

# **Volunteer Handbook for Digital Buddies**

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There are an estimated 11 million people in the UK who don't have the digital skills to benefit from the online world, and nearly 61% of these have never been online before. It's those who are already at a disadvantage through age, education, income, disability or unemployment who are likely to be missing out more. We want to break down the barriers to using technology, inspire people, build confidence and create opportunities.

## **What do digital buddies do?**

Inspire people who don't know about the benefits of the internet to give it a try. Every year more and more people are becoming interested in learning how to use a computer. They may want to know how to get started or wish to do a specific task. Digital buddies can help bridge the gap between getting started and becoming a confident user. Our buddies work with people on a one-to-one basis in libraries and digital hubs. You don't need to be an expert in all areas of IT but if you have a good all round knowledge and enjoy helping others then why not give it a go?

## **Why do it?**

- Meet people and have fun
- Help others in the community and feel useful
- Do something different and gain new experiences
- Build self confidence
- Learn new skills
- Contribute to a worthwhile cause

As a digital buddy we will support you in developing your own skills so that you can learn and help others at the same time. We hope the role will give you a great deal of satisfaction and it may also help you to make use of the skills in other ways e.g. employment.

## **What do we need you to do?**

We need people who can do some of these things:

- Can browse websites and use a search engine
- Can send emails and complete online forms
- Can shop online including online banking
- Can use Facetime and Skype

- Can help with applying for jobs
- Can explain about Internet security and staying safe online
- Can help with tablets and smart phones
- Can use Microsoft Office e.g. MS Word, Excel.
- Are willing to help others e.g. relatives, friends, neighbours, local groups

## **Requirements**

Enthusiasm and an interest in helping others gain the computer skills they need. The skills and qualities required are:-

- Friendliness and approachability
- Patience
- Good at explaining instructions to people learning something new
- Confidence to work with people from a wide educational background
- Ability to encourage and motivate
- Be passionate about the internet and the benefits it can provide

## **How much do I give?**

It's up to you, most people start by volunteering a couple of hours a week, you can always increase this later.

## **How to become a digital buddy**

Our process is very simple and we try our best to make it quick and easy to become a digital buddy volunteer.

You will need to complete an application form at:

**[www.bury.gov.uk/digitalbuddy](http://www.bury.gov.uk/digitalbuddy)**

and provide details of a reference from a friend, family member or work colleague. We will invite you to an informal discussion with a member of staff you would be working with either at a library or digital hub. If agreed that both the department's and the volunteers' needs are being met, we would then send off for the reference. Whilst you may come into contact with vulnerable customers you will never be left working alone with them and therefore will not require a DBS check but it is important that we know our volunteers are suitable for the role.

## **Volunteering while receiving benefits**

The Department for Work and Pensions have published a useful guide on volunteering whilst in receipt of benefits; please visit their website if you would like to learn more at **[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)**.

We do advise that any volunteer who is receiving benefits to inform their benefit office/job centre about their commitment to volunteering.

## **Training**

Volunteer meetings will be held and emails will be circulated.

You will be required to complete the 'Become a Digital Champion course' on the 'Learn my way' website. This is a short online course that will introduce you to being a digital buddy and give you ideas to help you support your community to get online. By the end of the course you will be able to:-

- Understand what it means to be a digital champion
- Motivate people to get online and address potential barriers they might face
- Support beginner to use computers and the internet and recommend appropriate learning resources
- Recommend what people can do once they have got to grip with the basics.

## **Communication**

Your supervisor or named staff member will discuss your progress and address any issues you may have. We rely on your feedback to improve the service offered to your and our customers. Volunteer meetings will provide an occasion to exchange ideas, news and progress.

## **Comments, Complaints and Compliments**

We want to know how we can improve our service and we welcome all suggestions and we also want to know what works well. We are always glad to hear from you. You will be able to make your comments to your supervisor/named staff member.

If you wish to make a complaint we will try to resolve this as quickly and fairly as possible whilst maintaining confidentiality. You should report

complaints to your supervisor/named staff member. If you do not feel able to do this or if you are not happy with the response you can follow the Council's corporate complaints procedure on our web site:

**[www.bury.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.bury.gov.uk/complaints).**

## **Volunteers' rights**

- Be given a clear idea of tasks and responsibilities within the organisation
- Be given the name of someone in the organisation who will look after your interests and who will offer you appropriate support and supervision on a regular basis
- Be assured that any information shared with the organisation remains confidential
- Be given the same protection under health and safety regulations and public liability as paid employees. To be offered opportunities for training and skills development appropriate for the voluntary tasks involved
- To not be exploited or have unfair demands made on their time.

## **Volunteers' responsibilities**

- To accept the organisations aims, objectives and policies
- To do what is reasonably requested of them to the best of their ability
- To treat any information obtained whilst volunteering in a confidential manner, this can be information about clients or other volunteers or staff
- To recognise that they represent the organisation and therefore need to act in an appropriate manner at all times
- To honour any commitment made to the best of their ability and notify the organisation in good time should you be unable to keep that commitment e.g. holidays, appointments
- To be willing to undertake training for the voluntary work undertaken
- To share suggestions for changes in working practices with your supervisor/named staff member
- To respect the rights of other volunteers, staff members and customers and to treat people with respect and dignity

- To treat all other volunteers, customers, staff members and members of the public equally and fairly in line with our equal opportunities policy.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

The Council deals with many issues of a confidential or sensitive nature. We are required to treat information on individuals who volunteer at the organisation as confidential. You will be required to complete a data protection online course. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary and privileged information while serving as a volunteer. PLEASE NOTE - Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the Council.

