



ANGLING
TRUST

Volunteering Best Practice Guide



Why is Volunteering and this Guide Important?

Angling is mostly a leisure pursuit and the majority of clubs are non-profitmaking, heavily reliant upon volunteers for essential personnel such as committee members and water bailiffs. Volunteering is essential but subject to certain legislation.

For this reason, angling organisations must be aware of the legalities and ethics involved, protecting both the organisation and volunteer. An awareness of Best Practice will better equip clubs to provide the best volunteering experience, thus showcasing angling.

This guide covers the key aspects of working with volunteers, providing advice and signposting further information.

Disclaimer Notice

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Definition of Volunteering

According to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), volunteering is:

'... any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.'

This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary

organisations as well as informal community participation and social action. Everyone has the right to choose to volunteer and volunteering can significantly benefit individuals.

Volunteer Policy

This important document defines the role of volunteers within an organisation, outlining how they can expect to be treated. It helps to:

- Confirm your club's commitment to both volunteering and individual volunteers.
- Ensure that volunteers are treated fairly and equally, demonstrating that decisions are made to a formal written policy.
- Provide security, knowing what they can expect and who to approach in the event of a problem.

Volunteering

'... any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.'

Things to consider include:

- Recruitment of volunteers, emphasising inclusivity (signpost to Equality Policy).
- Induction and training.
- Process for reimbursement of reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- Structure, including supervision and available support.
- Health and Safety (signpost to Health and Safety Policy).
- Confidentiality and data protection (signpost to Privacy Policy).
- Who to contact if there are any problems (signpost to Complaints Policy).

The Volunteer Policy should be shared with committee and club members, paid staff and all volunteers. Review the Policy annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

'Volunteer policy framework guidelines

Volunteer Agreement

Because volunteers are unpaid (see NCVO definition), they have no contract of employment so do not have the same rights as an employee or other worker. A Volunteer Agreement is useful because it explains:

- The level of supervision and support to be expected.
- What training is provided.
- What insurance policy covers volunteering.
- Signpost to Health and Safety Policy.
- Signpost to Expenses Policy.
- The commitment to equality, signposting to Equality Policy.
- That volunteers must comply with the organisation's policies and procedures.
- That the organisation will adhere to its policies and procedures concerning volunteers.
- The amount of time the volunteering role is expected to contribute.

It is common practice and advisable to include a clear statement that the agreement *'is binding in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract between the organisation and the volunteer and that neither party intends any employment relationship or other worker relationship to be created'*.



Care must be taken, however, not to inadvertently create an employment contract, the risk of which can be minimised by:

- Setting out what the organisation will provide, how the volunteer will be treated without creating mutual obligations, which could be construed as a contract.
- Setting out the relationship's terms based upon reasonable expectations as opposed to specific obligations.
- Avoiding using contractual language. For example, instead of stipulating that volunteers must contribute a set amount of hours per week for a given period, emphasise that volunteers are free to come and go without obligations - but suggest that volunteers remaining in the role for, say, at least six months, generally get more from the experience.
- Reducing perks that could be seen as either a consideration or a payment.
- Emphasising that only out-of-pocket expenses can be covered, signposting to Expenses Policy.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

²Guide to volunteer agreements

Role Description

Individual volunteering roles within an organisation should have a relevant and current Role Description. An honorary secretary's Role Description, for example, could include:

- Being first point of contact for all Club enquiries.
- Organising and attending all key meetings, including the AGM.
- Taking and circulating meeting minutes.
- Delegating tasks to members.

- Dealing with all correspondence.
- Attending to affiliated memberships.
- Ensuring insurance is current and relevant.
- Maintaining relevant records.
- Liaising with committee members as appropriate.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

³Writing volunteer role descriptions

⁴Role description templates

Codes of Conduct

All organisations, especially those reliant upon membership, strive to present the most positive image. It is important, then, that all volunteers adhere to a formally laid out code of good ethical practice and conduct. Such 'Codes of Conduct' provide clarity on the standard of behaviour required, may include dress code and where volunteers can report concerns.

