

# Confident in Surrey's Future: The role of volunteers

## PURPOSE

To highlight the central role volunteers play in ensuring Surrey residents remain healthy, safe and confident about their future

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## VALUES



**Listen**



**Responsibility**



**Trust**



**Respect**

## Want to volunteer?

Information on how to get involved can be found on the ['Be a Volunteer'](#) webpage.

## Context



Our 'Confident in Surrey's Future Corporate Strategy 2016 – 2021', sets out the challenges facing Surrey in the years ahead and how we will work as one team with residents and partners to meet these challenges. Achieving the goals in our corporate strategy will depend not only on those we pay to deliver services but also on the thousands of people in Surrey who freely volunteer their time, skills and expertise to support our communities.

Volunteers make a huge contribution and are already playing an integral role in the delivery of many of the strategic goals in our corporate strategy. This role is going to become ever more important over the coming years. As demand for our services rises, volunteers will increasingly play an important role in helping to manage that demand and prevent reliance on public services. Volunteers will also add value by enabling the ongoing and improved delivery of certain public services which, at a time when financial resources are declining, may otherwise cease to exist. If we are to make best use of volunteers in Surrey we will need to work with partners to support more people, including both residents and colleagues in our own organisation, to volunteer in the areas where they can have the biggest impact on the needs of Surrey residents.

## Why is volunteering important?

Volunteering reflects and promotes the values which are at the heart of our organisation and there are many benefits of volunteering both for those who volunteer and Surrey residents more widely. Volunteering enables volunteers to build skills, provides an opportunity to meet new people and improves the health and well being of volunteers. It also makes a significant difference to the lives of our residents and below are some examples of how volunteers and volunteering are contributing to the goals in our corporate strategy:

### 1. Wellbeing

**Everyone in Surrey has a great start to life and can live and age well.**

- Provide over 2,000 additional school places for September 2016 school year – School governors, Parent Teacher Associations and reading buddies are just some of the roles volunteers play in helping Surrey schools thrive.
- Improve outcomes for children in need of support and protection – volunteers support some of our most vulnerable children in Surrey through schemes such as the Finding Your Feet mentoring scheme and Independent Visitors.
- Support 750 families through the Family Support Programme – through organisations such as Home Start, volunteers play a vital role in supporting some of our families with multiple and complex needs.
- Support our residents to live longer and live well – volunteering has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of volunteers. It can be a way for people to keep active and connected to their community, preventing them from becoming socially isolated.
- Enable people to stay well at home in their community and to return home sooner from hospital with the care they need – befrienders, meals on wheels volunteers, and voluntary car scheme drivers all help our elderly residents to be able to stay well at home and live independently, preventing them from becoming reliant on social care services.

### 2. Economic Prosperity

**Surrey's economy remains strong and sustainable.**

- Support young people to participate in education, training or employment – volunteer mentors can support young people to build confidence and help them decide what they want to do in the future. Volunteering can also help young people build skills which will be valuable for their future careers.
- Resurface and treat roads to ensure the resilience of our highways network – Surrey Highways work with a number of voluntary organisations, such as Surrey 4x4 response, to help prepare for some of the challenges there may be on the roads during winter.
- Improve and renew priority pavements, particularly to support vulnerable users – Snow Angels are a network of volunteers who help clear pavements in key areas to help make them safe after it has snowed.
- Increase waste recycling and reduce the amount produced and sent to landfill – Surrey Green Network volunteers give up their time to encourage residents across Surrey to recycle.
- Support a £50m plus infrastructure investment programme - many suppliers of our infrastructure contracts are passionate about supporting their communities and delivering social value. These organisations often encourage their staff to volunteer for local causes through employee volunteering schemes.

### 3. Resident Experience

**Residents in Surrey experience public services which are easy to use, responsive and value for money.**

- Enhance opportunities for residents to influence and shape council services – volunteers for organisations such as Healthwatch help gather and feedback the views of residents to the council and its partners, enabling the views of residents to influence and shape services.
- Make better use of digital technology to improve services for residents – Digital Buddies in Libraries support older people to learn to use digital technology so they can access online services and keep connected with family and friends.
- Invest in flood and maintenance schemes – Community Resilience volunteers are helping to ensure their communities are prepared for emergencies such as flooding
- Improve the satisfaction of families of children with special educational needs and disabilities with the support they receive – a number of colleagues from SCC have signed up as part of the employee volunteering scheme to support Duke of Edinburgh expeditions for young people with SEND.
- Deliver the savings set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan – volunteers help reduce demand on public services and can also help keep services running, which otherwise may be under threat of closure. For example volunteers for Surrey Countryside Partnerships carried out 23,759 volunteer hours in 2015-2016 which is the equivalent of 14 FTE Staff and worth over £250,000.

