

INTRODUCTION

Tayside Contracts recognises the positive impact of volunteers have on charitable organisations and local communities, as well as the potential for positive impact on employee wellbeing. Creating community wealth is one of Tayside Contracts' strategic priorities and supporting employees to pursue volunteering opportunities by granting time off work for volunteering aligns with our vision and values.

Our Supported Volunteering Policy also aligns with our Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan, as volunteering can be considered one of the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' (the action of giving), upon which the Wellbeing Strategy is based.

This Supported Volunteering Policy gives employees who are interested in volunteering the opportunity to do so.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all employees working at all levels and grades within Tayside Contracts.

DEFINITIONS

Tayside Contracts consider volunteering to be when an employee chooses to give up their own time, without payment or other benefits in kind, to benefit other people, the community or the environment. Volunteering does not constitute a contract of employment.

Supported volunteering is where Tayside Contracts supports employee involvement in the community by making it easier for employees to volunteer, by granting time off work, if volunteering is of interest to them.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

- Employee volunteering is a choice and is in no way compulsory.
- Employees who give up one working day of their own time (through annual, flexi or unpaid leave) will be granted one working day's paid leave (pro-rata for part-time employees) to participate in volunteering opportunities.
- Tayside Contracts' Code of Conduct and employment policies apply during any supported volunteering activity and employees should remember they are representatives of Tayside Contracts while volunteering.
- To be considered under this policy the volunteering opportunity must be with a registered charity, community group or similar, or any other organisation approved by the Managing Director and must either contribute to an employee's personal development and/or make a positive impact on the communities of Tayside.
- Supported Volunteering should be a positive experience. Employees are under no obligation to continue with a volunteering opportunity where they feel unhappy.

PAID TIME OFF ENTITLEMENT

Employees who give up one working day of their own time, through either annual leave, flexi leave, or unpaid leave, will be granted a further one working day of paid leave to participate in volunteering activities. This time will be pro-rated for part-time employees.

Time can be taken in either full or half days, over a maximum of four occasions per calendar year (one full or two half days of annual, flexi or unpaid leave and one full or two half days of paid leave). It is not possible to bring forward or carry over any of the Supported Volunteering leave into a different calendar year.

Travel time to and from the location of the volunteering opportunity must be undertaken in the employee's own time. Employees who volunteer outside of their normal working hours are not entitled to time off in lieu.

REQUESTS FOR SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERING LEAVE

Employees must seek approval from their line manager before committing to a volunteering opportunity within their normal working hours. Employees should give as much detail as possible to their manager about the organisation they wish to volunteer with and the activities they are due to carry out in order that the manager can assess whether this falls within the scope of this policy.

Once management approval has been given for the Supported Volunteering leave employees must complete and submit a Supported Volunteering Leave Form in order that time off can be recorded and properly administered.

Supported Volunteering leave will only be granted in half or full day blocks/occasions, with one full day/two half day occasions being the employee's own time (annual, flexi or unpaid leave) and the second full day/two half day occasions being paid leave, with a maximum of two full/four half days being granted.

Managers must refer to the scope, eligibility and principles of this policy when considering requests for Supported Volunteering leave.

The nature of some service areas means employees being absent from their job causes specific operational difficulties and in some service areas it may be more difficult for managers to accommodate requests. Managers can only approve requests if they are satisfied that appropriate arrangements can reasonably be made to avoid impact on service delivery.

Subject to the requests being granted by their manager, employees can take the time off at dates of their choosing throughout the calendar year (i.e. the leave does not need to be taken at once).

POLICY RESTRICTIONS

Employees are free to pursue volunteering opportunities that are of personal interest to them. However, there must be no conflict of interest, or disruption to, or adverse effect on Tayside Contracts' core business activities in any Supported Volunteering activity.

Supported Volunteering is not applicable to assisting or helping a friend or relative (unless that friend or relative works for a registered charity and the activity is supporting the charity rather than them individually). It also does not extend to participation in charity fundraising or sponsored events. Nor does

it apply to volunteering as part of a commercial activity, or activities that support political groups or religious charities that only benefit a single religion.

As Tayside Contracts is a publicly funded organisation, all Supported Volunteering activities must be for the benefit of the communities of Tayside, i.e. based in the Angus, Dundee City or Perth and Kinross Council areas.