It could also include that volunteers should:

- Do nothing to bring the Club or angling into disrepute.
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Promote the positive aspects of angling.
- Follow all guidelines laid down by the governing body and Club.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

⁵Angling Trust code of practice for staff, officials and volunteers

Volunteer Handbooks

The Volunteer Handbook brings together all policies and information in one place. It often sits alongside the Role Description and includes:

- Useful information about the Club
- Club Mission Statement
- Equal Opportunities
- Expenses
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding
- Support, Training and Equipment
- Insurance
- Complaints Policy
- Useful Contacts

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

⁶Angling Trust Volunteer Handbook

⁷How to write a volunteer handbook

Health and Safety Policy

Organisations employing five or more people must have a written Health and Safety Policy and conduct a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. Although the law is very clear that volunteers should not be treated like employees, an organisation is responsible for any actions or omissions by its volunteers that negatively impact the health and safety of others. For that reason, it is highly advisable to publish a written Health and Safety Policy. This emphasises how seriously an organisation takes its responsibilities and seeks to protect those potentially affected by its policies.

The Health and Safety Policy should:

- Be of an appropriate length, written in plain English and relevant to the

organisation's size and range of activities.

- The Policy's aims must be linked to the level of risk i.e. remain in perspective and relevant.
- Detail how safety will be managed, emphasising the organisation's commitment to health and safety.
- Outline allocation of responsibilities.
- Detail how specific activities and functions are managed, such as bank-clearing. This section can include Risk Assessments, Fire Safety, First Aid, Accident Reporting, Electrical Safety, Work Equipment, Hazardous Substances, Manual Handling and Water Safety.

It is essential that the Health and Safety Policy is regularly reviewed - particularly in the light of incidents occurring.

The Health and Safety Policy should also signpost to the Lone Working Policy.

The Health and Safety Policy should also include reference to a Risk Action Plan, helping to assess any relevant risks associated with volunteering activities.



A simple Risk Assessment would:

- Detail the activity involved.
- Identify all hazards, categorising whether minor or major risks.
- Decide whether existing precautions are adequate, or whether further or alternative steps could be taken.
- Record findings for future reference.
- Identify whether each risk is high, medium or low, depending on potential level of harm and number of people affected.
- Carry out any further precautions necessary to reduce risk or injury, prioritising levels of risk and consequence.
- Implement agreed measures from the Risk Action Plan to reduce risk.
- Monitor to ensure appropriate standards.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

⁸Guide to health and safety and creating a policy

⁹Health & Safety Executive guidance for voluntary groups

Lone Working Policy

A volunteer may find themselves undertaking an activity alone. This is known as 'lone working'. A 'lone worker' is defined by the Health & Safety Executive as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'.

Organisations are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of volunteers working either alone from home or out in the field, without close direct support or supervision. To protect lone workers, adequate systems must be put in place to reduce risks where reasonable and practicably possible.

This Policy also can help volunteers to think about and increase personal safety through an awareness of apparent risks.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

¹⁰Health & Safety Executive lone worker guidance

¹¹Lone working policy template

The organisation's Health and Safety Policy should also be signposted.

Safeguarding Policy

A Safeguarding Policy is necessary to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Please note that only certain volunteering roles and activities are eligible for Disclosure & Barring Service (previously the Criminal Records Bureau) checks. It is an offence to apply for a DBS check if the role is ineligible.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

¹²The Angling Trust safeguarding guidance

Equality Policy

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the grounds of their:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

And from the following kinds of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Disability
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments

In 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that volunteers are not protected by the same provisions as employees.

Nonetheless, it is unacceptable to discriminate against volunteers. Everyone should have the right to enjoy their volunteering in an environment free from the threat of discrimination, intimidation, harassment and abuse. Any discriminatory behaviour must be taken seriously and dealt with as per the Complaints Policy.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

¹³NCVO equality guidance and policy template

¹⁴The Big Lottery Community Fund volunteer equality guide

Privacy Policy

The rules around personal data, requiring organisations to be more accountable and transparent, are set out in the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which came into force on 25 May 2018.

All organisations should have a Privacy Policy (also known as a 'Privacy Notice') detailing how data is treated, which should be provided to all staff, volunteers and members, as appropriate. This also provides users details of the organisation's location and contact details and identifies any third party that data may be shared with, explaining for what purpose.

The Information Commissioner's Office is responsible for implementing the new Act and GDPR. The ICO's website provides a wealth of information: <https://ico.org.uk/>, and a telephone service exists for small organisations: **0303 123 1113, option 4**.

If an organisation collects and holds personal data, such as contact details and application forms, there is a legal obligation to treat that data with respect and be responsible for its security. This means that personal data must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed.
- Processed for limited purposes.
- Adequate and relevant, limited to what is necessary.
- Not maintained in such a way that individuals can be identified from it any longer than necessary.
- Processed in a manner ensuring the security and integrity of the data.

