

Volunteer Policy

Our vision

Working with partners to be the physical and virtual heart of Suffolk's past, present and future archives and to encourage all those interested in the county's history in their journeys of discovery.

Our mission

Suffolk Archives helps residents and visitors engage with our county's rich heritage. It collects, conserves and communicates the recorded history of Suffolk from the 12th century to the present day, empowering people in exploring their roots, remembering their past, and planning their future.

1. Purpose of the Volunteering Policy

- 1.1 This Volunteering Policy sets out the principles and practice by which Suffolk Archives (SA) involve volunteers. The Volunteering Policy is relevant for volunteers and staff within SA. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management and support of volunteers.
- 1.2 This policy is one in a suite relating to the work of SA and should be read in conjunction. Corresponding policies describe the statutory and legal basis for Suffolk's archival collections and the standards under which SA operates.
- 1.3 This policy refers only to Suffolk Archives volunteers. It is not applicable to work experience students, unpaid internships or volunteers from other organisations who use the archive service.

2 Definition of a volunteer with Suffolk Archives

- 2.1 A volunteer is a person who freely agrees to give their time, experience and skills to the activities of SA. They work within clearly defined roles to complement and enhance the activities offered by the service and add value to the service already provided by paid staff.

3 Suffolk Archive's commitments to volunteers

- 3.1 SA recognise that volunteers are integral to the organisation. Working with volunteers allows SA to further enhance the service it offers, and volunteers often contribute specialist knowledge or skills to projects. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, its users and the volunteers themselves.
- 3.2 Working with volunteers provides a greater opportunity for SA to engage directly with users and non-users.
- 3.3 Appropriate training will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the roles and remit of volunteers, and to foster a good working relationship with them.
- 3.4 Volunteer involvement with SA should be mutually beneficial for both parties and each role developed within the service will reflect this aim.

We will:

- Keep volunteer personal details secure and use them only in connection with volunteering duties with Suffolk Archives in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- Provide the volunteer with insurance cover under the County Council's combined liability insurance while the volunteer carries out volunteering roles which have been approved and

authorised by Suffolk Archives.

- Clearly explain the volunteer role.
- Ensure the volunteer knows who to ask if they need help.
- Tell the volunteer about health and safety requirements, emergency evacuation procedures, security arrangements or legal responsibilities which they must abide by.
- Tell volunteers about any developments that directly affects their work as a volunteer.
- Provide a volunteer badge.
- Provide equipment, training, or other support that the volunteer may need.

What we expect from volunteers:

- Read and refer to the volunteer handbook.
- Display the [WEASPIRE values](#).
- If necessary for the volunteering role, provide any information or documentation required for a [Disclosure and Barring Service Check](#) or other checks we might make.
- Work safely as guided by staff and keep any personal or confidential information secure.
- Follow any security and health and safety arrangements as explained.
- Come in at the agreed times/meet agreed deadlines and let us know as soon as possible if they cannot.
- Let us know promptly if they have any queries or problems.
- Follow any instructions given to the volunteer by a member of staff in connection with the volunteering duties.

