



Belfast Hills Partnership

Volunteer Policy



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1. Statement of Policy

This policy is designed to clarify the broad principles regarding volunteer involvement with the Belfast Hills Partnership. It has been developed for our volunteers and anyone else concerned with the recruitment, support, development and management of potential or existing volunteers.

Values, Principles and Responsibilities of the Belfast Hills Partnership

- I. The BHP recognises that volunteers constitute an essential part of our team, with a distinct but complementary role to that of our paid staff;
- II. As volunteering is a two-way process, the BHP is committed to meeting the needs of all our volunteers;
- III. The volunteer role is a 'gift relationship', binding only in honour, trust and understanding;
- IV. The BHP encourages volunteers to develop and build on existing skills and knowledge through sharing good practice and training.

2. Implementation

Recruitment

- As a non-discriminatory organisation we welcome people of all abilities and experience levels, regardless of ethnic or social background, age or gender and sexual orientation;
- The BHP would aim to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds that reflects the make-up of our local community. As such, we will adhere to our Equal Opportunities Volunteer Policy when recruiting volunteers;
- We do not require any references for our new volunteers;
- Information for potential volunteers is made available at the BHP website, fairs, events and through local volunteer organisations as appropriate;
- Potential volunteers will be asked to complete an interest form, available on our website, or in paper format at our offices and any of our events;
- Every effort will be made to match a volunteer's knowledge, skills and experience to the projects available;
- Due to the nature of our volunteering roles, at the present time, we do not require our volunteers to be Access NI checked.

As a volunteer, you can expect that you will be...

- Recognised and appreciated;
- Provided with all the information, equipment, resources and guidance required for you to carry out your role;
- Encouraged to develop your skills and knowledge;
- Covered by the BHP insurance policy;
- Protected by the BHP health and safety policy;
- Contributing to a non-discriminatory and diverse organisation;
- Supported by the Volunteer Officer, who will help you resolve any difficulties;
- Kept up to date by the Volunteer Officer who will regularly contact you;
- Free to refuse to undertake any task you are not happy with;
- Free to stop volunteering at any time.

Induction

The Volunteer Officer is responsible for the induction of new volunteers to the BHP. During your induction you will be introduced to the rest of the BHP volunteer team and relevant BHP staff, given detailed information about your role and asked to complete a short interest form (if you have not already done so), including contact details and an emergency contact number. All the information that you provide us with will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Often, the induction will take place during a task as this is the simplest way to illustrate your role. The Volunteer Officer will contact you before your first task to ensure you know where you are going and what to bring and wear.

Finding Your Feet

The Volunteer Officer will review a volunteer's involvement after the settling in period with an informal chat or meeting, providing a potential volunteer the opportunity to express any concerns or needs they have with regard to their volunteering. This also allows the Volunteer Officer to suggest alternative options, or signpost you, to a different organisation, if they, or you, believe that volunteering in that role or with the BHP is unsuitable.

Training and Development

The Belfast Hills Partnership is committed to the on-going training and development of our volunteers. With that in mind, volunteers can talk with the Volunteer Officer about courses



on offer in the annual BHP training programme that will provide further training and development, relevant to their role.

Support

The Volunteer Officer/task supervisor will hold a brief and de-brief at the beginning and end of all tasks. He/she will offer full support to all volunteers for the duration of their volunteering. The Volunteer Officer will arrange regular review meetings with volunteers to discuss any concerns, needs and praise regarding volunteering. If the Volunteer Officer is unavailable and you require support or need to discuss an issue, please feel free to approach another member of the BHP staff.

If you need a reference from BHP for future work and pursuits, the Volunteer Officer will be more than happy to give you one.

Dealing with Problems

Belfast Hills Partnership believes it is important that problems or complaints are dealt with fairly, openly and consistently and hope that most can be solved informally. Volunteers are encouraged to raise any issues with the Volunteer Officer, or other appropriate staff, in line with the Dealing with Problems Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Grievance Policy. If required a more formal complaints procedure is in place.

Health and Safety

The Belfast Hills Partnership has a duty of care to all volunteers and we will take all reasonable steps to protect their health and safety while participating in any of our tasks or activities by following the Health & Safety Policy. We have qualified first aiders on our staff and any accidents or near misses involving volunteers will be recorded in our accident book.

We also expect volunteers to follow the Volunteer Health & Safety Policy and Code of Conduct to ensure their own, and others, health and safety whilst volunteering. Volunteers may refuse any task they consider inappropriate or that they believe may affect their health and/or safety.

Insurance

All of our volunteers are covered by BHP Employer's Liability insurance whilst representing or actively engaged with the BHP.

Data Protection

Personal information recorded about volunteers will be stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality, complying with the Data Protection Act 2018.



Copyright

We hope that volunteers are happy to donate any original copyright works they may produce. If you are happy to do so, we would ask you to sign copyright, or partial copyright, over to us in order for us to use your works in the future. You can ask the Volunteer Officer for details.

Reimbursement

Although we would like to, at this time, we cannot afford to reimburse volunteers any expenses they incur whilst volunteering with us. If there are any changes to these circumstances, we will inform the volunteers.

Reviewed by: __Laura Shiels (Volunteer Officer)__ Date: __28/03/2022__

Approved by: __BHP Board__ Date: __26/11/2015__

Reviewed by: Aodhan O’Kane Date: 27/09/2023

Next review date: April 2024

