



TIR COED VOLUNTEERING POLICY & PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Definition: volunteering is activity undertaken freely, by choice, for public/community benefit and not for financial gain. The good management of volunteers is of necessity more about good practice than meeting legal obligations. The reason for this is that there is no legislation that specifically covers volunteer workers. In law there is no definition of what constitutes a volunteer worker, or what differentiates a volunteer worker from a paid employee.

The work of Tir Coed is dependant upon volunteer input in many guises, from Trustees directing the work of Tir Coed, through to volunteer workers within our conservation and education programmes. For that reason we wish to be clear about the support and management that Tir Coed volunteers can expect. What follows is the voluntary commitment of minimum standards that Tir Coed will follow.

SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers will be recruited by a number of means:

Word of Mouth

The best possible advertisement for Tir Coed is through positive recommendation by happy and fulfilled volunteers

Social Media

Using various social media platforms to promote the benefits of Tir Coed's work and to reach a broad spectrum of potential volunteers

Public Spaces

Tir Coed will place posters in libraries and other buildings with public access to promote the benefits of volunteering to conservation and the satisfaction that can be gained from volunteering.

Umbrella Organisations

Local Voluntary Councils, volunteer bureau and youth organisations will be updated on volunteering opportunities within Tir Coed on a regular basis.

SELECTION

When prospective volunteers contact Tir Coed, the designated Volunteer Leader (who may be a staff member or freelance tutor) will have an initial discussion with the volunteer to consider the various volunteering roles available, read the role description and assess suitability for their preferred role. The Volunteer Leader will try to match volunteers with roles which suit their skills and aspirations. If the volunteer is not deemed suitable for a specific role for any reason, this should be made clear to them and they should be signposted to the local volunteer bureau.

When both parties are satisfied with regard to suitability, volunteers will be asked to complete a Tir Coed Volunteer info form with contact details, medical requirements, parental consent (if necessary) and what they hope to achieve through the volunteering programme.

Police Checks

Where volunteers are working with vulnerable people (children, elderly people or people with mental health problems) Tir Coed should carry out a DBS check.

Tir Coed will request an Enhanced Disclosure form from the CRU on behalf of the Volunteer and will check and countersign the form. A DBS check will not take place until Tir Coed is satisfied that the volunteer is satisfactory in other respects; this implies that they will have been successfully interviewed concerning the work they are to undertake. DBS checking of Volunteers is free of charge.

The results of the DBS check are presented to the applicant and to Tir Coed.

The following points are important in terms of ensuring that Tir Coed does not infringe the civil liberties of the volunteer

- **A DBS check should not take place before a satisfactory meeting**
- **The privacy of the volunteer must be protected**
- **DBS Disclosure information must only be seen by those who absolutely need to see it for operational reasons**
- **Records must be kept securely and then destroyed after use**

Should offences be disclosed, the applicant may be allowed to volunteer at the discretion of the management of Tir Coed, if the offences are of a type that does not affect the work considered and pose no threat to vulnerable people.

Insurance Cover

It is Tir Coed's responsibility to ensure that the volunteer is adequately covered by insurance for all activities that they undertake. Any unusual activity that may not be covered should be reported to a Tir Coed Project Officer, who will ensure that adequate cover has been provided, or is sought.

NOTE

The issue of selection is a difficult one within a voluntary organisation. A volunteer provides their time freely, and there is a school of thought that suggests that selection and the detailed processes above are otiose. But it cannot be stressed enough that the responsibility remains with Tir Coed for what takes place within the organisation's work plan and in which volunteers partake. This is in every way similar to the responsibility that Tir Coed has to its employees. While the law may not offer employment protection in the same way, Tir Coed is open to civil action and a heinous disregard of responsibilities may also be considered a criminal infringement. Thus having minimum standards of application procedure protects Tir Coed.

MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

INDUCTION, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Induction

Tir Coed is committed to ensuring that volunteers know they are an important part of the organisation. Tir Coed will run an introductory session for new volunteers as a group. This should cover issues such as the role of Tir Coed, its work programmes, its key conservation objectives and policies, how Tir Coed works with volunteers, who they report to and can complain to if they have a problem, and Tir Coed's policy on expenses. At this stage volunteers are told what is expected of them in terms of their

behaviour: that respect should be shown towards all other volunteers, staff, members of public and the environment at all times.

