Section 3
VOLUNTEERS

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VOLUNTEERS

Introduction

A club is reliant on the commitment of volunteers to develop and progress. This section considers how a club can engage with, recruit and retain volunteers. Club management entails planning, finance, meetings, coaching, facility development, etc. The list of jobs is varied and requires time and a mixed skill set. A club will need a team of volunteers to complete the various tasks. Without an adequate number of volunteers many functions of your club may not be complete. This is a risk to all clubs and can escalate to the point where a club can no longer operate effectively. A team of volunteers, with specific roles are ultimately better placed to manage the club. How volunteers are welcomed into the club is hugely important. Volunteers come into clubs with different needs, expectations and skills. Managing this involves planning their recruitment, selection, orientation, training and appraisal. Primarily the aim is to attract the right volunteer to the right job and keep them.

Volunteer Recruitment & Selection

To assist in the effective recruitment of volunteers, clubs should understand why people volunteer, and the benefits that volunteering within a club may provide to the individual. This enables a club to target people in their community who may be interested in volunteering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why People Volunteer?</th>
<th>What are Benefits of Volunteering?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former players giving back.</td>
<td>Sense of pride.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a child playing for the club.</td>
<td>Gain experience (e.g. a new coach gets to use their skills to train a team).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of the game.</td>
<td>Coaching a sport, they love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked by a friend.</td>
<td>To pass on skills and knowledge of the game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take on a challenge.</td>
<td>Social interaction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For volunteer positions, the recruitment process is often informal. The majority of people who get involved are asked to do so by friends or they have children playing with the club. Therefore, once potential volunteers are identified a club should get someone known to them to discuss a voluntary position and gauge their interest. Potential volunteers should be provided with a realistic preview of what a job entails. Volunteers need to know the size and nature of the task ahead of them before committing to a position. This is where an adequately prepared role description is helpful. Details should include:

- Meeting times.
- Major tasks.
- Average weekly or monthly time commitment for the position.

Benefits and conditions need to be clearly specified so applicants can make an informed decision about whether a job might suit their skills, experience and availability. When recruiting, it is important to emphasise the benefits for volunteers rather than the needs of the club. Many volunteers give up their free time to help clubs and may not be attracted by a work-like recruitment campaign.
Selection
Key in the selection process is choosing the individual who best meets the requirements of a position. The selection process should involve a number of steps which include screening, interviews and reference checks.

A consideration in the selection process is whether an individual has the required accreditation (or is prepared to undertake relevant training), has some experience in working with others in a positive way, and is of good character. Remember, the FAI’s Garda Vetting & Child Welfare regulation must be followed at all times.

**TIP** – Appointing a person to a volunteer position as a last resort, may be more harmful in the long term than temporarily leaving the position vacant.

Clubs may assign a Volunteer Coordinator to manage this process. This role involves ensuring that the club has a recruitment and selection process that is followed and that volunteers in the club are supported. The primary duties of such a role will include:

**Volunteer Coordinator**

- Determining what volunteers are needed and why.
- Writing volunteer role descriptions.
- Planning & implementing the recruitment strategy.
- Organising induction and training of volunteers.
- Reporting to the committee.

Please see Section 7, Appendix O for a sample role description.

The following is a recruitment and selection checklist that can be used as a guide when creating a recruitment plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment and Selection Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify what positions need to be filled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare job descriptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target people for certain positions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get friends to ask potential volunteers to commit to the club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen applicants and select volunteers for interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct interviews and select volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check references</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Garda Vetting &amp; child welfare regulations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notify successful volunteers and set up a time for induction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The checklist should be incorporated into the club’s volunteer recruitment policy which will guide the recruitment and selection of volunteers.

Please see Section 7, Appendix P for a sample Volunteer Recruitment Policy.
**Inducting Volunteers**

Inducting volunteers is another key aspect of the recruitment process. An induction includes welcoming new members and giving them details about their new position, the day-to-day operations of the club and introducing them to other club members. For example, a newly appointed coach needs to know where the equipment is stored, how to access it, what times the facility opens and closes and what to do in case of an emergency. A well thought out induction process reduces stress on new volunteers, makes them feel welcome and will reduce the likelihood of them having difficulty getting up to speed.

Below is an Induction checklist a club can follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Induction Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide an induction document with all relevant information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a copy of the club constitution.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter Details of new volunteers into the club's register.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce key volunteers &amp; staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce the club's culture, history, aims, and ethos.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline the roles and responsibilities of key members of staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight the roles and responsibilities of the volunteer’s new position.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarise volunteers with facilities, equipment, and resources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarise volunteers with the club’s day-to-day operations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain safety policies and procedures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather and file copies of qualifications from each volunteer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retaining Volunteers**

Having recruited new volunteers, a club should strive to keep them active. The benefits of retaining volunteers include:

- Less time invested in the training and the development of new volunteers.
- The continuity of the club ethos is maintained.
- Establishment of a consistent and experienced team of volunteers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Retention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Have a welcome pack and induction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- See ‘Volunteer Induction Checklist’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Communicate with your volunteers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Clear, regular communication is vital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hold volunteer meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use text messaging or email for quick communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have a volunteer page or section in your club newsletter, social media accounts or website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hold one-to-one meetings where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Make sure they are enjoying the challenge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vary volunteer roles from time to time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Give recognition and reward ‘say ‘Thank You!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide and ask for feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make the volunteer feel valued.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volunteering is the gift of time, and it is important that those within your club do not feel overstretched. While volunteers have responsibilities within the club, the club also has responsibilities to the volunteer.

All clubs are responsible for:

- Treating volunteers with respect.
- Aiming to provide a suitable role for the volunteer.
- Informing volunteers about the club, its ethos, policies and procedures.
- Providing training for the position where necessary.
- Providing an outline of a role description.
- Encouraging feedback from volunteers.
- Providing recognition through expressions of appreciation.
- Providing sound guidance and direction.

Volunteer responsibilities include:

- Being prompt and reliable in reporting for scheduled tasks, training or games.
- Keeping note of the hours they have committed to the club.
- Notifying the relevant person(s) as early as possible if they are unable to work as scheduled.
- Attending induction and training sessions that have been organised by the club.
- Being considerate, respecting the ability of others, and working as a member of the team.
- Carrying out assignments in good spirit and seeking assistance where necessary.
- Accepting the right of the club to dismiss any volunteer for poor performance/attendance.
- Declining tasks that are not acceptable to them.
- Maintaining an open mind about other people's standards and values.
- Communicating personal limitations such as time constraints and transportation needs.
- Providing feedback, suggestions, and recommendations to the relevant committee.
- Giving notice if they cannot continue in their volunteer position.
- Respecting and adhere to club policies and procedures.
CHILD WELFARE AND SAFEGUARDING

Introduction

The Football Association of Ireland is committed to ensuring that children can participate in all football activities in a safe environment. Football provides an excellent opportunity for children to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their potential as members of teams and as individuals. Participation in football should be fun, enjoyable and, provide a platform to learn and develop life skills. It helps children make new friends and enhance personal growth. The safety and welfare of all children is paramount. It is the responsibility of all adults involved in football to actively promote best practice standards while being ever vigilant and aware of their responsibilities.

Garda Vetting and the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy

The FAI is a registered organisation with the Gardaí for Garda Vetting. Garda Vetting is a process which involves an individual giving consent to the disclosure of information by the National Vetting Bureau to the FAI pursuant to Section 13 (4)(e) National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016. The FAI has in place a Child Welfare and Safeguarding Committee that review all disclosures sent to them through the Garda Vetting process. It is the responsibility of the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Manager and the Child Welfare and Safeguarding Committee to determine a person’s suitability to work with children or vulnerable persons based on the disclosures received. For more information on the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Committee, please see the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.

Garda Vetting must be completed before the commencement of any position for those working with children and vulnerable persons in any capacity. This approach is in line with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, the FAI Rulebook, the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017. Garda Vetting is not a substitute for safe recruitment but provides another element in determining a individual’s suitability for a position through standard recruitment processes including interviews and reference checks.

Each club that provides services to children is also required to do a child risk assessment, signed off by their committee and returned to childwelfare@fai.ie. Each club must then complete a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS). The CSS must be displayed and accessible to all.

For more information on Garda Vetting and the club’s responsibilities as well as a sample risk assessment and a sample CSS please see the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.

Child Welfare and Safeguarding Roles

All Clubs are required to have two key roles in place in order to fulfil the Child welfare and safeguarding roles and responsibilities within the service. These two roles are Club Children’s Officer and Designated Liaison Person.

Club Children’s Officer shall:

- Act as a resource to members with regard to Children’s issues and also ensure that Children have a voice in the running of the club and can freely talk about their experiences.
- Be familiar with the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding policy, Complaints and Disciplinary procedures, Social Media Policy and any other relevant guidelines.

http://www.fai.ie/domestic
- Undertake the role of Children’s Officer, the individual must have completed the Safeguarding 1 and Safeguarding 2 courses.
- Ensure the club have a completed Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement.

Please see Section 7, Appendix F for a sample role description for the Club Children’s Officer.

Designated Liaison Person shall:

- Be the Chairperson who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of Children.
- Be responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.
- Undertake the role of Designated Liaison Person, the individual must have completed the Safeguarding training 1 and Safeguarding 3 course.

