



Volunteer Handbook 2025



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Welcome & thank you from our Chief Executive

Since we were founded in 1931, volunteers have been vital to our charity's work, playing an essential role in looking after so much of Scotland's wonderful heritage.

You are part of this, and we are enormously grateful to you for that. As a volunteer, the time and support you give helps us to care for and protect the places we love, making sure the nature, beauty, and heritage in the Trust's care is there for future generations.

For this, I thank you most sincerely.

Philip Long OBE
Chief Executive



From our people team

We are delighted you have chosen to volunteer with the National Trust for Scotland. Volunteers are vital in helping to care for our special places – your generosity of time, skill and enthusiasm contributes to the vital work we do as Scotland's largest conservation charity.

You help us to care for over 100 treasured places across Scotland, which includes 300,000+ artefacts, rare wildlife and more than 76,000 hectares of countryside and gardens. The nature, beauty and heritage we look after is brought to vivid life by our dedicated teams of volunteers and staff, in everything from guiding visitors and maintaining historical collections to thatching cottages and building footpaths.

You might be volunteering regularly, occasionally, or as a one-off. You might be helping at one of our historic properties, in our offices, or outdoors in our gardens or countryside. Whatever your situation, we want to make sure that you get the most out of your time with the Trust, and this handbook will provide you with a general overview of volunteering with us. You'll also receive information about your specific role and have the opportunity to learn more about the Trust, during your induction.

If you have questions or concerns about your role, please speak to your volunteer manager/session leader, or contact the People Department with the details below.

Email: askPFEA@nts.org.uk
Phone: [0131 3573900](tel:01313573900)

We hope you enjoy your volunteering role, and we look forward to hearing about your experiences!

Ramsay Aitken
Lead Consultant for Volunteering



Section One:

You and Your Volunteering

Introduction to Volunteering with the National Trust for Scotland

Volunteering is at the heart of the Trust – since our foundation in 1931, volunteers have always been a part of our story. Our aim is to provide you with a welcoming and enjoyable experience and with an opportunity to contribute to the work of the National Trust for Scotland.

Volunteering with the Trust is open to all, based on your ability, suitability, and availability to carry out the role. You don't have to be a member of the Trust to volunteer with us. There is no upper age limit, and we also welcome young people, although there is a minimum age for some activities depending on the location and nature of the role (and you may need parental permission).

We try to be flexible in how volunteering is organised, and to fit in with individual circumstance. If there are specific expectations or requirements related to the

role you are volunteering for, your volunteer manager will let you know. Do talk to your manager/event leader if you have any additional support needs, including any reasonable adjustments which we can make to the role. If your role involves working with children or protected adults, we may ask you to complete a criminal records check before starting to volunteer with us.

If you are unsure whether you are able to volunteer with us – for instance, because you are a non-UK national – please discuss this with the volunteer manager for the role you are interested in or email askPEA@nts.org.uk

If you are claiming benefits, legally there are no set limits on how many hours you can volunteer for us, providing the conditions of your specific benefit are met. We recommend you discuss the volunteer role you wish to carry out with a benefits adviser before you start volunteering with us.



Working Together

As part of our commitment to providing meaningful, enjoyable, and well-organised volunteer experiences, it's important for you to understand both the benefits that you gain from volunteering with the Trust and our expectations of you as a volunteer.

Whether your motivation for volunteering is to acquire new skills, for personal development, wellbeing, friendship, fun or some other reason, we hope you will have a great time volunteering with us.

The Trust undertakes to provide you with:

- * A clear explanation of, and guidance for, what you will be doing and why.
- * Appropriate induction, training, supervision, support and equipment for your role.
- * A safe and respectful volunteering environment.
- * Reimbursement of agreed expenses.

As a volunteer, we expect that you will:

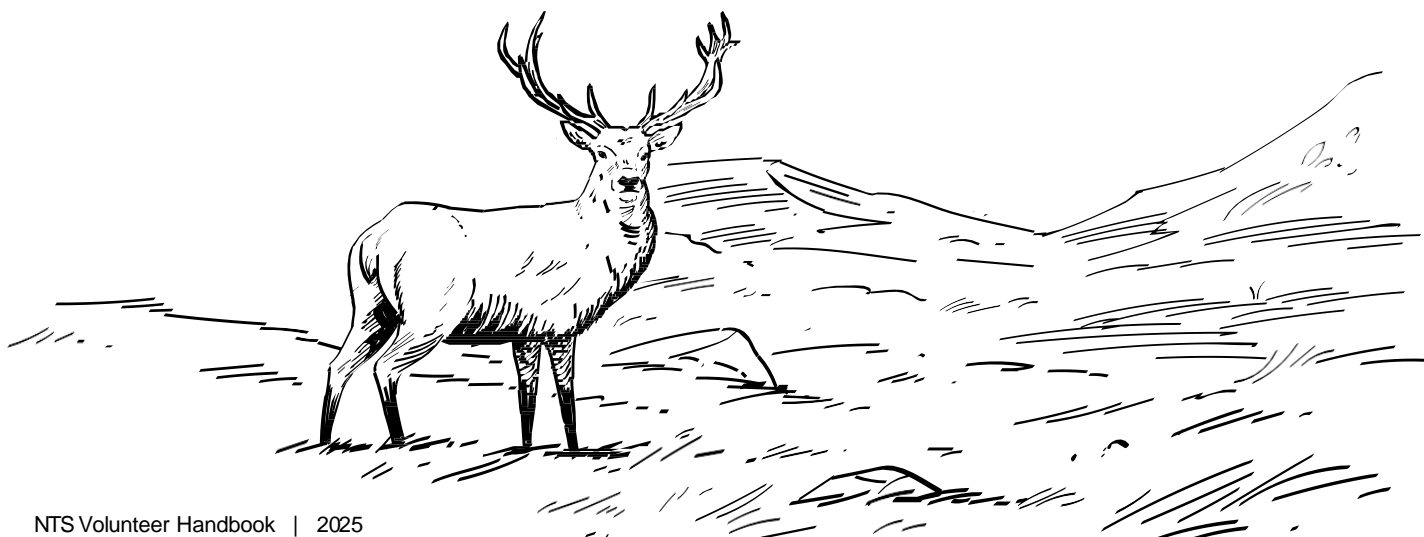
- * Maintain respectful relations with other volunteers, employees, Trust members and visitors, and be a positive ambassador for the Trust.
- * Respect and protect our built heritage, collections, and natural landscapes.
- * Be reliable and responsible, carrying out your role safely, both for your own sake and that of others.
- * Attend training and meetings necessary for your role.
- * Adhere to the Trust's decisions, policies and procedures including confidentiality, and act according to our core values (see page 13).

Volunteers receive communications relevant to their role, usually by email. Please notify your volunteer manager if this will not work for you. Optional communications such as updates are sent directly to all volunteers for whom we have email addresses and who have given us their consent to contact them. You can choose to stop receiving updates, or other optional communications, at any time.

On occasion, the role you are undertaking may end, or may no longer work for you. Under these circumstances your volunteer manager will talk through options with you, including whether there is a different role that might be suitable. Alternatively, if you decide you no longer wish to volunteer, it would be helpful for you to provide your volunteer manager and the central team with feedback.

Please message us at askPEA@nts.org.uk to let us know about your experience of volunteering with the National Trust for Scotland.

Tricky situations may arise sometimes which volunteers, or employees, need assistance to resolve. If you have a problem concerning any aspect of your voluntary work, please take this up directly with your volunteer manager or project leader. If this does not result in a mutually acceptable resolution, further advice should be sought from the People Department at askPEA@nts.org.uk



Depending on your role, there will be some training that you must complete- such as Health & Safety, Equality Diversity & Inclusion – before you can begin volunteering with us: your volunteer manager will explain these to you and what you need to do. Again, depending on your volunteer role, you may be asked to wear particular “personal protective equipment” (such as gloves, eye protection) for your personal safety. This is usually provided for you and it is important you follow these instructions. You may also have the chance to shadow another volunteer and attend training relevant to your role – please speak with your volunteer manager if anything will help you settle in. Your manager, coordinator or group leader is responsible for ensuring that your induction/safety talk will allow you to carry out your role or activity safely and effectively.

We understand however that the unexpected can happen! If you are unable to attend one of your sessions, please inform your manager as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

During your time with the Trust, you may be asked/ have the chance to attend training courses or complete specific online training modules – please speak to your volunteer manager to find out more. You can find out lots of general information about the Trust including our new strategy – Nature, History & Beauty for Everyone - by visiting the website at nts.org.uk

Notes



Volunteer Reward & Recognition

The Trust recognises and values the significant contribution made by our volunteers. We hope you will find your volunteering rewarding. Additionally, there are ways in which the Trust acknowledges the contribution you make.

