

CANI Volunteering Policy

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI). It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

It will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of CANI and its volunteers.

Commitment

CANI values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering. CANI recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

Volunteer Co-ordination

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is the Development Manager. This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers

Recruitment & Selection

CANI is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

If the volunteer will be working with children and/or vulnerable adults they will be required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure (Access N.I Check), which will include a check against the relevant Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) barring list(s), when the volunteer role meets the definition of regulated activity. Regulated activity is work a barred person must not do and is defined under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and further amended under Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. In other instances where a volunteer role involves contact with a vulnerable group (children or adult) but is not regulated activity then a volunteer may be asked to undergo an enhanced disclosure Access N.I check as best practice and where there is eligibility. This check will not include ISA barring list information.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed regularly.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

Volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, child protection and equal opportunities.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff, at staff meetings etc.

A process will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of the organisation's volunteers (e.g. internal awards, articles in newspapers and newsletters, thank you letters etc.) or outline any existing process.

Expenses

The organisation's volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

The organisation has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.

It is the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

Insurance

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

Confidentiality

The organisation will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's wider disciplinary, grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to.

Expectations and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the expectations of volunteers to:

- Know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- Have adequate support in their volunteering
- Receive appreciation
- Have safe working conditions
- Be insured
- Know their expectations and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- Receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- Receive appropriate training
- Be free from discrimination
- Be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- Be reliable
- Be honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Make the most of training and support opportunities
- Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- Work within agreed guidelines
- Respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- Comply with the organisation's policies