



London Borough of Sutton

*working in partnership with
Sutton Nature Conservation Volunteers*

Volunteer Policy – Plain English Version

This policy relates to arrangements for volunteering and work experience. It aims to outline what Sutton Council's Biodiversity Team and Sutton Nature Conservation Volunteers (SNCV) do and how they work.

Introduction

The Biodiversity Team work to protect, manage and enhance the local environment, as well as educate and inform people about the local environment and wildlife in the borough. Sutton Nature Conservation Volunteers undertake work on nature reserves and other green spaces. They also help inform the public about environmental and wildlife issues.

Volunteers play an important role in the work that the Council and SNCV undertake. Working in partnership, we encourage and support volunteer involvement in our work.

Guiding principles and values to volunteering

The Biodiversity Team and Sutton Nature Conservation Volunteers aim to:

- Ensure as many people as possible can volunteer.
- Have organisational structures that support volunteers.
- Help staff to work with volunteers and develop volunteer opportunities.
- Recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development.
- Provide safe working conditions and have appropriate insurance cover.

The relationship with volunteers

A volunteer is someone who carries out work, without expecting financial reward.

The Biodiversity Team will provide the framework and day-to-day management of volunteers, while volunteers will contribute time and skills. SNCV will provide additional opportunities to volunteer through Community Days, events etc. The Biodiversity Team and SNCV believe volunteering is a valuable activity, but not as a replacement for paid work.

As a volunteer you must understand current policies and agree to follow them. Policies include equal opportunities, privacy, health and safety protocol, grievance and safeguarding procedures.

Recruitment and selection of volunteers

The activities of the Biodiversity Team and SNCV are covered by an equal opportunities policy. Opportunities will be available to all regardless of marital status, sex, race, colour, age, sexual orientation, religion, politics, nationality, ethnic or national origin or disablement.

In rare cases it may not be possible to accommodate a volunteer. In this situation the reason will be explained and alternatives may be suggested.

All volunteers are expected to follow all policies and procedures, and as instructed by task leaders.

Support and recognition for volunteers

Volunteers will be overseen by staff from the Biodiversity Team or an SNCV Task Leader. When working with volunteers we aim to achieve the following:

- Encourage people to volunteer and endeavour to help them to continue.
- Maximise what volunteers are able to do.
- Champion the importance and value of volunteering throughout Sutton.
- Provide voluntary opportunities that are safe for staff and volunteers.

All new volunteers will have an informal induction. If necessary a review session may be called to assess progress and to resolve any problems.

Sutton Council will provide insurance cover for personal accidents and public liability for Task Day activities and SNCV have insurance for their activities, including Community Days. Volunteers will have access to information about legislation or policies that may affect them, such as Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities. Volunteers will be treated in the same way as staff when it comes to Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities policies.

Volunteers will be told how to get help and support and how to make a complaint about any part of their work.

Training and Development

Volunteers will be provided with 'in house' training for the work they do.

Volunteers will be told about training opportunities that may be available.

Rights and responsibilities of volunteers

Sutton Council and SNCV recognise that volunteers have a right to:

- Understand what the Biodiversity Team and SNCV do
- Have access to relevant policies affecting their work
- Know who to approach when emergencies, problems or issues happen
- Have access to appropriate training
- Feel valued for the work that they do
- Receive constructive feedback
- Have safe working conditions and adequate insurance cover

If a volunteer feels people are not carrying out work in the right way, they have a right to speak to the Task Leader about it. If a volunteer would sooner speak to someone else because the issue has not been resolved fully, or they don't want to speak to the Task Leader, they have a right to contact another member of the Biodiversity Team or the SNCV executive.

In return, we expect that volunteers will:

- Treat fellow volunteers and staff with the same degree of courtesy that they would expect to receive themselves
- Follow all rules and procedures, including Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities
- Tell the Task Leader about any health and safety concerns as soon as possible
- Be reliable
- Let the Task Leader know if you are going to be late or need to leave early
- Don't talk about confidential information
- Give the Task Leader feedback
- Ask for support if it is needed
- Be accountable for your own actions
- Take part in volunteer training
- Put in appropriate effort, to the best of your ability.

If a volunteer does not follow these rules, a review will be called and the volunteer's suitability will be considered.