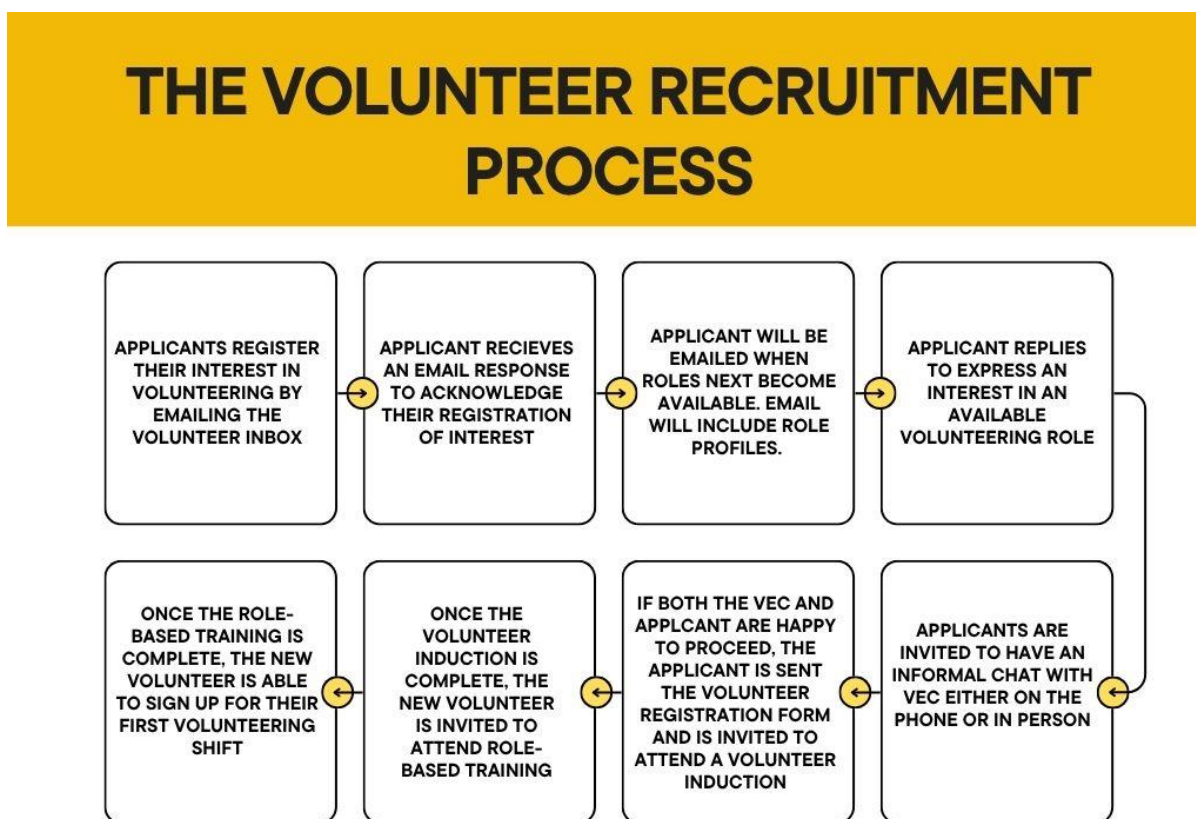
3.5 There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, that can be imposed on the volunteer to give a set minimum amount of time, however there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Volunteers are expected to support SA's vision, mission and aims; any conflict of interest must be declared if it arises.

4 Principles for volunteer management

- 4.1 SA staff will strive for fair and equal treatment for all volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted to a range of different people and existing volunteers. Any disagreements should be swiftly acted upon and a mutual decision come to.
- 4.2 The member of staff who is the volunteer manager will provide task specific training where appropriate or buddy a volunteer up with a more experienced volunteer to learn the role.
- 4.3 Any member of staff requesting volunteers should develop a role profile to be confirmed with the Volunteer Engagement Coordinator (VEC) and relevant management staff. This will enable effective recruitment. All role profiles must have details of the aims of the role, the skills required, the training offered, time required, background on the project, benefits to the volunteer and how long the project is to last. These role profiles will be shared with volunteer applicants at the start of a round of volunteer recruitment. SA is aware of the additional staff time and resources required to effectively manage and support volunteers. For this reason, available staff time is a contributing factor to determining the number of volunteers any one volunteer manager has at one time.

5 Recruitment and selection

- 5.1 Volunteer opportunities will be widely advertised with the aim of reaching a broad cross-section of the community and to provide equal opportunities for potential applicants. SA values diversity and aims for equality among volunteers. Our volunteer cohort should reflect the local community; therefore, we will source volunteers from a wide cross-section of cultures, backgrounds, lifestyles, skills and experiences. Volunteers and staff are expected to support SA in its commitment to diversity and equality.
- 5.2 The VEC will respond promptly to expressions of interest from potential volunteers. The VEC reserves the right to turn down someone unsuitable and terminate any involvement in volunteering. This would be informed by SCC's WEASPIRE values. Selection of volunteers will be based on project requirements and the skill sets, knowledge and experience needed. Once a volunteer has been successfully selected into a volunteering role, the VEC will ensure they have a building and volunteering induction and are introduced either digitally or physically to their volunteer manager.
- 5.3 If a role includes working with vulnerable groups, then the volunteer will be made aware, during the application process, that a [Disclosure and Barring Service Check](#) disclosure is required.
- 5.4 Recruitment process:



- 5.5 Volunteers under the age of 16 must have a specific risk assessment that will be given to the

parent/guardian along with the role description. Any queries regarding the documents can be fully discussed before volunteering begins.

