

# **This is community spirit**

Wellbeing and Volunteering at  
Warwickshire County Council

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# Our Approach - Policy Statement

Our people make our organisation the best it can be, so creating a sustainable and resilient workforce is a key priority for us. The physical and mental health of our employees is key objective, through creating a healthy work environment and helping individuals create resilience.

In developing a sustainable and resilient workforce this policy helps to fulfil our commitment to the wellbeing of our people and enable our organisation to be the best it can be.

The pandemic has changed all of our lives, two things it has brought to the fore are:

- The need to look after our own wellbeing
- The importance of volunteering

## Wellbeing

We encourage all our people to take pro-active steps to manage their own health and wellbeing. We are constantly reviewing the measures we have in place as an employer to support our people and our Wellbeing Charter reflects our commitment to providing a healthy and positive working environment. We believe that by giving people the time and space to learn something new or connect with our communities can enhance wellbeing. Learning is about gaining new knowledge, skills and experiences which are all good for our wellbeing.

## Volunteering

Volunteering has multiple benefits. We have all seen the impact it can make to the communities in Warwickshire and customers we serve. During the pandemic, our people have stepped up and gone beyond their roles to make a real difference. As well as helping others it has also shown us the positive impact it can have on those volunteering. Giving back to the community is great way to link with others perhaps beyond our existing networks, learn something new and help improve our environment, or the lives of others.

This policy is **6 month trial, ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**, we will evaluate the take up and feedback of this benefit before determining if it can make a real difference to the longer term wellbeing of our people.

This policy covers all colleagues of Warwickshire County Council (WCC); it excludes agency and casual staff and students on placements.

# 1. What is a “Wellbeing or Volunteering day”

There is no one definition of what a Wellbeing or Volunteering day is, what makes an activity meaningful will vary for individuals but it should involve learning or giving back.

Some of the benefits of continuous learning or giving back to the community are:

- Improved self-esteem – learning new things or overcoming a challenge can help us feel better about ourselves or improve confidence in dealing with new situations
- Better ability to cope with stress – by focusing on what you are trying to achieve and takes your mind away from your own concerns
- Encourages social interaction – connecting, helping and learning from others can improve our own sense of self-worth and wellbeing

Our people are entitled to one paid Wellbeing or Volunteering day off (pro-rata for part time workers) planned in advance.

Line Managers should ensure any requests agreed meet the requirements of the team and continuity of service to our customers.

As a guideline the benefits of the activity an individual chooses for a Wellbeing or Volunteering day should look to:

- Explore a different lifestyle
- Help others or the community
- Learn a new skill
- Increase self-confidence
- Experience of a lifetime such as challenge for charity
- Improve physical and mental wellbeing
- Inspire others
- Increase energy and resilience.

Some ideas of activities that you could do to make use of the Wellbeing and Volunteering Day are:

## **Volunteering**

- WCC works closely with CAVA, they have one-off opportunities as well as longer term volunteering opportunities if you want to commit more of your time too
- WCC has internal volunteering opportunities in certain services
- If you have a connection with a charity for personal reasons explore opportunities to support it
- Take part in community work e.g. litter picking in a community garden

## Wellbeing

- A taster day for an exercise or fitness activity
- Taking part in a sponsored event
- Having a “well person” health check appointment
- Complete a short course to learn a new skill such as a cookery course, home maintenance or managing anxiety/change
- Undertake learning or reading to aid personal development and wellbeing
- Coordinate and hold a team or workplace event to improve their wellbeing
- Creative wellbeing events such as undertaking a challenge whilst being sponsored to raise money for a local charity.

## 2. Planning a “Wellbeing or Volunteering Day”

Individuals will be expected to discuss the activity they want to undertake with their Line Manager when seeking approval and to feedback what they gained once it has taken place.

As part of this trial, we will be asking Line Managers about their experiences of using this policy and gathering feedback on the process.

### Planning a Wellbeing or Volunteering Day – The Principles:

Whilst the Wellbeing or Volunteering Day is around choosing something meaningful for the individual there are some key principles for taking the time.

