



Report of the Head of Adult Services and Tackling Poverty

Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee – 24
April 2023

Swansea Council Volunteering Policy / Strategy Development

Purpose: The report is for information purposes only

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For Information

1. Status at the start of the Municipal Year

- 1.1. At the start of the Municipal Year (24th May 2022), an internal mapping exercise focussing on Social Services and Cultural Services had been undertaken to identify examples of volunteering roles hosted within Swansea Council.
- 1.2. The mapping exercise identified 46 existing volunteering opportunities, 15 within Social Services and 31 within Cultural Services.
- 1.3. The mapping exercise identified that various approaches are currently being taken to host volunteers within the Council. A combination of the Council's Voluntary Workers Policy, service are specific policies and agency policies where agencies are providing volunteers were identified.

2. Progress during the Municipal Year

- 2.1 A Swansea Council Volunteering Development Working Group was established to drive forward the development of this work. The Working Group is made up of cross directorate Council Officers and is coordinated by the Tackling Poverty Service and Swansea Council for Voluntary Service. Membership of the Working Group has recently been extended following

promotion of the work via StaffNet.

- 2.2 The Working Group has further explored current practice across departments and services and has reviewed best practice volunteering policy in Wales. It has been identified that the first step is to develop a Swansea Council Volunteer Policy to establish consistent approaches and practice across the organisation.
- 2.3 It was proposed that the development of a Swansea Council Volunteer Policy and subsequent Strategy would include the principles of volunteering as defined by WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action):
- Volunteering is undertaken by choice. Individuals have the right to volunteer, or indeed not to volunteer.
 - While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards or incentives, they should be reimbursed for reasonable out of pocket expenses.
 - The contribution of volunteers and paid staff should complement one another. Volunteers should not be used to replace paid staff or to undercut their pay and conditions of service. Volunteers should enhance the quality of the Council's activities.
 - Effective mechanisms should be in place to support and develop volunteers.
 - Volunteers and paid staff should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination. All should be treated sensitively with regard to their preferred language.
 - Volunteers should have access to appropriate opportunities for learning and development.
 - There should be a recognised process for the resolution of problems, for both staff and volunteers.
 - Volunteers should not be used to undertake the work of paid staff in the case of industrial disputes.
 - Volunteering should be open and accessible to all
 - Mutual Benefit – both the volunteer and the Council should benefit from the relationship
 - The contribution of the volunteer should be recognised
- 2.4 A Swansea Council Volunteer Policy will aim to set out consistent principles and practice by which volunteers are involved across the organisation. The policy will aim to create a common understanding and definition of volunteering and clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained consistently in relation to the management of volunteers within Swansea Council whilst also recognising the importance of volunteers to Swansea Council.
- 2.5 An initial Draft Swansea Council Volunteer Policy has been developed and is attached at **Appendix A**. This draft policy takes account of best practice as identified by Third Sector Support Wales and as such defines volunteering, sets out standards and commitments to roles and responsibilities, recruitment

and selection, induction and training and support and supervision. Feedback from the Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee has further shaped the development of this draft policy.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 A Corporate Volunteer Handbook and Tool Kit for Volunteer Management to be developed as good practice and outlined within the draft policy.
- 3.2 Consistent baseline data for all volunteers hosted across services within Swansea Council to be established.
- 3.3 Alignment with HR work to develop 'Volunteering Guidance' is planned.
- 3.4 An application is being made via the Shared Prosperity Fund to provide additional resources to drive this work forward.
- 3.5 Engagement with current volunteers to undertake experience mapping and ongoing engagement and coproduction.

4. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

- 4.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 4.4 An Integrated Impact Screening has been completed for this report with no further assessment required (See Appendix B). This is an IIA Screening for the 'For Information' Report to the Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Delivery Committee regarding the development of a Swansea Council Volunteering Policy and Strategy. A full IIA will be carried out as part of the policy / strategy development process in due course.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, it may lead to decisions being taken at a later date that may have costs attached, e.g. volunteer expenses. Any such costs will need to be managed within departmental resources at that time with due regard to the Council's medium term financial plan.

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Swansea Council Volunteering Policy
Appendix B: IIA Screening Form