practice. It will be reviewed and updated as necessary, for example, to comply with changes in the law.

## **What is a volunteer?**

Volunteers are individuals or groups who offer their time, experience, knowledge and skills without financial gain, helping to achieve the Council's objectives and provide a benefit to the community. There are many reasons why people choose to volunteer with the Countryside Service. These include a

love of the outdoors and of Derbyshire, a way to meet people and acquire new skills, and a sense of having done something worthwhile.

Certain types of unpaid work for the Council are not regarded as volunteering, for example, student placements and work experience.

The role of volunteers is to complement the work of paid staff, adding value to and supplementing the capacity of the service to undertake additional and enhanced tasks. The Countryside Service engages with volunteers in recognition of the wide range of skills which they bring for the benefit of the community.

Countryside Service Volunteers will be managed in a different way to employees. It is a flexible arrangement and the Council will only have an expectation of a preferred schedule of time commitments. There is no obligation for the volunteer to accept the role or for the Council to offer it. Unlike an employee, volunteers do not have a contract of employment with the Council or have the same responsibilities and obligations as employees.

## **Community-based volunteering**

There are many community groups that want to help manage Derbyshire's countryside sites, Greenways and public rights of way network. These include 'Friends of...' groups, Rambler's groups and Parish Path groups. The Council will facilitate the creation of such groups and, by providing technical support and assistance, enable them to achieve mutual goals.

As these groups are working independently and are not an integral part of the Countryside Service, they are not covered by this Policy. However, they would be expected to operate to the Council's standards when working for and on behalf of the Service.

## **Volunteering with the Countryside Service**

The Council wants to make information on volunteering easily available to everyone. Many potential volunteers enquire at the Countryside Service's sites as to the opportunities available, but the Council will also publicise volunteering roles in Countryside Service publications and on the County Council's website and social networking pages. When required, the Countryside Service will engage with potential volunteers through specific, targeted campaigns. Volunteer opportunities may also be made available in local volunteer centres.

Where a volunteering role requires sole or substantial access to children, young people or vulnerable adults, an enhanced check for regulated activity will be requested through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) prior to the volunteer taking up their role. An enhanced check will also be required for volunteers with access to information about children and vulnerable adults.

Volunteers in roles involving vulnerable adults or children may need particular support, advice and training. Managers should make volunteers aware of the special requirements of the role and of behaviour that is not acceptable.

## **Derbyshire Volunteer Agreement**

Volunteers will be asked to abide by the Volunteer Agreement, which will clearly set out the Council's expectations of volunteers with regard to behaviour and conduct, and what volunteers can expect in return. The Volunteer Agreement is not a legally binding contract of employment between the County Council and the volunteer. It may be withdrawn from at any time at the discretion of either party, although whilst the parties are working together, the principles are expected to apply. Neither party commits to any employment relationship being created either now or at any time in the future. However, this Agreement does not exclude volunteers from applying for jobs within the Countryside Service.

## **The role description**

A written role description will be provided for all volunteer roles. This gives a clear overview of the activities volunteers can expect to be involved in whilst volunteering and helps to prevent confusion or misunderstanding. The role description will identify the activities to be carried out by the volunteer and the skills or experience needed. It will also identify what the volunteer can expect to get out of the role and the time commitment expected.

## **Induction, support and training**

Derbyshire County Council recognises that whilst volunteering can be satisfying and enjoyable, it can also place greater demands and responsibilities on individuals.

Also, as volunteers may be perceived by the public as representing the Council, they will be expected to abide by Derbyshire County Council policies and procedures whilst on County Council premises, or undertaking any of their volunteering duties. The Council will therefore ensure that all volunteers receive appropriate induction, support and training to carry out their role and work within relevant policies and procedures.

A nominated employee will address their needs for advice, guidance and training. The nature of support will vary depending on the volunteering role: a full-time volunteer may have different requirements to a volunteer undertaking a weekly or monthly supervised task. Employees that support volunteers will receive relevant training where appropriate.

There will be a review with the volunteer, initially after three months and then annually for regular volunteers, to make sure that both parties are getting what they want from the volunteering arrangement. This is an opportunity to consult and involve volunteers on issues concerning their volunteering activities. Reviews will be short and informal, but a brief written record will be kept identifying development needs etc.



## **Confidentiality and data protection**

Some aspects of the volunteer's role may be confidential. Issues around confidentiality will be discussed with the volunteer during the induction process. The volunteer will also be made aware of the Council's policies on confidentiality and data protection, and will be expected to comply with them.

Personal information about volunteers will be maintained in line with Derbyshire County Council's data protection procedures and confidentiality guidelines.

