



GWNW Group

VOLUNTEER POLICY AND PROCEDURE

HR/52

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY TRACKING SHEET

Note:

Following the introduction of this tracking sheet in July 2009 viewers will be able to track when and where changes to this policy have been made, thus providing reassurance that the policy is up to date with current legislation.

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Action	Date	Author	Section Modified (page no/paragraph)		Reason for Change
Approved by HR Subgroup	October 2012				
Approved by Board	November 2012				
Updated Approved by HR Subgroup	August 2023	LC	4 5 6	5 5 8	Updates needed due to Investing in Volunteering re-accreditation

Policy

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Groundwork Group (GWNW, Wild Ground, Refurbs Flintshire). It is of relevance to all within Groundwork Group, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is endorsed by the Board of Trustees of Groundwork Group.

1. Commitment

Groundwork Group recognises the right that people have to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering. It also acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. Groundwork Group values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Groundwork Group recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

2. Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

3. Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Groundwork Group and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

In the unlikely event of industrial action, volunteers will not be used during these times to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise, Groundwork Group cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are

acknowledged – both of what Groundwork Group expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of Groundwork Group.

4. Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated Groundwork Group staff member will be explicitly referred to in all relevant volunteer role descriptions within Groundwork Group.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within Groundwork Group is the Head of Operations.

This person is responsible for the management and welfare of Groundwork Group volunteers.

5. Recruitment & Selection

Groundwork Group is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.

The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by Groundwork Group in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

The Volunteer recruitment journey will be set out on our website to give Volunteers the opportunity to understand the processes we have in place to support their application to become a volunteer. Taster sessions will be available in some instances for volunteers to try volunteering before signing up as a regular volunteer.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with Groundwork Group or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

Volunteers will be required to apply for a DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) for an Enhanced Disclosure check if the volunteer role involves working with children. This regulated activity check is as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act.

Following changes to legislation in September 2012, Groundwork Group is no longer able to apply for a DBS Enhanced Disclosure check if the volunteer role involves working with vulnerable adults.

Groundwork Group reserves the right not to offer volunteer opportunities to individuals who have had cautions and / or convictions for any history of;

- sexual offences
- anything that could form the basis of a criminal prosecution

Volunteers will have a clear and concise role description, which will be subsequently reviewed every year.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into Groundwork Group of Organisations.

Volunteers will be given clear communication on the boundaries and expectations of volunteering through our Volunteer Agreement which sets the boundary for the relationship between the Groundwork Group and the Volunteer.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

6. Health & Safety

Volunteers will be made aware of Groundwork Group health and safety policies and procedures during their induction and whilst on site during their volunteering.

Volunteers are expected to follow health and safety guidance and instructions to ensure they are safe.

All sites and volunteering opportunities are risk assessed to account for the varying needs of volunteers and the work they will do. Groundwork Group takes its responsibilities to volunteers seriously to ensure they are safe whilst volunteering.

Groundwork Group will provide all necessary personal protective equipment needed by volunteers during their volunteering.

7. Training & Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all Groundwork Group relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, child protection and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for Groundwork Group in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of their line manager to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those staff with direct responsibility for same.

8. Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have a line manager to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Staff will be given training on supervision and relationship management of volunteers and will adhere to the Volunteer Agreement ensuring we meet all expectations of support requirements when working with volunteers.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and their line manager.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with Groundwork Group wider staff, at team meetings etc.

Groundwork Group formally recognise the contribution of volunteers through an internal awards system, celebration events and with a certificate of Recognition of Achievements.

9. Expenses

Groundwork Group recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in travelling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.

Groundwork Group volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from Groundwork Group and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

Groundwork Group has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer's line manager to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

10. Insurance

Groundwork Group liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

Groundwork Group does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

11. Confidentiality

Groundwork Group will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by

Groundwork Group relating to the volunteer. We will comply with the data protection principles when gathering and using personal information, as set out in our policies.

12. Settling Differences

Groundwork Group aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. Groundwork Group seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on Groundwork Group complaints procedure.

The Head of Operations is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by Groundwork Group to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, Groundwork Group complaints policies and procedures will be referred to.

Volunteer Agreement

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between Groundwork Group and you. We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your Volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your Volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding.

Part 1: You can expect from us:

1. Induction and training

- To provide a thorough induction on the work of Groundwork Group, its staff, your volunteering role and the induction and/or training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role. The Volunteer Handbook provides full details of the organisation.

2. Supervision, support and flexibility

- To explain the standards we expect for our services and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them;
- To provide a named person who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any successes and problems;
- To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.

3. Expenses

- To reimburse these expenses following the procedures in the Volunteer Handbook. Travel to and from home to {the place of Volunteering} and during your work. See the Volunteer Handbook for rules on methods of travel and car mileage allowances
- Please keep all your receipts to give to us when we reimburse your expenses.

4. Health and safety

- To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, further guidance of which is in the Volunteer Handbook and Volunteer Policy.

5. No- Smoking Policy

- Groundwork Group aims to provide and maintain a healthy work environment, to protect all employees and volunteers from the harmful effects of passive smoking and to ensure compliance with laws that ban smoking in public places (including workplaces). As such smoking is not permitted anywhere within Groundwork or Group of subsidiaries premises or grounds. This ban also applies to 'electronic cigarettes' which will, for the purposes of this policy, be treated in the same way as cigarettes. Designated smoking areas are made available and agreed on each site.

Smoking is not permitted within any of the delivery vehicles, including leased vehicles.

6. Insurance

- To provide adequate insurance cover for Volunteers whilst carrying out their volunteering roles which have been approved and authorised by us.

7. Equal opportunities

- To ensure that all Volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy. We work to ensure all our support is inclusive of all needs and suitable for varying abilities.

8. Problems

- To try to resolve fairly any problems, complaints and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us;
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the procedures set out in the Volunteer Handbook and Volunteer Policy please contact your volunteer manager for guidance.

9. Confidentiality

- To recognise the need for confidentiality when dealing with personal information. Groundwork will only share personal information if they believe a volunteer is at risk of significant harm. Under such circumstances we would aim to share information only with the consent or knowledge of the volunteer involved.

Part 2: The Volunteer

We expect you:

- To help Groundwork Group fulfil its services.
- To perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability.
- To follow Groundwork Group procedures and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its Staff, Volunteers and Clients.
- To treat your colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass others. In some situations, we may be at risk of being responsible for your behaviour so we will not tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour.
- To maintain the confidential information of Groundwork Group and of its clients. In the course of carrying out voluntary activities, a person may hear information which is confidential. The importance of discretion in such cases cannot be over emphasised. If you are unsure about whether you should disclose information which you think may be confidential, please ask your line manager.
- To meet the time commitments and standards which have been mutually agreed to and to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made when this is not possible.
- To provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to DBS checks being carried out where necessary in line with the regulated activity checklist.

This agreement is binding in honour only, is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.