



Council 18 July 2024

Meeting recording: [Council - Thursday, 18th July, 2024 6.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Agenda item 8f. Motion – TUC Volunteer Charter: Strengthening Relations Between Paid Staff and Volunteers

This Council Notes:

1. The key role volunteering plays both locally and nationally.¹
2. Our gratitude to the many thousands of volunteers that do so much to enhance our city and, particularly, to support the most vulnerable. Our equal gratitude to our staff, who work so tirelessly for our council and our city.
3. The impact that the economic downturn and the cost-of-living crisis have had on our paid and voluntary sectors².
4. The importance of sound core principles in enhancing relations between paid staff and volunteers.
5. That volunteering helps build social capital and community cohesion and plays an important role in the delivery of key public services. But that volunteers should not be a substitute for paid staff.

This Council Resolves to:

1. Affirm and adopt the TUC Volunteer charter principles as set out below.

¹ According to Support Cambridgeshire's 2023 State of the Sector Survey, approximately 2,100 charities operate in Cambridgeshire. These charities employ an estimated 5,300 people, with over 30,000 volunteers and nearly 11,000 trustees recorded with the Charity Commission. This does not include the many more people who give of their time through mutual aid.

² Support Cambridge's 2023 State of the Sector Survey highlighted issues in the local voluntary sector. Increasingly, the voluntary sector is struggling to both recruit volunteers, trustees and staff. Lack of funding was the biggest issue raised.

2. Use these principles as a guide to review our more detailed policies and procedures, which reflect our local needs and circumstances. To do this in discussion with local union representatives and volunteering managers.
3. Encourage partner organisations to do the same, to make sure paid staff are protected and volunteers supported.

TUC Volunteer Charter³

Preamble

This Charter sets out the key principles on which volunteering is organised and how good relations between paid staff and volunteers are built. It has been developed jointly by Volunteering England (VE) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and has been endorsed by the wider volunteering and trade union movements.

Its starting point is that volunteering plays an essential role in the economic and social fabric of the UK. It is estimated that some 22 million people volunteer each year, contributing around £23 billion to the economy. Volunteering helps build social capital and community cohesion and plays an important role in the delivery of key public services. Volunteering is also good for the volunteer: it helps improve health and wellbeing and provides opportunities for individuals to acquire skills and knowledge that can enhance career development or employment prospects.

This Charter demonstrates the value and importance that both organisations place on voluntary activity and the time, skills and commitment given by volunteers.

This Charter recognises that voluntary action and trade unionism share common values. Both are founded on the principles of mutuality and reciprocity, leading to positive changes in the workplace and community. The trade union movement itself is built on the involvement and engagement of volunteers.

Volunteering England and the TUC acknowledge that on the whole, relations between paid staff and volunteers are harmonious and mutually rewarding. They can, however, be enhanced by good procedures, clarity

³ Source, <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/charter-strengthening-relations-between-paid-staff-and-volunteers> (2009)

of respective roles, mutual trust and support. This Charter sets out the key principles to help underpin good relations in the workplace.

These principles should be used as a guide by individual organisations to develop more detailed policies and procedures, which reflect local needs and circumstances. This should be done, wherever possible, between local union representatives, employers and volunteering managers.

Paid work is any activity that is undertaken at the direction of an employer and is financially compensable.

Volunteering is freely undertaken and not for financial gain; it involves the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community.

Charter Principles

1. All volunteering is undertaken by choice, and all individuals should have their right to volunteer, or indeed not to volunteer;
2. While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards for their activities, they should receive reasonable out of pocket expenses;
3. The involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff, and should not be used to displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service;
4. The added value of volunteers should be highlighted as part of commissioning or grantmaking process but their involvement should not be used to reduce contract costs;
5. Effective structures should be put in place to support and develop volunteers and the activities they undertake, and these should be fully considered and costed when services are planned and developed;
6. Volunteers and paid staff should be provided with opportunities to contribute to the development of volunteering policies and procedures;
7. Volunteers, like 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;
8. All paid workers and volunteers should have access to appropriate training and development;

9. There should be recognised machinery for the resolution of any problems between organisations and volunteers or between paid staff and volunteers;
10. In the interests of harmonious relations between volunteers and paid staff, volunteers should not be used to undertake the work of paid staff during industrial disputes.

This Charter stands between Volunteering England and the TUC as a statement of principles and good practice. It is also a model for use by individual unions, volunteer involving organisations in the public, third and private sectors and other bodies in discussions around the use of volunteers.