## **Safeguarding**

A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 who may not be able to protect themselves against harm or exploitation and this may be due to age, illness or lifestyle. Vulnerable adults are at risk of a variety of forms of abuse and neglect some of which may be unreported. They may have difficulties in expressing feelings or making their wishes known making them more susceptible to abuse.

If you are concerned about an adult you are buddying because of what you have seen, heard or been told, please inform the staff member present or your volunteer co-ordinator. Alternatively, you can discuss your concerns with Adult Services Connect and Direct by telephone on 0161 253 5151.

## **Employees as Volunteers**

The Council accepts the service of its own staff as volunteers, as long as the volunteering is provided totally without any coercive nature, involves work which is outside the scope of normal staff duties, and is provided outside usual working hours.

## **Family of Members of Staff as Volunteers**

The Council accepts the service of family members of its own staff as volunteers. When family members apply as volunteers they should notify

the identified line manager of any family relationship to a member of the department's staff. Such a relationship would not, in the first instance preclude volunteering under direct supervision or within the same department as other members of their family who are employees.

Relatives of clients may also serve as volunteers, but will not be placed in a position of direct service or relationship to, members of the family who are receiving services.

## **Dignity at Work**

Bury Council is committed to providing a working environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect and are valued for the different skills and abilities they bring to the workplace.

## **Travel and Transport**

We will try to arrange for you to volunteer as close to your home as possible in order that you can walk to the place where you volunteer. If you choose to drive most locations have free on-street parking available. Volunteers should not be out of pocket for undertaking duties to enhance our service.

## **Insurance**

Registered volunteers are covered by the Council's public liability insurance while they are engaged in the Council's activities. Please ensure that should you drive you are covered by your own car insurance should you drive to the office where you volunteer. This should not incur any additional costs to your insurance.

## **Induction**

Once a satisfactory reference and health clearance have been received volunteers will be contacted to arrange a mutually agreeable start date and their induction at the place where you would be working to introduce you to colleagues and show you round the building and advise on fire evacuation, health and safety and other general induction information. There is a health and safety induction for volunteers.



You will be required to have your photograph taken and you will be provided with a volunteer ID badge in order that both staff and customers can identify you.

The volunteer coordinator will conduct a four week review as part of the volunteers' induction to ensure that both the department's and the volunteers' needs are being met.

### **Health and Safety**

The Council aims to anticipate risks and remove or avoid potential hazards during volunteer tasks where practical. You should familiarise yourself with health and safety specific to your workplace and this will form part of your induction. Volunteers are asked to be mindful of taking reasonable care for their own safety and that of customers include being aware of preventing accidents. Always inform the staff member present or your co-ordinator of any incidents or accidents as soon as possible.

### **Fire**

You should familiarise yourself with the fire evacuation procedures for the venue where you are volunteering and this will form part of your induction.

### **First Aid**

In case of emergency please make yourself aware of your first aid point of contact at the venue where you are volunteering. Please report any accidents or near misses that you experience while volunteering.

### **Lone working**

You will not be left alone whilst volunteering and there should always be a staff member present. If you do have any concerns please speak to a staff member or your co-ordinator.

## **Ending the Volunteer Placement**

Volunteer placements can be ended at anytime by either party. If you decide that you are unable to continue to volunteer we would ask that you let your co-ordinator know this and that you complete and evaluation form of your experience of working with Bury Libraries as a volunteer.

# Volunteer Agreement

Digital Buddy Volunteers are an important part of Bury Libraries. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel a valuable member of our team.

This arrangement tells you what you can expect from us, and what we hope you will give to the Digital Inclusion project.

We, Bury Libraries, will do our best to:

- introduce you to how the Service works and your role in it.
- provide any training you need.
- arrange meetings with relevant staff so that you can tell us if you are happy with all aspects of your volunteering and get feedback from us.
- respect your skills and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them.
- consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes.
- insure you against injury you may suffer or cause due to our negligence.
- provide a safe workplace.
- apply our Dignity at Work Policy.

The volunteer will do their best:

- to volunteer reliably to the best of their ability, and to give as much warning as possible whenever they cannot work when expected or if unable to continue volunteering.
- to follow the department's policies and guidelines, including health and safety, dignity at work and confidentiality. All policies are in the Volunteer Handbook and available online.
- to inform the relevant manager if they have any difficulty with their volunteering.

**Volunteers will not take the place of paid employees or professionals.**

PLEASE NOTE THIS ARRANGEMENT IS IN HONOUR ONLY AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A LEGALLY BINDING CONTRACT BETWEEN US AND MAY BE CANCELLED AT ANY TIME AT THE DISCRETION OF EITHER PARTY. THE PURPOSE OF THE ARRANGEMENT IS NOT FOR EITHER PARTY TO INTEND ANY EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP TO BE CREATED NOW OR AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE.

## DECLARATION

I have received a copy and read the Volunteer Handbook and agree to abide by the Volunteer Agreement

Name .....

Signed ..... Date.....