

Purpose and Scope

National Trust for Scotland Volunteers provide skills, experience, enthusiasm and time, helping us to carry out our work, engage effectively with visitors and connect with our local communities. In return, we provide a safe, welcoming and supportive environment in which volunteers can get involved, take satisfaction in their contribution and feel part of the wider organisation. This policy sets out how and why we involve volunteers, and the responsibilities of staff to ensure volunteering is meaningful, enjoyable, well planned and organised.

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1. Introduction

Volunteers enable us to do much more than would be possible without them. We recognise the benefits that volunteering brings to individuals and how involvement can change and enrich people's lives while bringing wider benefits to society.

We strive to promote good practice, providing volunteers with inclusive, enjoyable and worthwhile experiences, involving them in all aspects of our work, valuing and recognising their contributions. We aim to shine a light on the incredible contributions of volunteers, to provide opportunities for their voices to be heard and to develop mutually beneficial volunteering opportunities which contribute to caring for Scotland's precious historic places and natural landscapes.

To achieve this, we provide resources, guidance, training and support to ensure our staff are aware of the value of volunteer involvement and are able to manage and lead volunteers well.

2. Policy Statement

Volunteering with the National Trust for Scotland is a critical component of delivering our charitable purpose. Volunteering should be a collaborative, positive, mutually beneficial and inclusive experience. Anyone who shares our values and is willing to adhere to our policy and practices is welcome to apply. Our Vision for Volunteering is:

'for volunteering to be inclusive, accessible, enjoyable, meaningful, sustainable and impactful, bringing positive benefit to the special places we care for, to individuals and to communities.'

Volunteering is a gift relationship, with time given freely and willingly without expectation of financial or other reward by the volunteer. It is non-contractual - there is no obligation on the volunteer to attend or to provide a specific amount of time; likewise, the Trust is not compelled to provide tasks or benefits.

Volunteering is organised at a local level according to the requirements of the specific place or task and is supported centrally by the People Team who oversee the development of policy, guidance and training for volunteers and volunteer managers, provide support in the recruitment process and offer ongoing advice.

This policy sets out the mechanisms for achieving our vision and the stages to be followed when involving volunteers. There is a responsibility on all within the organization who manage, supervise, lead or involve volunteers in their work to ensure they understand and follow this policy and to ensure all systems and processes are in place and adhered to.

3. Policy Guidance and Implementation

The guidance and processes for involving volunteers are set out below, with more detail provided in resources for Volunteer Managers and the annually updated Volunteer Handbook.

It is the responsibility of senior managers to ensure that these measures are implemented consistently and fairly, and that appropriate budget is allocated. We recognise that the management of volunteers can be both rewarding and challenging. Senior managers are to ensure that all staff with a role to play in volunteer involvement are appropriately trained and supported.

What volunteers can expect

Prospective volunteers will have:

- Easy access to information on how to volunteer with us, via our website and other local mechanisms, and a clear process for applying to volunteer
- Their enquiry dealt with in a timely manner
- Access to opportunities to find out more about the place of volunteering and options for involvement
- Access to the Volunteer Handbook
- Information explaining that it may be possible to adapt opportunities, to ensure unnecessary restrictions are not a barrier to their involvement
- Details of any specific skills or requirements relating to a role
- Timely notification of the success or otherwise of their application, with an explanation if unsuccessful.

Volunteers will receive:

- A role description (written using the NTS role description template)
- A clear explanation of their duties and responsibilities
- Access to the Volunteer Handbook (which includes information on problem solving and making a complaint)
- A relevant, helpful and welcoming induction

- Necessary guidance, equipment & resources, training and support relevant to their role and personal requirements
- Thanks and appreciation for their contribution, an opportunity to give and receive feedback, and invites to events as appropriate
- Upon completion of 40hrs of volunteering and at the discretion of NTS, receive a Volunteer Card, renewably annually on continuation of their volunteering
- Guidance on how to claim expenses
- Details of their named manager and knowing how to access support if their manager is unavailable
- Effective local and national communications (with an opt out option for online communications), including other opportunities for volunteering

Role of the volunteer manager

Volunteer managers will:

- Plan effectively for volunteer involvement, including budgeting, risk assessments and to how to make roles inclusive and accessible
- Follow guidance for volunteer recruitment and induction
- Support volunteers to claim expenses
- Support, encourage, value and communicate effectively and personally with their volunteers ensuring all volunteers are treated with fairness and equity
- Complete all paperwork and monitoring as required, including registration forms and volunteer hours and provide this in a timely manner to the central people team, ensuring data protection rules are always followed
- Identify where roles may require a Disclosure check and discuss with their People Business Partner (PBP)
- Ensure guidance is followed when recruiting young people and/or vulnerable adults
- Have access to and complete/ attend appropriate training to ensure they have the confidence, capability and competence to work alongside volunteers
- Ensure volunteers have the training and resources they need to carry out their role
- Ensure all volunteers are thanked and receive recognition for their contribution¹
- Address any issues in a timely manner, seeking out support from their PBP if needed
- Manage, according to guidance, the processes for leavers, changes to volunteering role, or changes due to a volunteers' personal circumstance

Role of the People Department

Centrally the People team will:

- Provide support and advice to volunteer managers via the People Business Partners, the AskPea helpdesk, the Consultant for Volunteering, the People Systems & Operations team and the Organisational Development team
- Maintain up to date volunteer information on the data base
- Provide and develop relevant volunteer manager training and resources

¹ An annual volunteer card is given to all active, registered volunteers on completion of 40hrs of volunteering, at the discretion of the Trust. Other forms of recognition may also be issued, such as long service awards. To ensure length of service and active involvement are correct, managers must ensure that volunteer details are up to date on the central data base.

- Support the production and distribution of Volunteer Cards and other forms of recognition where appropriate and agreed
- Proactively identify, with others, opportunities to improve volunteer inclusion and voice across the organisation

Role of the Communications Department

Centrally the Communications team will:

- Share relevant information with volunteers and their managers
- Support volunteer recognition via, for example, Volunteers Week and other national/local initiatives, and through the publication of stories

Role of regional teams

Regionally teams will:

- Support Trust-wide volunteering initiatives
- Support volunteer recognition and reward
- Support the coordination of the regional volunteer groups
- Ensure all data is supplied in a timely manner to the People Team
- Organise 'thank you' and other recognition events

4. Related Documents

[Volunteer Manager 'How To' Guides](#)
[Health, Safety & Environment SharePoint](#)
[Data Protection](#)
[Equality & Diversity Policy](#)

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