Please refer to Section 7, Appendix Q for a role description of the Designated Liaison Person.

Reporting Child Welfare Concerns

The FAI treat all concerns reported under the Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy in a serious manner and in line with the principles laid out in the policy. Reporting child welfare concerns and abuse can follow two avenues as shown in the table on page 37 of this guide. The approach taken depends on whether the concern or complaint is based on poor practice, a breach of the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy or suspected child abuse.

Judgement about whether an incident is one of child abuse or poor practice may not be possible at the point of referral, but only after the collation of relevant information. The majority of poor practice concerns should be dealt with directly by the club in the first instance and then the league, affiliate, provincial body and then the FAI.

For further information on reporting and dealing with sanctions please refer to the FAI’s Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy and the full Concern / Complaint Procedure which can be found at www.fai.ie/domestic.
For further information on reporting, dealing with and sanctions concerning both child abuse and serious poor practice concerns, please refer to the FAI’s Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy. www.fai.ie/domestic
Child Welfare & Transport

Children being transported should have the express permission of parents/guardians to do so. Appropriate insurance should be in place by the transporter and duties conducted in accordance with relevant legislation including the use of seat belts. Only the permitted number of passengers should be allowed in specific transport. Clear itineraries for transport arrangements including collection, drop off and contact details for the appropriate adults in charge should be provided. Personnel shall not allow themselves be alone with any one child when assisting with transport arrangements. The use of private cars may be necessary from time to time but where possible this should be avoided.

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to ensure that they are fully aware and happy with transport arrangements. Children should be collected promptly, and it is a matter for parents/guardians to make any necessary arrangements. If a parent/guardian is late for collection or drop off, immediate contact should be made with the contact person involved. If a child is late being collected, efforts should be taken to contact the parent/guardian to make other appropriate arrangements. It is a matter for parents/guardians to arrange transport to events for children unless specific arrangements are made by the club. If a private arrangement is made between parents/guardians, they should be aware that there are extra responsibilities placed on persons who transport players to events.

For more information on away day trips, please refer to the FAI's Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy.

Child Welfare & Training

Under the FAI rulebook, everybody who works with children and vulnerable persons is required to complete the Safeguarding 1 course delivered through the FAI Child Welfare Office. The Club Children’s Officer is required to complete the safeguarding 1 and the Safeguarding 2 training courses. The Designated Liaison Officer is required to complete the Safeguarding 1 and the Safeguarding 3 training courses. For a list of available courses please visit www.fai.ie/domestic.

Coaches Code of Conduct

Coaches need to be aware of why children want to play football. They want to learn new skills, make new friends, to be part of a group, experience challenges, excitement and action. Remember that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of players. Results are not necessarily a good indicator of coaching ability, the improvement level of players and their level of enjoyment. It is important that coaches follow an agreed code of good practice. It gives parents confidence that the coaches are suitable to lead activities for children.

Please see Section 7, Appendix R for a sample coaches/mentors code of conduct.

Players Code of Conduct

Players both under and over 18 not only represent themselves but their club as well. The player’s behaviour on and off the field reflects on the club. Therefore, it is essential that players represent the values and identity of their club. One method of ensuring that players are aware of the club’s ethos is to ensure they sign a player’s code of conduct. The code of conduct can highlight what is expected of players and the standards that they need to adhere to. It is not about setting down rules for players but merely informing them that the club has an ethos that has been agreed among the members.

Please see Section 7, Appendix S for a sample players code of conduct.
Parents Code of Conduct

Parents/guardians play a vital role in promoting children’s happiness and success in football. Parental expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on children’s attitude, behaviour and willingness to stay involved in football.

Along with Coaches it is important that parents / guardians need to be aware of why children play football. Children want to learn new skills, make new friends, be part of a group, to win and be successful, experience challenges, excitement and action. While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of players.

Parent / Guardian Support leads to:

- Higher self-esteem.
- An enjoyment of football.
- A sense of personal achievement.
- Improved physical fitness.
- A greater level of skill.
- Improved social skills.

Please see Section 7, Appendix T for a sample parents/spectators code of conduct.

To help create the right ethos among parents, clubs should host parent education workshops. Please visit the FAI website to see the Parent Education Video. This video is a guide to assist clubs to educate parents on their role within the club.

www.fai.ie/domestic/player-development-plan/parent-education

Clubs are responsible for being aware of the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy and the FAI Concern Complaint Procedure & Policy.

For more information on Safeguarding and Child Welfare, please contact, Football Association of Ireland Address: National Sports Campus, Abbotstown, Dublin 15 Email: info@fai.ie | childwelfare@fai.ie Tel: +353 1 8999 500, Fax: +353 1 8999 501.