# Confident in Surrey's Future: Our Volunteering Strategy

## PURPOSE

To set out how we will make best use of volunteers to ensure Surrey residents remain healthy, safe and confident about their future

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## Want to work with volunteers?

Best practice and guidance on working with volunteers can be found in our [Volunteering Toolkit](#).

## Our Volunteering Priorities

In May 2015, the council launched a two year project to increase volunteering in Surrey, with the aim of ensuring we are making best use of volunteers to help improve **residents' wellbeing, economic prosperity, and resident experience** in Surrey. There are three main priorities in our volunteering strategy:

### 1. Promote the use of volunteers to enhance services

We will promote an understanding across the council and amongst partners of the benefits of involving volunteers. We will share best practice on how to involve volunteers and identify opportunities to join up our work with volunteers.

### 2. Work as one team with residents and partners to support volunteering in Surrey communities

We will support local areas to develop easily accessible pathways to volunteering which take account of local contexts and promote volunteering to meet local needs. We will ensure everyone has the opportunity to volunteer and that any barriers to participation are tackled safely, promptly and effectively.

### 3. Embed a culture of volunteering in Surrey County Council

We will ensure our employees have the opportunity to volunteer their time, skills and expertise to support local people and causes, bringing their learning and experience back into the organisation. We will also help colleagues about to retire find volunteering opportunities, which make the most of their skills whilst also supporting their wellbeing in retirement.

## What have we done in year 1? What will we do in year 2?

### Promoting the use of volunteers to enhance services:

- ❖ Developed a Volunteering Toolkit for services working with volunteers.
- ❖ Established an internal SCC Volunteering Network
- ❖ Recruited a pool of staff volunteers to support Duke of Edinburgh expeditions for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- ❖ Advised individual services on working with volunteers (e.g. Community Resilience, Libraries and Youth Support Service) and identified opportunities for them to learn from and link with other services.

### Working with residents and partners to support volunteering in Surrey communities:

- ❖ Re-designed 'Be a Volunteer' Webpage and delivered "Time to Volunteer" campaign with residents.
- ❖ Promoted Volunteers' Week to SCC staff and residents.
- ❖ Developed a toolkit and ran workshops to support VCFS organisations to engage with businesses.
- ❖ Developed a new approach to working with Rotary Clubs in Surrey.
- ❖ Scoped two pilots for supporting young people to volunteer to be delivered in 16/17.

### Embed a culture of volunteering in Surrey County Council:

- ❖ Re-launched the employee volunteering scheme and piloted new approaches to engaging staff in the scheme.
- ❖ Worked with Finance, HR, Information Governance and Property to deliver skills workshops for VCFS organisations.
- ❖ Promoted volunteering to pre-retirees through pre-retirement courses.

### Promoting the use of volunteers to enhance services:

- ❖ Support SCC services with their recruitment and retention of volunteers and pilot joint recruitment initiatives.
- ❖ Pilot a shared volunteering placement across SCC services for young people aged 14-25.
- ❖ Develop a sustainable Volunteering Network which will continue to operate beyond the end of the project.

### Working with residents and partners to support volunteering in Surrey communities:

- ❖ Work with internal and external stakeholders to carry out a gap analysis, building a picture of how much volunteering is already taking place in Surrey and of the priority areas where volunteers are needed, in line with the priorities in our corporate strategy.
- ❖ Deliver a second campaign with residents, highlighting priority areas where volunteers are needed.
- ❖ Pilot new approaches to working with Rotary Clubs in Surrey.
- ❖ Support the sharing of the Family, Friends and Communities approach by exploring the role of volunteers and VCFS in supporting young people with SEND.
- ❖ Work with partners to support more young people to volunteer.
- ❖ Facilitate greater engagement between businesses, public sector and VCFS organisations through a social value event and by piloting an online brokerage tool.

### Embed a culture of volunteering in Surrey County Council:

- ❖ Develop sustainable channels for engaging staff and managers in employee volunteering, encouraging colleagues to volunteer in areas which support the goals in our corporate strategy.
- ❖ Continue to support teams and individuals to share their skills to support the sustainability of VCFS organisations in Surrey, ensuring there are channels for colleagues to continue to share their skills beyond the end of the project.
- ❖ Continue to promote volunteering to pre-retirees via pre-retirement courses and Pensions Team.