'Sensitive' personal data, such as criminal convictions and medical history, is subject to separate conditions.

There are no specific guidelines regarding how long volunteer records should be kept. The NCVO's advice is that data should not be kept on a volunteer for any longer than for the purpose recorded - for example, data concerning someone who has enquired regarding but not pursued volunteering with the organisation should be deleted.

Fish Legal provides advice sheets on data protection law, privacy notices and privacy statements specifically for Fish Legal members, email: admin@fishlegal.net.

Complaints Policy

All organisations using volunteers should strive to create an environment in which volunteers feel valued. It is important to provide a Complaints Policy, providing reassurance that in the event of an issue arising which cannot be informally resolved, a written process exists to provide an open and fair way for volunteers to make their concerns known, enabling complaints to be resolved quickly.

When a volunteer has a grievance concerning the organisation or an individual, this can be distressing. The Complaints Policy should take volunteers' concerns seriously and seek to address any concerns or complaint.

There should be three stages:

- **An informal stage**, in which the volunteer first discusses the problem with their line manager, who should try to resolve the issue. If inappropriate for the volunteer to take the complaint to their line manager, it can be reported to any manager (or committee member), who should also try to resolve things informally.
- **A formal stage**, if the volunteer is dissatisfied with the informal resolution, they can complain in writing to their manager, or if inappropriate another manager. A meeting must be held between the complainant and person(s) involved, to discuss the complaint. The volunteer has a right to be accompanied at such a meeting. Afterwards, the organisation should provide the volunteer, within 10 working days, details of the response and outcome.
- **An appeal stage**, should the volunteer be dissatisfied with the outcome. This should be heard by an Appeals Subcommittee; whose decision is final.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

¹⁵NCVO advice on complaints policies

Expenses Policy

The golden rule is that volunteers must never be out-of-pocket. However, every year sports clubs are penalised by HMRC for paying volunteers for services, which happens if volunteers are paid *more* than actual out-of-pocket expenses. In addition, the volunteer

can claim to have worker/employee rights, and demand minimum wage, which can cause the organisation serious problems in the event of any dispute.

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses whilst volunteering can include:

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering or other location.
- Meals.
- Accommodation for overnight stays.
- Care of dependents.
- Postage, phone calls, stationery etc for the organisation.
- Cost of protective clothing/special equipment.
- Cost of relevant training.

A flat rate, however, must not be paid, only the actual cost, preferably supported by receipts. If HMRC proves the volunteer profited in any way, then this could be considered a payment.

It is important to note that HMRC treats benefits such as free membership as a payment for services, equating to the membership's value, and is therefore taxable.

Any expenses should be claimed using an approved claim form.

In summary, only pay:

- For out-of-pocket expenses upon receipt of a claim form.
- For car travel upon receipt of a mileage claim form.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

¹⁶NCVO advice on volunteer expenses

¹⁷Government information on volunteers' rights and expenses

Insurance Policy

Organisations are obliged to have the right insurance cover for their volunteer activities, which should include:

- Employer's Liability or Public Liability insurance, covering a volunteer being harmed owing to the organisation's negligence.
- Public Liability insurance covering both the organisation and volunteer in the event of a third party being injured through a volunteer's actions.

Depending upon the type of activity involved, Professional Indemnity insurance may also be required, covering claims arising from loss or injury caused by services provided negligently or without reasonable care.

When purchasing an insurance policy:

- Ensure the policy explicitly mentions and covers volunteers.
- Check if there are upper and lower age limits for volunteers.
- Ensure that the policy covers the type of volunteering activities involved.
- Conduct a risk assessment for the volunteering role/s, helping the insurer identify the best policy and cover.

Personal home insurance also sometimes covers an individual for certain volunteering activity, so the volunteer should be encouraged to check this.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

¹⁸Volunteer Now information on volunteers and insurance

¹⁹Angling Trust insurance for anglers, clubs, syndicates, fisheries and riparian owners

²⁰The British Insurance Brokers' Association's guide to volunteering insurance products



Social Media Policy

Social media has become a massive part of many people's everyday lives. Online platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are extensively used to share experiences and opinions. This can be extremely positive and helpful, particularly for communication and promotion, but if abused can have negative implications. Volunteers can be enormously helpful to promote positive messages online. However, to protect all involved, they should be made aware that their online conduct could reflect upon the organisation.

To clarify what is acceptable and what isn't, provide a Social Media Policy, written in plain English. The following key points could be included:

- Use common sense - if you're unsure whether a post is appropriate, don't post it.
- Be respectful, kind and civil - volunteers are ambassadors for the organisations they support and must not engage in discriminatory or hateful comments about anyone online (which could be a criminal offence).
- Remember that posts are often permanent and reflect on your Club - ensure posts communicate the right message about the Club and its members. Be inclusive, be open, and friendly!
- Always acknowledge the work of others and ensure permission has been sought from the copyright owner before sharing material.
- Do not disclose confidential information, especially of a personal nature.
- Ideally, social media accounts used for promotion should be created using a

club, not a personal email address, and individuals authorised to post via that account should be provided passwords.

- Passwords should be protected, and any indication of hacking must be raised immediately with the social media platform involved.
- There should be a consequence to a volunteer (or member) failing to comply with a club's Social Media Policy, which could ultimately lead to termination of the volunteering arrangement.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

²¹[NCVO social media policy template](#)

Please also see the section on 'The Importance of Digital Awareness' below.

Preparing for the Future

The Importance of Diversity Awareness

The concept of diversity is broader than equality. It is not just about preventing discrimination but recognising that we are all different, and those differences should be respected. This creates an environment where everyone is valued. This is called 'inclusivity' - because no-one is excluded on any basis, and all are welcome.

Diversity in Volunteering involves two things:

- A varied body of volunteers.
- A varied selection of volunteering roles.

The benefits of this are:

- An inclusive and more positive image of the organisation is presented.
- Wider community representation with

volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

- A broader range of skills, experience, and ideas.
- Role models that can encourage others to participate.
- Increased understanding and confidence in working with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Wider sources of funding can be accessed.

That the organisation welcomes diversity and is inclusive should be widely promoted and all members should be made aware of its importance.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

²²[NCVO on the importance of diversity](#)

The Importance of Digital Awareness

Whilst we now live in a digital age, the fact is that angling has an ageing demographic. Research by Angling Trust National Regions Manager, John Cheyne, identified that the average age of anglers is rising, and most committees are run by males over sixty. Many clubs are losing members, and modern anglers, especially the young, are increasingly disconnected from clubs due to the availability of commercial fisheries.

One of the reasons for this is communications, older people preferring traditional methods whilst younger people are engaged with modern, online, digital platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. To reach younger people especially, therefore, clubs must understand and use free, modern, communication channels, including a website with a means of conveniently taking out membership online using, say,

PayPal. To be properly effective, any user-friendly website must be linked to wider promotion, drawing attention to it - and the best way to do this, cheaply or free, is via social media.

Clubs engaging with social media appear as forward-thinking and modern, appealing to a wider audience and age range. This could also be helpful in attracting younger people to volunteer for roles within angling clubs. Today, many young people recognise that volunteering can provide important experience otherwise unobtainable, which can be of great benefit to a personal CV. This is a 'Key Selling Point' when trying to attract younger volunteers, reaching them through modern media.

An ideal person to get involved with modernising a club's digital understanding and presence could well be a younger volunteer appointed for this purpose.

When using Facebook, clubs can create their own page, appointing an administrator to add members and moderate posts if necessary. Free online courses are available on using social media, such as this one from the eMarketing Institute:

<https://www.emarketinginstitute.org/free-courses/social-media-marketing-certification-course/>

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

²³[How to create a Facebook account](#)

²⁴[How to set up a Twitter account](#)

²⁵[NCVO advice on modern communications and the media](#)

Recruitment, Training, Management & Motivation of Volunteers

According to Sport England, seven out of ten clubs need more volunteers - and angling clubs are especially heavily reliant upon volunteers. A barrier, especially for those in work, is a lack of time and the need to put paid employment first. This is one reason why many volunteers in angling are retired - which is a positive, given the huge professional and life experience of retirees. However, it is important to attract young people for succession planning.

Properly thought-out policies concerning volunteering will ensure that roles, procedures and expectations are clearly defined, emphasising that the organisation is committed to providing a positive volunteering experience.

Clubs already have a pool of potential volunteers from their members, but volunteers do not necessarily need to be members of the club concerned. Promoting the recruitment of volunteers to a wider audience will also increase the potential experience available. Volunteers should be provided training relevant to their role, be supported and supervised. Most importantly, volunteers should be made aware that their efforts are valued - and that feedback is welcomed.

In life, priorities fluctuate, so it is important to understand that whilst someone may enthusiastically volunteer for a while, this may not be indefinite. A change in circumstances can lead to a reduction or ceasing of the volunteering activity, which should be sympathetically viewed. This is known as 'episodic' volunteering.

Useful links: (see Appendix pages 14-15)

²⁶Volunteering Matters advice on recruitment

²⁷NCVO on the volunteer recruitment process

²⁸NCVO on supervising volunteers

²⁹NCVO on managing and retaining volunteers

Conclusion

This Guide is intended as a starting point for angling clubs to ensure that existing processes are legally and ethically compliant and reflect Best Practice when engaging volunteers. It is not definitive but covers the key points, providing links to more detailed further information or helpful resources.

To prepare angling for the future, clubs must carefully consider their current use of volunteers, updating and upgrading policies and processes as necessary. Equally important is ensuring a positive volunteering experience - which can only benefit angling.

The Angling Trust is a member of the NCVO, through which advice and resources can be accessed. Should any further help, advice or signposting to information and resources be required, please contact:

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This Guide can also be accessed via the Angling Trust website www.anglingtrust.net, where all future updates and useful information will be added.



Appendix

¹Volunteer policy framework guidelines

<https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/10/Volunteer-Policy-Framework.pdf>

²Guide to volunteer agreements

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/keeping/volunteer-agreements>

³Writing volunteer role descriptions

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/recruiting/writing>

⁴Role description templates

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/guidance/all-guidance-and-templates/>

⁵Angling Trust code of practice for staff, officials and volunteers

<https://www.anglingtrust.net/page.asp?section=1451§iontitle=governance>

⁶Angling Trust Volunteer Handbook

<https://www.anglingtrust.net/page.asp?section=161§ionTitle=Volunteering+in+Angling+with+the+Angling+Trust>

⁷How to write a volunteer handbook

<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/how-to-create-a-volunteer-handbook-for-your-nonprofit-4172313>

⁸Guide to health and safety and creating a policy

<https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/health-and-safety/>

⁹Health & Safety Executive guidance for voluntary groups

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/index.htm>

¹⁰Health & Safety Executive lone worker guidance

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm>

¹¹Lone working policy template

https://www.northumberlandcva.org.uk/files/volunteer%20factsheets/Sample_Volunteer_Safety_and_Lone_Working_Policy_v1_0_07_12_16.pdf

¹²The Angling Trust safeguarding guidance

<http://www.childreninangling.org/policies/angling-trust-safeguarding-policy>

¹³NCVO equality guidance and policy template

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/hr/equality-and-diversity>

¹⁴The Big Lottery Community Fund volunteer equality guide

https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/equality_matters.pdf

¹⁵NCVO advice on complaints policies

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/operations/policies-and-procedures/Complaintspolicysampled.pdf>

¹⁶NCVO advice on volunteer expenses

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/keeping/volunteer-expenses>

¹⁷Government information on volunteers' rights and expenses

<https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses>

¹⁸Volunteer Now information on volunteers and insurance

https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/03/Volunteering-and-Insurance-Information-Sheet_NL.pdf

¹⁹Angling Trust insurance for anglers, clubs, syndicates, fisheries and riparian owners

<https://www.anglingtrust.net/page.asp?section=228§ionTitle=Official+Insurance+Scheme+for+Angling+Trust+Affiliated+members>

²⁰The British Insurance Brokers' Association's guide to volunteering insurance products

<https://www.biba.org.uk/>

²¹NCVO social media policy template

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/how-to/how-to-create-a-social-media-policy>

²²NCVO on the importance of diversity

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/hr/equality-and-diversity>

²³How to create a Facebook account

<https://www.facebook.com/help/188157731232424?helpref=topq>

²⁴How to set up a Twitter account

<https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/create-twitter-account>

²⁵NCVO advice on modern communications and the media

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/campaigns/communications>

²⁶Volunteering Matters advice on recruitment

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/volunteer-recruitment-getting-word-out/>

²⁷NCVO on the volunteer recruitment process

https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/recruiting/copy_of_process

²⁸NCVO on supervising volunteers

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/keeping/supporting-volunteers>

²⁹NCVO on managing and retaining volunteers

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/keeping>



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