This policy does not apply to employees who volunteer for Territorial Army and reservist duties, or other public duties, such as jury duty, or justice of the peace etc.

REFUSED VOLUNTEERING REQUESTS

Tayside Contracts is keen that as many requests for Supported Volunteering leave are granted as possible. However, managers may have to refuse a request for operational reasons, such as insufficient cover in the workplace/inability to reorganise workload, or the employees' absence is likely to cause a detrimental impact on service delivery.

Managers may also refuse requests if the volunteering opportunity does not meet the principles outlined in this policy. In these circumstances the manager should support the employee to choose an alternative volunteering opportunity.

Where an employee's request for Supported Volunteering leave is declined the manager must give justification for the refusal and be as constructive as possible in suggesting alternative dates, or alternative volunteering opportunities as appropriate. A refused request must not prevent an employee from requesting Supported Volunteering leave in the future.

Any employee who believes that their request for Supported Volunteering leave has been unreasonably refused should discuss this with their manager. Should this fail to resolve the matter the employee can raise this through the Grievance Policy.

CONDUCT

When participating in Supported Volunteering employees should remember that they are representing Tayside Contracts while volunteering and they should demonstrate the same level of commitment as they do to their normal work.

Employees should arrive on time for their volunteering work and avoid cancelling their volunteering work wherever possible. If an employee is unable to attend their volunteering due to sickness absence they should follow the normal absence reporting procedures as outlined in the Sickness Absence Management Policy and Notification Procedure.

EXPENSES

Tayside Contracts will not reimburse employees for any expenses (including travel and parking) incurred during any time off for volunteering. Depending on who the employee is volunteering with, there may be options to claim costs via the organisation where the volunteering takes place. This should be discussed with the organisation directly.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AND INSURANCE

It is an employee's responsibility to ensure they are meeting all health and safety standards in whatever volunteering opportunity they undertake. Employees should not participate in any volunteering activity that puts their health and safety or their wellbeing at risk.

Employees are responsible for ensuring the organisation in which they are volunteering has liability insurance which extends to cover volunteers.

Where employees are using their own vehicle or method of transport to carry out volunteering duties, they are responsible for contacting their own insurers regarding the extension to include volunteer work. Volunteers should be able to produce evidence of this cover if required.

DISCLOSURE CHECKS

For most volunteering opportunities, disclosure checks or PVG Scheme membership will not be required. However, where an employee may be working with vulnerable groups, the organisation they are volunteering with may request that they complete a disclosure check/join the PVG Scheme.

In these circumstances all checks should be organised directly with the volunteering organisation, Tayside Contracts will not fund these checks. It is an employee's responsibility to ensure they have completed the appropriate checks and have the necessary documentation in place before their volunteering begins.

MANAGEMENT OF THE POLICY

Each line manager has responsibility for ensuring that the rules and spirit of the Policy are adhered to at all times, and to ensure operational needs are met at all times.

POLICY VIOLATIONS

Failure to comply with this, or any other employment policy, may result in individuals being investigated and disciplinary action taken against them in accordance with Tayside Contracts' Disciplinary Policy.

RELATED POLICIES

The Supported Volunteering Policy links to the following policies which can be accessed on the Intranet, or requested from your line manager or from the HR Admin Team:

- Employee Charter
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Time and Attendance Policy

The above list is not exhaustive.

CONSULTATION

Tayside Contracts' recognised Trade Unions have been fully consulted on this employment policy.

POLICY REVIEW

The Supported Volunteering Policy will be reviewed at three yearly intervals. Supported Volunteering leave is provided at the discretion of Tayside Contracts and may be amended or removed at any time.

DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Tayside Contracts respects the privacy of our employees, any personal data processed during the application of this policy will be in line with Data Protection Legislation. Further information on how we may process personal data for the purpose of applying this policy can be found in our Privacy Notice.

Should you have any queries or require further clarification regarding any aspects of this policy or related policies please contact, HR Services on 01382 812721 or employment.policies@tayside-contracts.co.uk

If you would like this document translated into another language or in another format such as audio or large print then please contact the Equalities and Communications Section on 01382 834165 or communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk