

FAI's Policy on Volunteering

Policies are essential for the effective management of clubs and leagues. Policies help to ensure fairness and equity in the way clubs/leagues interact with its members. Voluntary work has become increasingly responsible and sophisticated; allied to this is the changing nature of Irish culture – more professionalism is required and unfortunately more litigation ensues if things are not done properly. Changing needs and expectations of volunteers have also to be factored in. Clubs/Leagues need to have policies in place for their volunteers

The VEP (Volunteer Education Programme) is aimed at helping volunteers in Clubs and Leagues;

- To recruit more volunteers into football clubs
- To retain volunteers and help them work smarter, not harder
- To recognise and reward the work of all volunteers¹

The VEP consists of information, courses, resources, ideas, packages, booklets and products that can help provide some practical solutions to everyday volunteering in clubs and leagues. We provide good practice guides, solutions to problems, shared good practice, and information access.²

Volunteer Management Policy

Recruitment:

- a. The Club/League should accurately assess the amount and type of work to be done. Specific skill needs should be identified and an estimate of the time commitment for each job given.
- b. A Recruitment Message should be formulated for positions within the league/club. This message can be articulated in a variety of media, however the following points should be included – the need, the challenge, the work, the fears, the benefits and finally, the next steps.
- c. A recruitment processes should be developed and followed; i.e. – advertisement of the position, application, informal interview, references, notification.

Screening: While no screening procedure is full-proof, the following polices can help reduce risks

- a. There should be clear role descriptions for every position within the Club/League
- b. Every volunteers should submit an application form and/or a CV. (Application form does not need to be over elaborate).
- c. Each volunteer should have an informal interview.
- d. If a position requires certain skills then a set criteria for skills and qualifications should be ascertained and checked.
- e. References should be submitted and checked.

¹ The FA Football Development Programme, Football Workforce, p 1

² The FA, p 2

- f. If the job is physically demanding or stressful a health check may be required.
- g. For volunteers who may be in contact with children it is necessary that the club/league follows the new Garda checks.
- h. Each position should begin with a trial period so that both parties can re-evaluate the volunteering experience.

Induction:

- a. Every new volunteer in the Club or league should have a ‘buddy’; ideally, the buddy would be someone who has done these particular tasks before.
- b. Every Volunteer should have received job description with a list of roles and responsibilities. They should also receive an estimate of the duration of the particular job.
- c. Each new volunteer should be formally introduced to officials and other volunteers within the Club.
- d. Each volunteer should receive a list of names and contact details for key persons connected with the Club/League and associated with their work.
- e. Each volunteer should be provided with details of meetings, training and events that they will need to attend.
- f. Each volunteer should be provided with key dates for the year.
- g. Each new volunteer should be orientated – where equipment can be found, first aid kit, lights, etc.
- h. Each new volunteer should receive training if required for their new tasks.
- i. If appropriate to the job, provide information on clubs’ financial procedures, confidentiality and other operating procedures.
- j. The Club/League should provide feedback on progress, particularly in the early stages.
- k. Chairperson of club should take time to get to know new volunteers.

Succession:

- a. The club should actively encourage succession. Volunteers should be actively looking out for people to succeed them.
- b. Clubs/Leagues should offer others a chance to shadow them on their job.
- c. During induction to a new position the outgoing volunteer should commit to a period of time to ‘buddy’ the new volunteer.

Support:

- a. Every volunteer in the Club/League should have a meaningful role.
- b. Where possible a volunteer’s needs should be matched with the Club or League’s needs.
- c. Proper recruitment, selection and induction should be followed up with appropriate and ongoing training.
- d. A volunteer policy should be in place.
- e. Every volunteer should be covered by insurance while volunteering for the Club/League.

- f. Support and supervision sessions should be available for new volunteers and for ongoing evaluation and training.
- g. Volunteers should be shown real recognition and gratitude for their volunteering.
- h. Each Club/League should have a volunteer coordinator who would be dedicated to supporting volunteers.

The Volunteer's Rights:

- a. To be given meaningful work to do.
- b. To know what is expected of them.
- c. To be offered appropriate training.
- d. To be thanked and to have their voluntary contribution recognised.
- e. To receive supervision and support.
- f. To get something out of the work for themselves.
- g. To know who to go to if they have problems.
- h. To be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred when volunteering.
- i. To be treated fairly.
- j. To be able to say 'no' and leave without feeling guilty.

The Club/League's Rights:

- a. Commitment, reliability, punctuality, and discipline from volunteers.
- b. To be able to dismiss a volunteer