

H & W Welders Football Club – Volunteer policy

Statement of policy

H & W Welders Football Club is a community focused football club largely run and organised by volunteers. We aim to promote and support high quality volunteering activity. We acknowledge the important contribution made by volunteers in our own work and recognise that without them, we would not achieve our sporting, social, recreational or educational goals. We aim to present a model of good practice in volunteer management. We regard volunteers as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the organisation and within all appropriate activities. We aim to train, support, and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.

The club is committed to equal opportunities and the promotion of the UEFA 10 point plan.

Procedural Guidelines

1. General Principles

1.1 Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on all aspects of volunteering. It does not constitute a binding contract. It supplements other policies and procedures, as well as our definition of volunteering, our mission and our value base. These procedures apply to all volunteers, including volunteers elected to the club's committee.

1.2 Responsibility

The club will appoint a volunteer co-ordinator responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures and this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers (including voluntary Committee members) are expected to facilitate this process.

1.3 Eligibility

We will consider involving anyone as a volunteer. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the organisation. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation will be accepted as a volunteer.

1.4 Relationship with Paid Staff

Volunteers are appointed to enhance the capacity of paid staff, not as a substitute for them. Clear roles are established to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers to foster mutually beneficial and complimentary relationships.

1.5 Working conditions

Volunteers are treated as full members of team. They are treated as equally and fairly as paid staff and are included in the organisation's functions and decision making processes wherever practical. Volunteers are provided with appropriate work sites and have access to the space, equipment and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably.

1.6 Working Times

Working times are negotiated between the Volunteer Manager and the volunteer and are as flexible as the tasks allow. Voluntary time commitment is not expected to match that of full-time paid staff, but unscheduled absences and create organisational problems. When expecting to be absent volunteers should inform the organisation as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

1.7 Appropriate Behaviour

Volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of the organisation and adhere to its ethos. As representatives of the organisation, they are responsible for presenting a positive image to the outside world.

1.8 Representation

Volunteers must seek prior approval from the Volunteer Manager before undertaking anything which might significantly affect the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

1.9 Confidentiality

We respect the volunteers right to privacy and confidentially. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering.

1.10 Records

A volunteer register will be maintained by the volunteer manager / Co-ordinator. A system of records is maintained on all volunteers, including their 'Volunteer Position Description', duties performed, evaluation of work, etc. Volunteer records are accorded the same confidentiality as staff records.

1.11 Service is at the discretion the organisation

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of the organisation. We may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate volunteers' relationships with the club. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationship with the club. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, preferably in writing.

2. Recruitment

2.1 Role descriptions and person specifications

Like paid staff, volunteers require a clear and accurate description of the tasks and responsibilities they are expected to undertake. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a role description should be developed for each voluntary opportunity. This must include a title of the volunteering role, starting and finishing dates, hours and place of work, name so supervisor and tasks to be undertaken. If appropriate, a brief person specification may also be drawn up. The role description may be amended in joint agreement with the volunteer and the volunteer manager. A copy of the final version must be given to the volunteer before commencing voluntary work as it will be used in supervision and evaluation sessions. Role descriptions must define a time limit (no longer than one year) for voluntary involvement, after which time they are reviewed, and updated if appropriate.

2.2 Applications

H &W Welders Football Club implements a fair, effective and open system in the recruitment and selection of volunteers and treats all information collected in the process confidentially. Potential volunteers may apply speculatively. Volunteers are recruited in a manner appropriate to the role and in accordance with the clubs equal opportunities policy. All volunteers are required to complete an application form.

2.3 Discussion Interviews

If necessary, applications are short listed and suitable candidates are invited to attend an informal chat with the volunteer Manager, to ascertain their interest in suitability for the role. This process should be friendly, informal and conducted (if not by the volunteer Manager) by a suitably briefed person. Written records of all interviews are kept. All unsuccessful candidates are thanked for applying and encouraged to reapply for the other volunteering opportunities, either currently or in the future.

2.4 Check for Suitability

References are always taken up, if the role requires it, child protection, health (mental and physical) and/or police screening are also undertaken. Other checks may also be completed (for example, ascertaining professional qualifications). Volunteers are always warned in advance of the intention to make these checks.

2.5 Appointment

Formal appointments are made only after the role description has been agreed and all necessary checks have proved acceptable. No placements are made unless the requirements of the volunteer and the volunteer's supervisor can be met.

