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By: Office Manager

To: Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority  
– 24 November 2015

Subject: **Volunteer Policy**

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: to present to Members a draft volunteer Policy for adoption for Kent & Essex IFCA staff

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In September 2015 Members met and discussed a proposed policy for staff that were members of the Reserve forces. At the time Members were recommended to allow staff up to 5 days additional paid leave to attend training.

Members approved this policy but requested that a policy be developed to cover all types of voluntary work that could be undertaken.

Involvement in voluntary work, although not a substitute for training, can, if managed well, deliver training objectives cost-effectively and can be an excellent opportunity for personal and professional development.

Research by SaBRE (Support for Britain's Reservists & Employers), endorsed by the Chartered Management Institute, found that an employer would have to purchase over £8,000 of commercial civilian training to provide the same amount of development that an average Reservist's military service provides in a year. This research related only to the skills that were relevant to the civilian workplace.

Studies have also shown that volunteering helps staff to develop leadership, decision-making and negotiation skills. It can also help staff develop as individuals, boost morale and improve retention *Volunteering – The Business Case* (City of London 2010)

There are two distinct types of voluntary work that can be undertaken; that defined as public duties and that defined as volunteer service.

Under section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, a person is allowed a "reasonable" amount of time off for public duties if they are an 'employee' and one of the following:

- a magistrate (also known as a justice of the peace)
- a local councillor
- a school governor
- a member of any statutory tribunal (eg an employment tribunal)
- a member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment
- a member of a health authority
- a member of a school council or board in Scotland
- a member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales
- a member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection agency
- a member of the prison independent monitoring boards (England or Wales) or a member of the prison visiting committees (Scotland)
- a member of Scottish Water or a Water Customer Consultation Panel
- a trade union member (for trade union duties)

The employer does not have to provide additional paid leave for their staff to undertake these duties.

Voluntary work for volunteer services (eg scouting movement, working in a hospital shop, RNLI) does not attract the same statutory rights as those for public duties.

In April 2015 the Government proposed that all public sector workers and those businesses employing over 250 workers should allow their staff to take an additional three days paid leave to undertake voluntary work.

An example of organisations that allow additional paid leave for volunteering are:

- Civil Service - 3 day's paid leave per year (although HMRC does restrict this to volunteering that can show a business benefit). In the case of reservists this is increased to 10 days.
- Kent County Council – 5 days paid learning & development leave per year that can also be used for volunteering. However additional paid leave is granted in the case of magistrates, school governors, retained firefighters and examiners of up to 18 days and for reservists 10 days to attend camp

- Essex County Council – 2 days paid leave for volunteering. Additional paid leave is granted for public duties and for reservists

At the September meeting Members expressed a wish for officers to develop a Volunteer Policy that showed parity with the Reservist's Policy. This policy is attached as Appendix 1. You will note that the number of days leave for a Reservist has been adjusted to 3 days to place this voluntary work in line with the other types of work that can be undertaken.

Currently three members of staff undertake either public duties, voluntary work or are a member of the Reserves.

The **comments** and **recommendations** of Members are requested