

HR Policy & Procedure: Employee Volunteering Policy

Version: 1.7

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North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

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Employee volunteering

Version Control

Version Number	Effective Date	Details of Last Revision
1	1/9/11	Created
1.1	1/1/15	Updated onto new policy template
1.2	24/8/15	Updated to replace reference to Navigate with 'Connects'
1.3	26/10/15	Introduce 'Get Connected Days'
1.4	15/2/17	Changes to 'Get Connected Events', revisions to the no. of hours for volunteering and recording on the Leave screen.
1.5	8/3/19	Removal of brand Get connected "Days" and insertion on recording on Kelio
1.6	25/9/20	Updated to align with Accessibility Regulations
1.7	10/2/22	Updated links to new Connects

Equality Impact Assessment: 26/8/11

Prepared by: HR Team

1. Introduction

- 1.1 North Ayrshire Council supports employees who wish to do volunteer work within the community or for charitable institutions. Supporting volunteers helps North Ayrshire Council to build relationships with the local community and contribute to achieving the aims of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.
- 1.2 Employees who do volunteer work can use the skills that they have developed at work to help the community; learn new skills including, for example, leadership qualities, and improve their morale, physical health & wellbeing and work-life balance.
- 1.3 The Employee Volunteering Policy applies to all North Ayrshire Council employees.
- 1.4 This policy describes the provisions in place to help employees conduct specific types of volunteering, namely:
 - General Volunteering in the Community
 - Volunteering to contribute to specific Council Initiatives
 - Volunteering at recognised 'one-off' Events e.g. National Sporting Events

2. General volunteering in the community

- 2.1 North Ayrshire Council supports employees who are undertaking community or charitable activities within North Ayrshire, for example:
 - Community care work
 - Environmental work and conservation projects
 - Fundraising for community projects or charities
- 2.2 Employees are encouraged to share their time, knowledge, and skills with the voluntary sector in a positive and structured way. This can be done in a variety of ways such as helping in a residential home, helping a voluntary organisation, or assisting in a charitable organisation for the day. This does not include charity fundraising events e.g. fun runs, gala days.
- 2.3 Please see Section 6 for information on the provisions available to support general volunteering in the community.

3. Volunteering to support Council initiatives

- 3.1 North Ayrshire Council has a number of responsibilities to improve the socio-economic conditions in North Ayrshire. To this end, there will be a number of specific volunteering projects which arise, which are aimed at improving the community.
- 3.2 Such initiatives encourage North Ayrshire Council employees to use their particular skills and talents to improve our communities.

- 3.3 Please refer to Section 6 for information on the provisions available to support general volunteering in the community.

4. Volunteering at ‘one-off’ events

- 4.1 The Council recognises that there may be unique ‘one-off’ events for which employees may wish to volunteer at. Further guidance to this procedure will be circulated as and when these events arise.

5. Participating in “Get Connected”

- 5.1 North Ayrshire Council's Get Connected events are an integral part of our Corporate and Social responsibility, and as such, employees are encouraged to volunteer at events.
- 5.2 Some volunteering opportunities will be available outwith an employee's ‘normal’ working hours. It will be an employees’ personal choice to volunteer for these activities therefore no time will be given back to the employee.
- 5.3 Employees must seek their line Managers approval before volunteering for activities within their working hours. Managers are encouraged to allow employees time to attend, however this will be subject to the exigencies of the service and the maximum time allowed.
- 5.4 Some volunteering opportunities will be available within external organisations and all volunteers should bear in mind that they are still a representative of North Ayrshire Council during this volunteering time and their code of conduct should reflect this. All volunteers must comply with policies or procedures of the partner organisation in conjunction with the relevant North Ayrshire Council policies and procedures particularly in relation to any specific health and safety requirements.

6. Time off and other supports available

- 6.1 Employees will be granted paid time to attend all types of volunteering events up to a maximum of 14 hours per employee per calendar year, i.e. January to December.
- 6.2 Over and above 14 hours, it is anticipated that further volunteering would take place out with work. However, where this is not possible, the Council will endeavour to facilitate volunteering through consideration of a number of flexible working options such as the use of flexi time, compressed hours, adjusting weekly working hours or temporarily reducing working hours.
- 6.3 Where this is not possible up to 5 days unpaid leave per annum may be granted. Where further unpaid leave is required, this can be approved at the discretion of the Head of Service/ Executive Director.
- 6.4 Employees who wish to undertake volunteering work under a scheme operated by the Council should discuss the opportunity with their line manager in the first instance. A formal request should then be made using the ‘Employee Request to Undertake Volunteering’ form.

- 6.5 Once approved by line managers, volunteering requests must be passed to the CHRIS administrator to ensure the day is recorded on CHRIS within the Leave (LVE) screen. Alternatively, employees who use Kelio can use the system to request approval from Line Managers whilst recording their hours.

7. Expenses

- 7.1 Any expenses incurred whilst volunteering are not the responsibility of the Council.
- 7.2 Where a volunteer incurs additional expenses as a result of volunteering externally to North Ayrshire Council the employee must agree any reimbursement with the host organisation.
- 7.3 Where an employee is participating in “Get Connected events” for travel purposes, a Pool car should be used in the first instance and car share should also be considered. The Council will only reimburse travel expenses, in accordance with the rates in the employees Terms and Conditions of Employment and this should be approved by the employees Line Manager in advance.

8. Dealing with employee requests to undertake volunteering

- 8.1 Requests to undertake volunteering should be in accordance with the provisions set out under each section above and be formally requested using the ‘Employee Request to Undertake Volunteering’ form.
- 8.2 On receipt of the request form managers should discuss the request in more detail with the employee.
- 8.3 Approval of time off/flexible working arrangements will be subject to the exigencies of the Service. North Ayrshire Council will endeavour to approve all requests to undertake volunteering, however there are occasions where a request may not be approved due to:
- Detrimental impact on the business needs of the employee’s department
 - Work within the department cannot be re-arranged to accommodate the employee’s varied hours
 - The cost of the new arrangements would be too great
- 8.4 Where a request is declined, the line manager must provide the employee with justification for the refusal.
- 8.5 Receiving a refusal does not prevent the employee from requesting time off to volunteer in the future.
- 8.6 The outcome of the meeting should be confirmed in writing to the employee.

9. Monitoring

9.1 The application of the policy will be monitored on an annual basis.