- 5.6 Similarly, a role in which a vulnerable adult will be volunteering will be risk assessed prior to their role beginning.
- 5.7 If volunteers develop a long-term illness whilst volunteering, a risk assessment will be put in place and discussed with the volunteer in order for them to safely continue with their volunteering role. If staff feel their continuing with volunteering has become detrimental to the health, safety and/or wellbeing of the volunteer, other volunteers, staff, customers or collections then a discussion about their future involvement must be had as soon as is convenient. It may also be necessary to do a risk assessment for certain types of short-term illnesses to ensure the safety of the volunteer or others, or collections in them continuing to volunteer in a specific role.
- 5.8 Spouses or ex-spouses of staff may volunteer if they are not being directly managed by their partner/ex-partner. Children of staff are welcome to volunteer, if they are under 16 the same process laid out in 5.4 will still apply. It is preferred that the children are not managed by their parent/guardian. The same approach extends to wider family. All prospective volunteers must go through the same recruitment process. If it is a family member of the VEC, then a nominated member of staff must conduct the initial informal discussion.

6 Induction

- 6.1 All new volunteers will be taken on an induction to the building and meet staff. This will include what to do in a fire or other security incident etc, where to get a drink and location of the toilets, lockers etc. All volunteers will be given a name badge, lanyard and induction pack which includes a guide to manual handling, ASPIRE values, staff lists and forms surrounding confidentiality agreements, video/photo permissions and volunteer agreement.
- 6.2 All volunteers must have a project induction or role-based training session with their volunteer managers to gain a better insight into their roles. If the volunteer needs to use the searchroom, the volunteer manager should arrange an induction with the Service Manager and Archive Assistants.

7 Review period

- 7.1 A review date, if appropriate for the role, will be set by the volunteer manager usually during the fourth volunteering session. Support from the VEC can be called upon. The review will allow both parties the opportunity to check that they are happy with the arrangement and identify if extra training is required.

8 Dealing with problems

- 8.1 SA aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted, and acted upon promptly.
- 8.2 SA volunteer managers will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. If the behaviour of the volunteer is inappropriate, they will be asked to discontinue these actions in an informal or formal meeting. If the behaviour persists, a formal meeting will be

held between the VEC, volunteer manager and volunteer in question. If the behaviour persists beyond the formal meeting, the volunteer will be asked to leave. Each informal and formal meeting will be noted.

8.3 Inappropriate behaviour which will not be tolerated are as follows:

- Consuming alcohol/illegal drugs just before or during volunteering on site.
- Bullying/harassing/victimising. More detail on this behaviour can be found in the [Bullying and Harassment Information and Guidance](#)

8.4 If an issue arises between a volunteer and a member of staff where it is not appropriate to talk to the volunteer manager, then the volunteer can informally talk to the VEC. If a volunteer wishes to, they can make a written complaint to the VEC and volunteer manager. The VEC and volunteer manager may take any necessary guidance or advice before dealing with the complaint. If the complaint is about the VEC, then a written complaint can be made to the Operations Manager.

8.5 If an accusation of bullying, harassment or victimising is made, then the [Bullying and Harassment Information and Guidance](#) in conjunction with the Grievance Policy must be followed.

9 Volunteer time records

9.1 All volunteers must record their time. They will be shown how to do this as part of their role-based training. If the volunteer is unable to do this, they must keep a written record to be given to their volunteer manager.

10 Training, support and supervision

10.1 Training for a specific role, such as oral history recording, researching, inputting on CALM, may be either given by SA staff or external trainers. This training must be offered initially to volunteers where it is most relevant to their role. If there are spaces left, then it can be offered out to the wider pool of volunteer.

10.2 SA staff appreciate the time given up by volunteers and welcome a two-way dialogue on their thoughts surrounding the volunteering offer. Support is ongoing and can be done through email, over the phone, through online platforms such as SLACK, coffee forums, 1:1 and group meetings.

10.3 An anonymous survey will be released once a year, and a review will be conducted with staff and volunteers to improve the volunteering experience.