At the discretion of the Trust, Volunteer cards are available to all active registered volunteers on completion of 40 hours of volunteering. Cards are renewed each March if volunteers continue to actively assist each year. Terms and Conditions for the cards are available online at nts.org.uk/volunteerterms

The card provides:

- * Free admission to all National Trust for Scotland properties (If you are already a Trust member, the Volunteer Card allows free entry to one accompanying guest when both valid cards are shown).
- * Free admission to all National Trust (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) properties.
- * 20% discount on retail purchases in National Trust for Scotland shops (T&Cs apply).
- * 20% discount on the rental price of all National Trust for Scotland self-catering holiday accommodation managed by Sykes, our partner organisation, and 10% for other Sykes properties (T&Cs apply).

Discount for NTS Properties Listed on Sykes – 20%

Volunteer card holders can use their discount to book any NTS holiday property listed on Sykes website, for themselves and their guests. This does not include Bunkhouses or properties listed on other platforms. These bookings **MUST** be made directly via the Holidays team and 20% will be deducted from the rental price. The discount may not be gifted to non NTS staff or volunteers. The booking can be made by emailing holidays@nts.org.uk with name, discount code, property name, start and end date of booking, and number of guests. The Holidays team will then be in touch to confirm details and request payment.

Discount with Sykes Properties, not owned by NTS – 10%

You should email holidays@nts.org.uk to obtain a discount code for use with Sykes.

For properties in Sykes portfolio the booking must be secured via telephone. The volunteer will call Sykes 0131 378 9110 and quote their discount code obtained from Holidays.

You will also have access to:

- * Training, relevant to your role.
- * Long Service Awards.
- * A record of your volunteer involvement for your CV.
- * Invitations to end of season or other events organised locally, regionally, or nationally as appropriate.
- * Access to employment opportunities – please contact your manager or the People Department or check our website for current vacancies.

Volunteer Expenses

All expenses are submitted through the Trust's People System and paid by direct bank transfer – please let your volunteer manager/ team leader know if you wish to make a claim. Claims must be submitted within three months of the initial expense.

Travel expenses: home to place of volunteering

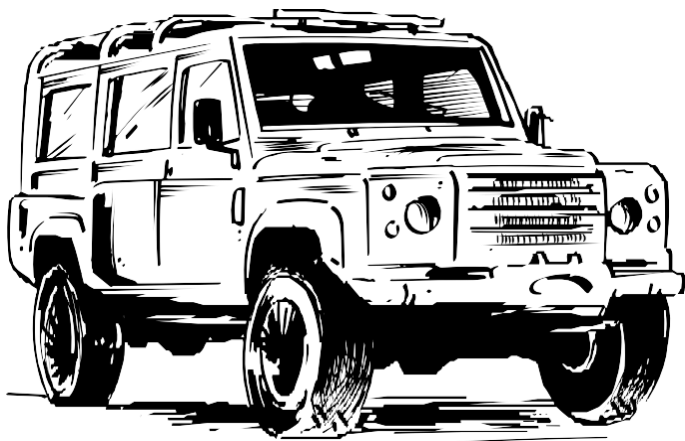
Trust volunteers may claim reimbursement for agreed travel expenses, including mileage from home to their place of volunteering. This will be discussed with you when you start volunteering in your new role.

- * All travel expenses must be agreed with your volunteer manager in advance.
- * The current mileage rate for volunteer home to volunteering location is 45p for the first 10,000 miles per tax year.
- * Properties/Departments will have a maximum travel distance or claim value. Your volunteer manager will be able to guide you on this.
- * For environmental reasons, please use public transport where available and consider cost-effective transport such as car sharing.



Expenses: travelling on Trust business

- * 'Trust business' includes any travel you undertake at the request of the Trust, and can include training sessions, meetings, or any location outside of your normal place of volunteering.
- * Again, all travel expenses MUST be agreed in advance with your volunteer manager and prior to expenditure.
- * The current rate for Trust business mileage (using your own car) is 45p per mile.
- * Volunteers driving on Trust business (whether using their own car, a hire vehicle or Trust vehicle) must complete an up-to-date Driver Declaration Form. This will be provided by your manager and must be signed off by them before you drive on Trust business.
- * Do inform your insurance company that you are using your vehicle for volunteering purposes – you shouldn't incur an additional charge, but the notification ensures you are fully covered.



Representing the National Trust for Scotland

Whatever volunteer role you undertake, you're an important ambassador for the Trust. Always extend a warm welcome to visitors and treat all members of the public with respect and courtesy.

