

Volunteers

Work permits for young volunteers

Did you know young people volunteering in certain environments require a work permit from the local authority?

Why do young people need a permit?

Under child employment legislation, young people up to the compulsory school leaving age (the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they turn 16) require a work permit for any activity considered as employment. A young person can be counted as being in employment if they are 'contributing to a business carried out for profit', even if the young person is not being paid.

What voluntary roles need a permit?

All voluntary roles that are 'contributing to a business carried out for profit' will require a permit and this applies even if the profit is used to finance charitable works. For example, a young person volunteering in a charity shop or a shop at a museum, where the young person is volunteering in a retail environment, would require a permit. Similarly, if a young person is volunteering in a cafe or restaurant this would require a permit.

In circumstances where a permit is required, only young people over 13 years of age can carry out the role and there is also a limit to the time they can spend volunteering.

How do I apply for a permit?

Work permits are free and the process to apply for one is simple. There is a short application form, which asks for information you will already have about the young person. The application is available by emailing childemployment@sunderland.gov.uk. Permits need to be applied for within 7 days of the young person starting volunteering, so you can ask them to bring their completed form on their first day.

If you already have young people volunteering with you, who you think may require a permit, then please complete an application form as soon as possible.

What happens if a young person does not have a work permit?

If a young person does not have a work permit, where one is required, then the young person may not be covered by the organisation's employers' liability insurance. Therefore, it's important to make sure young people have a permit where necessary.

If you are unsure whether a young person requires a permit to volunteer for your organisation or would like further information, then please contact the childemployment@sunderland.gov.uk