2.6 'Probation' – Trial Period

All placements are subject to an initial trial period of one month. At the end of this period, the volunteer manager meets with the volunteer to discuss the volunteer's suitability for their role. At this point, volunteers may continue in their current role, be reassigned to a more suitable role, or to be asked to leave.

3. Training

3.1 Induction

All volunteers should receive induction when they begin voluntary work. This consists of a general introduction to the organisation, as well as a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of their volunteering role. Volunteers will also receive an induction pack, or Club Information pack containing useful information about the club. The pack will normally include this volunteer Policy, a Club Staff/Personnel Structure, a contacts list for the Board/Committee, an emergency Contacts list, information on expenses Claims and appropriate policies.

3.2 On-The-Job Training

Volunteers receive initial and on-going on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their tasks well. The training must be appropriate for the demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer. Volunteers are encouraged to suggest appropriate training opportunities to their immediate supervisor or to the Volunteer coordinator.

3.3 Additional Training

Volunteers are actively encouraged to identify training courses, seminars, conferences, and so on, which would help them to perform their roles better and which would aid their personal development. Approval to undertake such training is approved only sufficient funds are available. Priority is given to long last standing volunteers and those who have received little or no training in the past.

4. Supervision

4.1 Lines of Communication

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings relevant to their assignments. Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions which would substantially affect their volunteering conditions.

4.2 Supervisors

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the day-to-day management of that volunteer.

4.3 Supervision sessions

Volunteers and their supervisors should meet as regularly as appropriate to review their work, based on their role descriptions. These review the performance of the volunteer, suggest any changes in the work style, seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with the club, convey appreciation to the volunteer, and ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in his or her role. The sessions also serve as an opportunity to plan future tasks.

4.4 Corrective Action

If appropriate, corrective action may be taken following evaluation sessions. Examples include the organisation of training for an identified training need, the reassignment of a volunteer, or the dismissal of a volunteer.

4.5 Dismissal

Volunteers who do not agree to the clubs rules or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be subject to the termination of the Volunteer arrangement. No volunteer's involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible termination with their supervisor. Grounds for termination include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, misuse of equipment and materials, abuse of clients and co-workers, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide by organizational policies and procedures, and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

4.6 Concerns and Grievances

H &W Welders Football Club aims to reflect the voluntary nature of our relationship with volunteers in all our policies and procedures for managing their involvement. Therefore, the volunteers designated supervisor will deal with minor complaints of grievances about or by volunteers. In the case of serious complaints, as specified in the Code of Practice, the matter will be considered by the Board/Committee. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be handed over to the PSNI. If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately; they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by the club committee. The chairperson will discuss the issue as soon as practical after receiving a written complaint, and take appropriate action. In this event, the decision of the Chair is final.

4.7 Exit interviews

Where possible, informal exit interviews may be held with any volunteers who are leaving the club, either because they have reached the end of their project, or are leaving for some other reason. Interviews are usually conducted with the volunteer's ex-supervisor and written records may be kept. The session should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they offer to improve the way volunteering within the club operates. The offer of a personal reference for future employment etc. is made to each volunteer.

5. Support and recognition

5.1 Support

We endeavour to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary work. Support forms part of the regular supervision sessions and gives volunteers a safe setting in which to express themselves, 'let off steam' or discuss how they feel about volunteering. The volunteer manager will always try to be available to volunteers who require support in other areas which are affecting their performance.

5.2 Recognition

Volunteers provide a unique service to the organisation, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. Staff are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation. The volunteer manager is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times, such as Volunteers Week, anniversaries of involvement, Christmas or Birthdays.

5.3 Expenses

Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge, so it is essential that we endeavour to reimburse any out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the club. The costs of volunteering should not be allowed to discourage those on low incomes, particularly as these are often the very people who have the time to volunteer. Current rates and procedures for claiming expenses will be set out by the volunteer manager. Use of official club claim forms is a pre-requisite to any payments.

5.4 Insurance

Insurance is provided to cover all volunteers working on behalf and at the direction of the organisation. Divers using their cars in connection with voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover.

5.5 Personal and vocational development

Volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while involved with the organisation and are assisted into assuming additional and greater responsibilities over time, if they desire this.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 Volunteer involvement

We monitor and evaluate volunteer involvement in the organisation on a regular basis and seek to make on-going improvements.

6.2 Feedback

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It must be given to the senior staff member who will ensure that it is considered fully.

6.3 Review

This document will be reviewed by the committee on a regular basis.