



Volunteer Handbook

2020

Southwark Council would like to welcome you as a volunteer and hope it will be an enjoyable and positive experience for you.

We have compiled this handbook for all those who come to volunteer for Southwark Council, as a guide to what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. Please ensure that you read it and use it during your time with us.

Content

1. Background information
2. Volunteering for Southwark Council – what you can expect from us
3. What we expect from you
4. FAQs

1. Background

Southwark has a great history of people volunteering their time for the benefit of the Southwark communities. From the early days of the Settlements and the Boys Clubs youth provision to more recent volunteering during the London Olympics in 2012, Southwark residents have always been supportive of volunteering.

There are many reasons why people want to volunteer, from using their skills to learning new ones. Some people want to have more activity and social engagement in their lives and volunteer to bring a new experience into their life. People volunteer from all age groups some informal and others in a more formal and structured way.

While many people volunteer for charities and in community groups Southwark also has about 500 people who volunteer each year in a range of roles at the council.

Southwark Council is made up of many different teams and departments all doing fabulous work in keeping services going for the residents of Southwark. Volunteers are involved in providing services for the council, and your role is important part of providing high quality experience for residents.

About Southwark

Southwark is a historic and vibrant inner city borough. As of 2016 we are the third most densely populated borough in London with a population of 310,600 people. We are the largest social landlord in London.

We have a young population (the average age is 34.2 years old) our communities are comprised of people from a wide range of countries and cultures. 47% of our communities belong to an ethnic minority and we have the largest Black African population in the country.

The number of older people in Southwark is below the London average but many do volunteer or engage with organisations that have volunteers help in delivering services.

Volunteering can have a great impact on wellbeing and can help bring people together from different parts of society. We want to ensure that volunteering is open to all and that Southwark Council is able to involve volunteers in a meaningful and mutually beneficial way.

All departments within the Council are working to achieve Southwark's' Vision and Fairer Future goals, your volunteer role will help us to deliver on these.

Everyone at the Council is working to make sure people in the borough have

- the best start in life: clean air, great schools and opportunities to thrive;
- the quality homes that you and your family need;
- A great place to live with clean, green and safe communities
- A healthy borough where your background doesn't determine your life chances;
- Full employment, where everyone has the skills to play a full part in our economy.

This work is underpinned by Southwark's' Values which are:

- Treat residents as if they were a valued member of our own family
- Be open, honest and accountable
- Spend money as if it were from our own pocket
- Work for everyone to realise their own potential
- Make Southwark a place to be proud of
- Always work to make Southwark more equal and just
- Stand against all forms of discrimination and racism.

2. Volunteering for Southwark Council - What you can expect from us

Before you Start:

You will be given a volunteer agreement which will set out the following:

- Purpose of the role
- Tasks for the volunteer
- Hours and days for working
- The agreed reimbursement for expenses
- Any Learning and development goals for the volunteer
- Any role specific expectations
- Sets out how your work will be supervised

You will be asked to sign the agreement and read any policies relevant to your role

Induction

You will have a named supervisor who will provide an induction to Southwark Council and the role on your first day .

The induction will cover:

1. People (who you will be working with)
2. Premises (where you will be volunteering)
3. Practicalities (where do you go to the bathroom, who do you call if you are sick),
4. Policies and Procedures (such as health and safety, confidentiality etc)
5. Problem solving (who do you go to if you have a problem and how will that be resolved)
6. Purpose of organisation (who you are and what you do)
7. Position (where you fit in)

Expenses

We do not expect any volunteer to be out of pocket for expenses to travel to the location of your role or for your lunch expenses. Your supervisor will explain how you can claim your expenses and the forms that you will need to complete. We do have maximum agreed amounts for travel and lunch reimbursements, see below

- Travel; the cost of a bus pass for a return journey from your home to the Southwark Council building (all other travel outside of this area must be agreed)
- The lunch allowance of £5.00 is for those volunteers who are committing to four or more hours in one day. This will be discussed and agreed with you when you agree the hours you will complete.

Support and Supervision

Volunteers will be provided with a named supervisor and have one-to-one supervision. Supervision will give you the opportunity not only to discuss the volunteer role and work plan but provide a chance for you to talk about any concerns and feedback you have. Training and support needs will also be discussed in these meetings. In addition to formal supervision, Southwark council have an 'open door' policy where issues can be raised with your supervisor at any point.

A healthy and safe environment

You will be covered by Southwark Council's insurance while you are engaged in any voluntary role on our behalf. You will be given information and access to our Health and Safety policy and training.

If you see anything that you feel is unsafe you are asked to report it to your supervisor or other team member immediately.