## **Insurance**

Volunteers registered with and supervised by Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service are insured for personal injury and are covered by professional and public liability insurance, in the same way as employees. However, the insurance will not cover unauthorised actions, or actions outside the volunteer's role description.

Friends groups, access groups and other volunteer groups working without charge and at the request of the Countryside Service are also covered by the Council's insurance.

## **Reimbursement of volunteer expenses**

Derbyshire County Council recognises that volunteers should not lose out financially because of their volunteering activities. The Council will provide a clear procedure for the reimbursement of eligible out of pocket expenses. Eligible expenses incurred during the course of volunteering duties and training will be reimbursed, but only in exceptional circumstances will the cost of travel from home to the volunteering base be reimbursed.

## **Equality and diversity**

Derbyshire County Council intends to draw on as wide a pool of volunteers as possible. 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.

During the induction process, it will be made clear to the volunteer that they should treat all employees, clients, other volunteers and members of the public with respect, regardless of their backgrounds and beliefs, and that volunteers should expect the same in return.

Volunteers will be expected to accept and adhere to the equality and diversity policies in terms of their treatment of people they come into contact with as a result of their volunteer role.

An Equality Impact Analysis has been carried out on the Volunteer Policy and the following actions identified:

- Any literature about volunteering should be in an appropriate format/language and address the potential barriers to volunteering by the Protected Characteristic 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, every effort will be made 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 the Service is engaging with the volunteers (potential or actual) from Protected Characteristic Groups to ensure that this work remains high profile.

## **Problem solving**

Derbyshire County Council aims to resolve any problems or difficulties that volunteers may have, whilst placed within the organisation, fairly and quickly. Issues should be brought to the attention of the appropriate manager for resolution.

## **Health and safety**

Derbyshire County Council's health and safety policies and guidance set the standards for a safe and healthy working environment and must be followed by volunteers at all times. Health and safety information will be made available during the volunteer's induction and for reference as required throughout the placement.

Derbyshire County Council is responsible for the health and safety of its volunteers. A risk assessment will be undertaken for each volunteer role. Necessary personal protective equipment will be made available, either on loan or provided without charge as appropriate.

## **Volunteer handbook**

Volunteers will receive a "*Volunteers' Handbook*" providing all the information they need to commence volunteering with the Countryside Service. The handbook will be tailored with local area detail.

## **Further information**

Contact Steve Cresswell, Countryside Officer, on 01629 539660.  
[Steve.cresswell@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.cresswell@derbyshire.gov.uk)



## Countryside Service Volunteer Agreement

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service and (name of volunteer)

We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your experience of volunteering with us enjoyable and rewarding.  
Your role as volunteer is (state the nature of the voluntary work)

and starts on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 1: Derbyshire County Council

Derbyshire County Council commits itself to the following:

#### Induction and training

- To provide you with a thorough induction on the work of Derbyshire County Council and its staff, your volunteering role and training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role.

#### Supervision, support and flexibility

- To explain the standards we expect for our services and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them.
- To provide a named person who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any successes and problems.
- To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.

#### Expenses

- Reimburse eligible out of pocket expenses incurred during the course of volunteering duties. Only in exceptional circumstances will the cost of travel from home to the volunteering base be reimbursed.
- Make sure you do not lose out financially as a result of your volunteering activities.

#### Health and safety

- To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policies.
- Ensure the safe working of volunteers and provide appropriate personal protective equipment to volunteers when required.

#### Insurance

- To provide appropriate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by the Council.

## Equal and Diversity

- To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equality and diversity policies.

## Problems

- To try to resolve fairly and quickly any problems, grievances or difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us.
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with our problem solving procedure.

## Part 2: The Volunteer

Whilst volunteering with Derbyshire County Council Countryside Service in the role of (enter volunteer role)

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I agree that there is a reasonable expectation that I will:

- Perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability.
- Follow Derbyshire County Council's procedures and standards, including those relating to health and safety and equality and diversity, in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients.
- Meet time commitments and standards agreed to, and, where necessary, give reasonable notice so that other arrangements can be made.
- Provide referees who may be contacted, if required, for the volunteering role.
- Agree, should the volunteering role require it, to an enhanced check for regulated activity through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Represent the Service in a positive manner.
- Act with integrity and honesty when performing my volunteer role. The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from those that volunteer with Derbyshire County Council.
- Remember to be responsible to the community I serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial services to all service users, groups and individuals within that community, as set out in the Customer Service Charter and in line with the Council's vision of improving life for local people. These responsibilities apply equally to conduct with employees, contractors, other volunteers, and those on student/work experience placements with the Council.
- Recognise that confidentiality and data protection is an obligation for those that volunteer with Derbyshire County Council.