The Trust has an Equality Policy, which all volunteers and employees must follow. We have a legal obligation to ensure that neither the Trust nor anyone representing it (either directly or indirectly) discriminates against an individual based on protected characteristics including age, gender, disability, race, or sexual orientation. The full policy is available on request from your manager.

Although the Trust does not have a specific dress code, your volunteer manager may have recommendations for appropriate clothing based on your role and location. Some activities may require the mandatory use of specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). As part of your role you may receive Trust branded clothing. If you choose to wear branded clothing outside of your volunteer role, please be aware that you are identifying yourself as a Trust representative.

Political Views:

When people know that you're volunteering with the Trust, they will naturally come to you for your thoughts or opinion on matters relating to the Trust. This can be particularly true during politically active times. Here are some tips on handling these conversations:

While volunteering: if someone asks you a question while you are volunteering, politely let them know that the Trust is politically neutral – this means that you're unable to comment either on behalf of the Trust, or to share your own views. If the person is insistent, please alert your volunteer manager or the responsible person on site.

Outside of your volunteer role: to maintain the Trust's political neutrality, we need to ensure that we do not appear to support any political party (for example, it would put the Trust in a difficult position if someone were photographed wearing their Trust-branded clothing at a political rally).

Social Media:

If you are a National Trust for Scotland volunteer, your comments can reflect on our charity, even when made in a personal setting, for example on your own social media account. Please remember that social media is a public domain where a single comment can be shared or retweeted by many people in a short period, out-with your control. We are happy for volunteers to promote their connection with the Trust, but please be aware that you are identifying yourself as a Trust representative. We recommend including the statement 'all opinions are my own' in your social media profile, to ensure that any comments do not reflect on any organisations to which you are connected. The Trust has a social media policy which goes into more detail on the topic of social media use for personal purposes.



Section two:

The legal part

Health, Safety & Wellbeing

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Trust is responsible for ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all employees, as far as reasonably practicable. The Trust recognises that it owes the same standards of care in health and safety to volunteers.

If you have any concerns about your safety during your time as a volunteer, please do let your manager or other member of staff know. Volunteers and employees also have a responsibility to ensure that they do not put themselves or anyone else at risk, working in accordance with any instructions they have been given.

- * Regional Group Volunteers will receive a thorough tools/site safety talk at the beginning of each project.
- * All other volunteers will receive a site-specific induction and on-going training as required.

Please speak with your manager/group leader if you do not understand any aspect of the activity procedure, risk assessment, or safety talk, or if you have any health and safety concerns.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Trust staff have a duty of care to all volunteers whilst they are on site. It is the Trust's responsibility to provide you with any essential PPE which may be issued for the day, or duration, of your volunteering. Training will be provided in its correct use – it is your responsibility to use PPE as instructed. It is important that if you have reusable PPE to take care and look after your equipment, and if there is any damage (such as rips and cuts to protective clothing) or fault you report this to your volunteer manager/group leader. A volunteer who does not use or misuses required PPE equipment may be asked to leave a work area or, under serious circumstances, their volunteering role may be terminated.

If you experience an accident, incident or 'near-miss' while volunteering with the Trust, please inform your volunteer manager/group leader as soon as possible who will ensure that this is recorded in line with the Trust's procedures. If you witness something you believe is a risk to yourself or others, please inform your volunteer manager/group leader immediately.

Wellbeing:

Volunteers will receive breaks appropriate to their designated role and shift length. If you need additional breaks, or have other specific requirements relevant to your wellbeing or any disability, please talk to your volunteer manager/group leader who will try to provide adjustments where possible. If it's not possible for you to continue in your present role, your manager will discuss with you if there are other suitable volunteering opportunities.

Bullying and Harassment:

The National Trust for Scotland holds that all people should be treated with dignity and respect and should not be subject to bullying, harassment, or any discriminatory treatment. It expects all employees and volunteers to honour and comply with this code of conduct and to behave accordingly. Should a situation arise where you feel that you have not been treated accordingly, please discuss this with your volunteer manager. Advice and assistance can also be sought from the People Department at askPEA@nts.org.uk



Insurance

The National Trust for Scotland has employer liability insurance in place to cover its people, including our volunteers, while they are engaged in voluntary work or associated activities connected with the Trust.

To be covered by our insurance the following three steps must be carried out:

- * A volunteer registration form has been completed in full with your volunteer manager (including the manager's checklist for property and office based roles).
- * The volunteer has received a role description outlining their agreed duties and conditions of volunteering.
- * A role-relevant induction has been carried out and recorded.