Training

You will have access to training opportunities provided by the Council and Community Southwark. We value you and are keen to help you gain valuable experience and training during your time volunteering with us.

Confidentiality

Some volunteers may be in a role where they come across information relating to residents of the borough or to other confidential material. It is very important to us as a council to ensure that the information that we have on individuals, projects or in conversations is kept confidential. We will ask those of you that may be exposed to anything confidential take an online training session on GDPR and confidentiality and sign a declaration that you understand about confidentiality.

Your personal details will be kept secure and not passed onto other parties without prior agreement from you, unless we are required to share this information by law.

Any problems that you experience

Your named supervisor will be able to answer any questions that you may have and will be happy to check in with you regularly to make sure your volunteering experience is going well for you.

As a volunteer and as part of the team you will be contributing to the services that the council is delivering to the Southwark community and will be recognised for your contribution.

Please discuss any areas of your volunteering tasks with members of staff, but if you have any questions relating to the items in this handbook please discuss them with your named supervisor.

Please do tell your named supervisor if you have any problems or concerns about your volunteering role, we will endeavour to resolve any concerns promptly. However, if you are not satisfied with the resolution provided by your supervisor you will have the ability to escalate the matter through our volunteering complaints procedure.

The volunteers complaints process will ensure that your concerns are escalated to a senior manager within your volunteering area. This allows the matters you have raised to be further explored. In order to escalate these matters you will be asked to complete the complaint form and hand it to your supervisor or their manager.

We will aim to resolve any escalated matters within 20 days of the complaint being received.

Please also look at our whistleblowing policy.

Equal Opportunities and anti-discrimination legislation

Southwark Council complies with equal opportunities and anti-discrimination legislation. We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds and are committed to promoting equality, inclusion and creating an environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

For further information on Southwark's commitment to equality within the community please click on the following link:

Celebrating the contribution of volunteers

National Volunteers' Week is held during the first week of June. Our partners Communities Southwark hold an annual event to celebrate the contribution made by volunteers in the borough.

References for volunteers

After completion of an agreed period of volunteering, your supervisor will be able to give you a reference for future employers. This can be requested in writing or by email to your named supervisor. If the named supervisor is no longer in the employ of Southwark Council a project lead/manager will be able to take the place of the named supervisor in supporting you with a reference.

3. What we expect from you

We would like you to carry out your volunteering role to the best of your ability. You should talk through your role description with your named supervisor and project leader. Please do ask for help when you need it - we want all our team, including volunteers, to feel supported.

While volunteering at Southwark Council we ask that you treat members of staff and other people who we engage with respectfully. We will not accept behaviour that causes offence, disrespect, or harm. Please ask to see our Southwark ways of working document and respect at work policy if you would like to know more about the standard that we expect.

Commitment

Having discussed and agreed a Volunteer Agreement with your named supervisor we would like to have your commitment to carrying out your volunteer role to the best of your ability.

We will agree your volunteering hours with you and of course we understand if things come up, you can't attend or you need to reduce your hours or change days etc. If anything changes and for whatever reason, including sickness and you can't volunteer, then if you could inform us as soon as possible so we.

We expect you to adhere to our policies and procedures particularly around our values and mission.

Leaving

If you are no longer going to be available to volunteer please do give your supervisor or project lead as much notice as possible, so that arrangements can be made to organise a replacement.

Feedback

Before you leave your volunteering role please complete a volunteer feedback form. This will help us to assess what has worked well for you in your role and also areas that we can learn from and adjust to improve the experience.

FAQs

Can I volunteer if I am an asylum seeker or refugee?

YES! Your UK status does not affect you being able to volunteer in the UK. Volunteering can be undertaken at any stage of the asylum process but such activities must not interfere with scheduled events such as a substantive asylum interview, regular reporting event or re-documentation interview.

Where do you keep the policies that affect my role?

During your induction you should receive the relevant policies. This Handbook provides a summary of our policies but you can find more details on the Source. Your Volunteer Supervisor can give you any policies needed, or show you where they are just ask!

I need to keep a record of my hours how can I do this?

If you are working in the main office you will be able to record your hours through the clocking in system used by staff. If not please speak to your supervisor about how you can do this.

Can I volunteer while claiming benefits?

Yes, you can volunteer so long as you continue to meet the requirements of the benefit you are claiming.

Thank you for your time with us

A very big thank you for the time you have given to us. We hope that you have enjoyed the volunteering role that you have carried out for Southwark Council and

that you have had a positive experience of gaining new skills and meeting with new people. All Southwark Council volunteering roles have benefits to the residents and communities of Southwark.