**The Volunteer Agreement is not a legally binding contract of employment between the County Council and the volunteer. It may be withdrawn from at any time at the discretion of either party, although whilst the parties are working together, the principles are expected to apply. Neither party commits to any employment relationship being created either now or at any time in the future.**

## **Derbyshire County Council**

### **Equality Impact Analysis on the new Countryside Service Volunteer Policy**

#### **Introduction**

This Equality Impact Analysis has helped to inform the preparation and priorities of the new Countryside Service Volunteer Policy to cover the period from 2014-2019.

#### **Background to the Draft Countryside Service Volunteer Policy**

Over the last three years, volunteering with Derbyshire County Council's Countryside Service has generated an average of 4,090 volunteer days per year, with an equivalent value of £775,537 per year. The target for 2013/14 is 4,840 volunteer days.

The Countryside Service currently works with volunteers in two ways:

- firstly, with individuals volunteering directly with the Service; and
- secondly, with community-based volunteer groups working for and on behalf of the Service.

The Volunteer Policy sets out the proposed key principles and objectives for working with the first group and provides a framework for best practice. It will be underpinned by guidelines for volunteers and managers, and will be reviewed at least every five years. It was subject to a six week public consultation carried out through the County Council's website and distribution to interested groups and organisations from 29 July 2013 to 6 September 2013. This consultation included a question about how the proposed Policy could impact on any of the protected characteristic groups identified in this Equality Impact Analysis.

Comments from the public consultation and from the Directors of Legal Services and Human Resources within the County Council have been incorporated into both this Equality Impact Analysis and the final Volunteer Policy, in addition to those made by the two Local Access Forums for the County. The Forums have a statutory advisory role in strategic access and outdoor recreation issues. Informal discussions have also taken place with some of the Countryside Service's key volunteers and with partners with existing Service Level Agreements (e.g. Peak District National Park Authority, Groundwork and The Conservation Volunteers).

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## Equality Impact Analysis

### The Scope of the Analysis

This report considers the principles and objectives that are in the draft Volunteer Policy and assesses:

- What impact the principles and objectives will have on any of the Protected Characteristic Groups, and how well they meet the needs, requirements and expectations of the different groups. Throughout the process, consideration was also given to groups classed as 'social deprivation'.
- If there are any potential barriers and whether there is scope to mitigate their effects.
- Are resources available to facilitate any mitigation required?

### Additional data

The following sources of data have been referred to as they are relevant to this assessment:

Source	Reasons for using
Countryside Service Code of Practice E11: Working With Volunteers	Document currently used to guide volunteer management in the absence of an approved policy.
The Compact (2010)	National document (originally 1998) setting out the agreement/partnership between Government and Civil Society Organisations.
A Compact for Derbyshire 2003	Background information on the relationship expected between statutory organisations and the voluntary/community sector in Derbyshire.

### What impact will the Policy have on any of the Protected Characteristic Groups and what scope is there to mitigate their effects?

#### Race:

Members of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population are less likely to do unpaid voluntary work outdoors than are the rest of the UK population<sup>1</sup>. Potential barriers include a lack of awareness or interest, cultural attitudes,

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feeling unwelcome and a perceived risk of racism.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, for people from many Eastern European countries, volunteering has negative associations as it was once compulsory in the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

As the majority of the BME population live in large urban areas,<sup>1</sup> they are perhaps less likely to visit most of our countryside Sites. Consequently, they are less likely to come forward as volunteers for the Countryside Service. Elvaston Castle Country Park is arguably the only site with a BME population within its volunteer catchment area. Hence, we need to ensure that any pro-active volunteer recruitment for Elvaston Castle addresses the needs of the nearby BME population. Any literature should be in an appropriate format/language and deal with the potential barriers. Any images used should dispel the perception that the countryside is mainly for white/middle class people.

**Religion/Belief:**

For the most part, the issues and barriers discussed above (Race) apply here. Some members of the BME population, for example Buddhists and Hindus, have beliefs that promote respect and appreciation for nature.<sup>2</sup> They may well find countryside volunteering a worthwhile and rewarding experience if other barriers can be overcome.

Any pro-active volunteering literature should be in an appropriate format/language and address the potential barriers to volunteering. 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

**Gender:**

Experience suggests that women often lack the confidence to become a countryside volunteer and feel that it is physically demanding and therefore only suitable for men. For volunteering in general, women are more likely than men to cite threats to safety as a reason for not volunteering.<sup>3</sup>

When women enquire about volunteering, they will be assured of a safe and supportive environment in which to volunteer and encouraged to work within their own limits. We will discuss their individual needs and make every effort to find them a suitable volunteer role: not all volunteer opportunities involve hard physical work.