Specific task related induction will be delivered for each job to be undertaken.

Training

It is not unusual for volunteers (particularly in this sector) to volunteer out of a personal motivation to gain more skills in this area of work.

Where the volunteer is undertaking tasks using machines or tools, specific training will be given under the Health and Safety Codes of Practice. The Volunteer Leader will consider carefully what tasks can be safely undertaken by volunteers.

Supervision

The principle that should guide Tir Coed in terms of its supervision of volunteers is that, ultimately, Tir Coed may be held responsible for anything that the volunteer does.

It follows that volunteers must be supervised by the Volunteer Leader at all times. The Volunteer Leader can observe, train on the job, identify areas for future training, set goals and ensure that the volunteer is involved and appropriately busy.

Volunteer Leaders should make clear to the volunteers what is expected of them in each and every session. Volunteers should be listened to; their perspective may be valuable and Leaders should respect their contribution.

Volunteers do not have the same disciplinary grievance processes as employed staff. Tir Coed does however recognise that, from time to time, volunteers may feel that they have been dealt with unfairly. In such circumstances, the volunteer should discuss this with the Volunteer Leader. If they are not satisfied, they should follow our 'problem-solving' procedure in which a Project Co-ordinator, their Manager or, ultimately, a Trustee or even mediation may be involved. This cannot be laid down as disciplinary or grievance procedure, but it should be transparent, impartial and straightforward.

In theory, Tir Coed may ask an unsatisfactory volunteer to leave without fear of court action for unfair dismissal. In practice staff may need to consider a range of issues which the volunteer faces when dealing with volunteer difficulties and volunteers should have the opportunity for further training/supervision, as this may alleviate the situation, or for following a 'problem solving' procedure above.

Volunteer Status

While in law volunteers have very few rights, they are an important part of how Tir Coed achieves our aims and objectives. To ensure that Tir Coed maintains best practice in volunteer management we have adopted the following as policy:

- All written or verbal communication with volunteers will avoid describing the relationship between Tir Coed and its volunteers in terms of binding obligations;
- Volunteers will be supervised at all times;
- Tir Coed will differentiate between paid staff and volunteers in all of the relevant processes that might be used to manage them. For example, the grievance process for volunteers will be simpler than for paid staff and will be presented as a problem solving process rather than the more legally orientated policy for paid staff.
- In practice none of the above should mean that volunteers feel any less respected and valued than paid staff.

Recognition and Reward

How we recognise volunteers should be specific to the individual as some will enjoy public thanks, celebrations or certificates, and others will find the role intrinsically rewarding, just needed to know that their efforts make a positive difference. Volunteers can be recognised through regular supervision and other meetings, by listening, recognising their contribution, and saying "thanks."

Volunteer Expenses

Volunteer expenses will be reimbursed against actual expenditure and ideally against receipts. A simple form for expenses will be created and given to all volunteers.

What constitutes a legitimate expense is at the discretion of Tir Coed; however, the following will normally fall into the category of legitimate expenses:


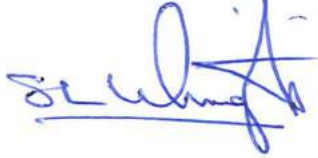
- Travel to and from the place of volunteering
- Travel in the course of volunteering
- Meals taken during the course of volunteering (up to a set value.)
- Protective clothing or other essential equipment

Promotion of the policy:

All Board members, staff and volunteers will receive a copy of this policy and be aware of its contents and requirements.

Monitoring:

Tir Coed will demonstrate its continuing commitment to the implementation of this policy by monitoring and reviewing every six months. The responsibility for this will lie with the Board of Directors.

	LAST REVIEWED
DATE:	28/11/18
SIGNED:	
POSITION:	CHAIR
SIGNED:	
POSITION:	VICE CHAIR
on behalf of Tir Coed Board of Directors	

Adopted: 10.08.2009
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