- The Wellbeing or Volunteering Day must be taken in one go as a whole day, not part days or hours.
- Time off is being given by WCC; any costs associated with the activity will be the responsibility of the individual
- As part of a trial all activities must be agreed and taken by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**
- Approval must be agreed by the Line Managers before the activity takes place
- Reasonable notice should be given, if a request is made at short notice time off may not be given as many teams work rota's or must provide front line customer services so pre-planning will be required.
- The day must be recorded on Your HR (YHR) as a learning experience.
- This is not an additional day of annual leave day and should not be added on to an existing period of annual leave.
- The Wellbeing or volunteering day is not for sick leave or medical appointments; WCC has a comprehensive Sickness and Wellbeing policies to support ([link](#)).

- If you need time off for childcare or caring responsibilities, we have a family friendly policies for you ([link](#)).
- The activity should be a constructive development opportunity and meets both of the following requirements:
  - Personal development opportunity to support emotional wellbeing.
  - Broadly promotes the Council's corporate objectives e.g. promoting health, wellbeing, community engagement and sustainability (e.g. volunteer with a charity which promotes these objectives).

The spirit of this policy is clear and we trust our people to respect this.

### 3. Your HR Process for booking a Wellbeing or Volunteering Day

#### **Booking a Wellbeing or Volunteering Day"**

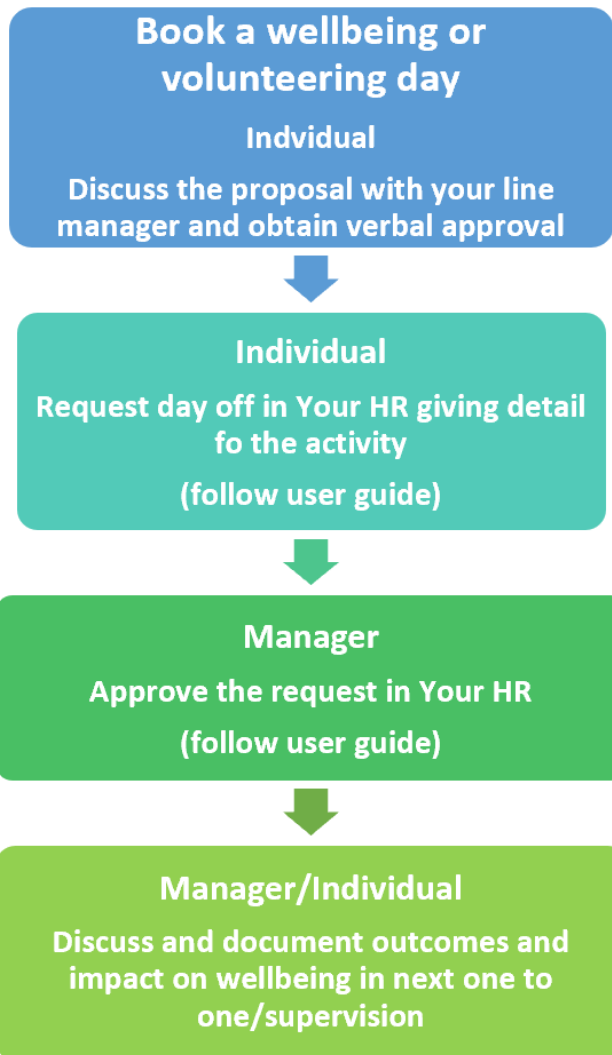
Follow the process below to agree and discuss the details of the Wellbeing or Volunteering day and book on Your HR.

For Individuals log in to Your HR to book as a personal learning event, for Managers to approve see ['How-to guides' for managers](#)

Remember to:

- Discuss and book the date in advance
- Discuss the benefits and agree that the request meets the criteria. If agreement can not be made refer to your Service Manager.
- Individuals should document the details of the activity on YHR, not just book as Wellbeing/volunteering day.
- Managers should follow up in one to ones and supervision the benefits from the day.
- Managers and individuals should have ongoing dialogue about wellbeing in one to ones and team meetings

## The Process



## 4. Documents and further reference

### Documents

- Warwickshire's wellbeing pages  
<https://warwickshiregovuk.sharepoint.com/SitePages/HR/Keeping-you-well-and-working.aspx>
- [Wellness Plans](#)
- [Employee Assistance Provider \(EAP\)](#)