**Age:**

Nationally, participation in outdoor volunteering increases with age.<sup>1</sup> Examination of Countryside Service volunteer data shows that a significant number are over 65. This is particularly the case for long-term volunteers.

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Younger people tend towards short-term, episodic volunteering<sup>4</sup> often in order to gain essential experience for a countryside career.

We will ensure that wherever possible, volunteering opportunities are available to meet the needs of all age groups. We will encourage different age groups to volunteer together so that they may learn from each other's life experiences.

**Disability:**

There is little information on the numbers of disabled people volunteering in the countryside but, in 2005, the National Trust monitored its volunteer figures and found that 11% of its volunteers were disabled.<sup>5</sup> By its very nature, practical countryside volunteering may be difficult and sometimes impossible for disabled people to access. However, there are frequently volunteering roles that disabled people can carry out, such as digital archiving, exhibition, educational and visitor centre support. Many people with a learning disability may also be able to make a valuable volunteering contribution. When disabled people enquire about volunteering, we will make every effort to find them a suitable volunteer role. We will ensure that volunteering literature is accessible and easy to understand. This will help support getting the information about volunteering over to people who may have reading or learning difficulties

**Sexual Orientation:**

A person's sexual orientation or gender identity will not be a factor in determining their suitability to volunteer. However, within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community there is a perception, often based on experience, that unless it promotes itself as such, an organisation will not be inclusive of LGBT people.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, any volunteering literature will present an LGBT-inclusive approach through use of appropriate text and images.

**Social Deprivation:**

The Natural England - Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) research has identified that people living in areas of greatest deprivation are less likely to do unpaid voluntary work outdoors than people from the least deprived areas: they tend to see time outdoors as less important.<sup>1</sup> Whilst arguably not a factor in their disinclination to volunteer, a perception of being 'out of pocket' may be an additional barrier. We will ensure that potential volunteers are aware that they will not be 'out of pocket' through volunteering and reimburse eligible expenses incurred during the course of volunteering duties. However, only in exceptional circumstances will the cost of travel from home to the volunteering base be reimbursed. This may include when a potential volunteer is in receipt of benefit and would otherwise be unable to volunteer.

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### **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

No information is collected or is available in order to assess the impact of the Countryside Service Volunteer Policy on this Protected Characteristic Group but it is not considered that there will be any adverse impacts on this group as a result of volunteer recruitment and management.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

Pregnant women and new mothers will not be excluded from volunteering, but a specific risk assessment will be carried out to identify safe, appropriate activities.

### **Social Relationships/Community Cohesion**

Volunteering can have a positive influence on the physical and mental health of those involved.<sup>5</sup> Also, volunteering activities, such as community tree planting and woodland management, can improve community cohesion and social relationships.<sup>5</sup> This Policy and subsequent documents provide a framework for the development of these societal benefits.

### **Are resources available to facilitate this?**

We are producing the Countryside Service Volunteer Policy during what is a very challenging time for local authorities as we are faced with significantly reduced budgets over the next five years. However, by assisting staff (though not substituting for them), volunteers help us to deliver our services and hence make us more effective. In addition, the specific post of Community engagement / Volunteers' Officer is in place both to facilitate and develop volunteering, and support and advise volunteer managers.

### **Consultation and Feedback**

Comments from the public consultation (29 July 2013 to 6 September 2013) and from consultation with the Local Access Forums and key volunteers, resulted in a re-write of the main Volunteer Policy to make it more accessible and easier to understand. This will help support getting the information about volunteering over to people who may have reading or learning difficulties.

As a result of the analysis above, a list of actions will be included within the Equality Impact Analysis to address the issues identified.

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## Identified Actions

Actions	Lead Officer	Timescale
1. 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	Steve Cresswell	2014-2019 as required
2. 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 be encouraged to work within their own limits.	Steve Cresswell	2014-2019 as required
3. 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.	Steve Cresswell	

## Implementation

This Equality Impact Analysis will be incorporated into and help define the final Countryside Service Volunteer Policy 2014 - 2019

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<sup>1</sup> *Natural England - Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) Survey 2012/13*

<sup>2</sup> *Woods, Forest & Countryside Access: Issues of the Perceptions of Black and Ethnic Minority Communities*. Maxwell A Ayamba & Ian D Rotherham. A World of Trees, issue 18 (No date)

<sup>3</sup> *Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving* (2007)

<sup>4</sup> McCurley, Steve, Rick Lynch & Rob Jackson (2012). *The Complete Volunteer handbook, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. The Directory of Social Change

<sup>5</sup> Ockenden, Nick (2007). *Volunteering in the natural outdoors in the UK and Ireland: A literature review*. Institute for Volunteering Research.

<sup>6</sup> *Involving LGBT volunteers*. The consortium of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered voluntary and community organisations. No date