Personal belongings:

The personal belongings of employees and volunteers are not insured by the Trust. As such, the Trust cannot accept liability for any personal items damaged or lost on Trust property. Volunteers are asked not to bring valuables to their place of volunteering and are reminded that their personal belongings should be covered under their own personal insurance policy.

Driving Trust/Hire Vehicles

Driving Trust vehicle

- * To drive a Trust vehicle and for it to be comprehensively insured you must have authorisation, have completed a current Driver Declaration Form (DDF), and have this signed off by your manager. Your volunteer manager will provide you with a DDF and guidance if this is needed for your role.
- * If you drive a Trust or Trust-hired vehicle, you must inform the Trust of any changes to your details, including any new penalty points or relevant medical conditions.
- * Any motor accident involving Trust vehicles must be reported immediately to the Trust's Motor Insurers in accordance with the procedure set out in the Vehicle Information Pack provided in all Trust-owned vehicles.

Using your own vehicle:

We advise all volunteers to inform their insurer if they use their car to commute from home to the place of volunteering, or to travel on Trust business.

Criminal Record Check

If your role requires a criminal record check or membership of the PVG scheme, this will be stated on your volunteer role description, and you must undertake this before starting your role. Please ask your volunteer manager for more information.

If your role does not require a criminal record check or membership of the PVG scheme, but you have a relevant unspent criminal conviction, then you can confidentially self-disclose this information to your volunteer manager or the People Department to help us ensure that the Trust does not involve you in any tasks which may have a direct or indirect connection to your conviction.

Confidentiality & Intellectual Property Rights

During your volunteer work with the Trust, you may be party to personal or confidential information about Trust activities not in the public domain.

We require volunteers not to communicate such information outside of the Trust. Some specific roles will require handling of personal data on a more regular basis, and in such cases, you will be required to complete an online data protection training module and any subsequent refreshers before you can do this.

If your role involves the creation of intellectual property, or if you create something the Trust wants to use, you will be asked to complete an Intellectual Property statement. The Trust appreciates the vast amount of work carried out by volunteers; therefore even when assigning intellectual property rights to the National Trust for Scotland, the Trust recognises that the volunteer retains the moral right to be recognised as the creator of their work. If published in an external forum (including academic or published papers), credit should be given to the National Trust for Scotland for research done under its auspices.

Records Management & Data Protection

The Trust holds volunteer details and work records to document the contribution made by volunteers, for insurance and health and safety purposes. The Trust is registered under Data Protection Legislation.

With your permission, we may use the data to keep you informed of other news and activities concerning the National Trust for Scotland, however we will not pass on your information to third parties without your specific permission. If any of your details change, it is important that you inform your volunteer manager.

If you have volunteered for some time, we may occasionally ask you to sign an updated Data Protection statement to confirm that we can continue to hold your details, as required by the Trust's data protection auditors.

Sometimes you may attend events where photographs are taken on behalf of the Trust for use in promotional and publicity materials, which can be used in various formats including printed publications, online, and social media. If the Trust intends to take photographs at any event, this will be made clear, and you will have the option not to be included.

And Finally...

We hope that becoming a National Trust for Scotland volunteer will provide you with all kinds of new and unique experiences as you help to care for Scotland's incredible nature, beauty and heritage. Through your volunteering with us you will learn new skills, meet new people, and be able to explore our stunning places. We're excited to welcome you as part of Team Trust!

Enjoy your adventure!



Section three:

Our values

CARING

Caring

This comes from our unwavering protection of the nation's stories, values, objects, wildlife and environments; as well as protecting our people and helping to support communities.

BRAVE

Brave

This comes from our self-sufficient nature: not having to fall in line with political viewpoints; fighting for what we believe in; evaluating and managing risk. This also reflects our proactive spirit, taking initiative and acting with purpose.

CURIOUS

Curious

This comes from our ability to both question the past while also looking forward, exploring new areas and discovering new heritage to share.

VIBRANT

Vibrant

This comes from Scotland's vibrant history: the stories, buildings, landscapes and objects we look after, as well as the enriching, authentic experiences that we share with visitors and members.

INCLUSIVE

Inclusive

This comes from championing national public access: allowing people to get up close to our heritage; social inclusion programs; and our diverse staff, member and volunteer base.



Notes

Please use this space to make a note of any names, contact details and key information to remember. You could also use it as a place to record any events or training you attend.

