

# Community Service Information

## Communities and Organisations providing individual Community Service work placements



## WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHEME?

As a punishment for an offence a Court has the power to order a person before the Court to complete between 40 and 240 hours of unpaid work for the community instead of a prison sentence. The person has to be assessed as suitable for the scheme by the Probation Service and has to agree to the order. The scheme is managed on behalf of the Courts by the Probation Service.

## WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT?

Community Service Orders are undertaken in two ways:

- In small work groups supervised by employees of the Probation Service (Group Placements)
- In individual placements where the accepting organisation provides supervision (Individual Placements)

This leaflet addresses the most frequent questions arising about individual placements with community groups and organisations.

## COSTS

There is no charge for the work completed by a Community Service worker on an individual placement but purchase of materials and specialist equipment is the responsibility of the host community or organisation.

## WHAT KIND OF LABOUR IS AVAILABLE?

People on Community Service have a variety of skills and experience. Community Service can readily offer help with general unskilled tasks including gardening, domestic duties and decoration.

Many people are interested and available for charity shop work and tasks with community and voluntary groups.

A wide range of people, many with valuable skills, are subject to Community Service orders and are ready and available to make a valuable contribution to the community at no cost.

If you are a community group or charitable organisation the Probation Service is available to discuss your requirements and will do whatever we can to meet your needs through the Community Service scheme.

## WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE AVAILABLE?

People come before the Courts for a wide variety of reasons. The Probation Service always take great care in the selection of offenders for individual placements and will usually be able to discuss any sensitive issues or concerns. We will consult openly and transparently on placement arrangements. The Probation Service is committed to public safety and will, at all times, seek to respect and safeguard the interests of our work providers and the community.

## HOW LONG WILL I HAVE SOMEONE ON A PLACEMENT?

An individual Community Service Order lasts between 40 and 240 hours but the Probation Service on taking on tasks will provide suitable Community Service workers for the agreed work period or task to be completed.

## WHEN CAN THEY WORK?

We usually try to match the availability of the worker with the needs of the work sponsors/providers. Days and times for work will be agreed in advance with the work sponsor/provider. In normal circumstances persons will not be required to work for more than an eight hour day.

## INSURANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

We recognise that many of the organisations we provide help for are small, with limited resources.

The work sponsor/provider's responsibility under the law is the same as it would be for any other person on their premises. It is important that the appropriate public liability insurance is in place.

Liability for injuries sustained by persons on Community Service Orders in completing the work is covered under the State indemnity by the State Claims Agency. The matter of injury or damage by persons in the course of Community Service is also managed by the State Claims Agency.

To safeguard Health and Safety interests we will ask you some questions about your health and safety arrangements to ensure appropriate safe practice, compliance with regulations etc. It is important that agreed best practice is complied with.

## WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENTS?

People selected for agency placements will have been assessed by the Probation Service as suitable for open employment. We will discuss and agree working arrangements with you and the worker before the placement begins.

It is best to regard Community Service workers in the same way as other workers and provide supervision and instruction at that level. Should you have particular concerns we will address them with you to achieve a positive and efficient Community Service placement for you and for the worker.

## WHAT PAPERWORK IS REQUIRED?

A minimal level of paperwork is required to account for hours worked and to plan and monitor work schedules. It is most important that work times are recorded accurately. You will be contacted by the Probation Service to ascertain work completed and to consult on any issues arising. Where a worker does not attend for work the Probation Service must be notified of the absence immediately.

## WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT CAN WE EXPECT AND WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMETHING IS GOING WRONG?

The Probation Service will normally arrange to visit you and discuss your particular situation in detail as needed. If we place someone with you we will make contact with you on a regular basis either by phone or in person to check out how the placement is going and to provide advice and support in the case of problems. If there is a problem the Probation Service will intervene. If a placement is not working out you have the right to terminate it at any time.

## SECURITY

Normal security precautions, similar to those when any work is carried out on your property, should be taken to minimise risk.

## COMPLAINTS

Day to day problems are best raised with the Community Service Supervisor or the Probation Officer who is responsible for liaising with your organisation.