10.4 Regular opportunities will be created for volunteers to meet informally to discuss their volunteering and the working relationship with SA. Examples of these include a quarterly Tea & Talk event, which is a social event for volunteers which is centred on a free talk from a guest speaker. Other examples are regular volunteer focus groups to discuss and feedback on the progress of projects, and training workshops and drop-in sessions for ongoing support and development.

11 Expenses

11.1 Out of pocket travel expenses, such as mileage, public transport and parking, will be reimbursed

promptly upon receipt of a volunteer expense claim submitted by the volunteer. Other expenses must be discussed with the volunteer manager before a claim can be submitted. Volunteers will be shown how to claim these expenses by the VEC and/or their Volunteer Manager as part of their induction.

12 Recognition for volunteers

- 12.1 All volunteers should receive recognition for their contribution to SA. A simple 'thank you' is a powerful gesture in recognising the valuable contribution made by a volunteer.
- 12.2 We will endeavour to provide social opportunities to thank our volunteers, such as Tea & Talk events with guest speakers and recognition or awards events.
- 12.3 Volunteers cannot be rewarded with anything which holds a direct cash value as this could be misinterpreted as payment for time. A promise of a job should never be made.

13 Health and safety

- 13.1 SA is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of SA volunteers. SA wants to help volunteers understand the health and safety risks associated with their role. SA supports volunteers by providing appropriate information, training, supervision and equipment to work safely and keep the environment safe for other users.

14 Insurance

- 14.1 All volunteers engaged in activities are indemnified under SCC's public liability insurance.
- 14.2 SA ensures that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside of the role description.

15 Confidentiality, copyright and data protection

- 15.1 Volunteers will be advised of the need to maintain confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information which is not public knowledge or are working with confidential information in closed records. A signed agreement is required to be completed before volunteering begins.
- 15.2 Volunteers are expected to assign any original copyright works they may produce while volunteering to SA. If a volunteer is unhappy with this, they must notify the volunteer manager before the beginning of the project.
- 15.3 Personal information recorded about volunteers will be stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality.

16 Moving on

- 16.1 Both the volunteer and SA have the right to terminate the Volunteer Agreement at the discretion of either party.
- 16.2 While there is no employment relationship and no contractual obligation exists, SA asks that any volunteer who no longer wishes to actively volunteer lets their volunteer manager know by speaking to them.
- 16.3 On occasion, it may be necessary for SA to end a volunteer's involvement with the service. This may be because the role is no longer needed, or the volunteer is no longer suitable for the role.

When this happens, SA will give due notice. In all circumstances, SA will treat the volunteer fairly and with dignity and respect.

- 16.4 When a decision has been made to end a volunteering opportunity, either by staff or by the volunteer, an exit interview can be facilitated if required.

17 Related documents

- 17.1 The policy informs the volunteer induction pack, agreements and role profiles for volunteers.
17.2 Volunteers at SA are subject to all relevant Council policies such as Health and Safety, Manual Handling, Customer Care and Data protection.
17.3 This Volunteering Policy was informed by SCC's [Volunteering Policy](#)
[SCC's WEASPIRE Values](#)
SCC's [Bullying and Harassment Information and Guidance](#)

18 Date for next review

- 18.1 June 2027

Suffolk Archives, The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich, IP4 1LR

01473 296666

archives@suffolk.gov.uk

www.suffolkarchives.co.uk

If you need help to understand this information in another language please call **03456 066 067**.

Se precisar de ajuda para ler estas informações em outra língua, por favor
telefone para o número abaixo. 03456 066 067

Portuguese

Jeigu jums reikia šios informacijos kita kalba,
paskambinkite 03456 066 067

Lithuanian

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tych informacji w swoim języku
zadzwoń na podany poniżej numer. 03456 066 067

Polish

Dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru a înțelege această informație într-o
altă limbă, vă rugăm să telefonați la numărul 03456 066 067

Romanian

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى المساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على
03456 066 067

Arabic

Если для того чтобы понять эту информацию Вам нужна помощь на другом
языке, позвоните, пожалуйста, по телефону 03456 066 067

Russian

If you would like this information in another format,
including audio or large print, please call **03456 066 067**.



Designed and printed by **vertas** Design & Print
Phone: 01473 260600