



# Volunteer Friendly Guidance Document

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# Introduction to Volunteer Friendly Award

**“A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one’s own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary”**

- The Scottish Government, Volunteering for All – Our National Framework

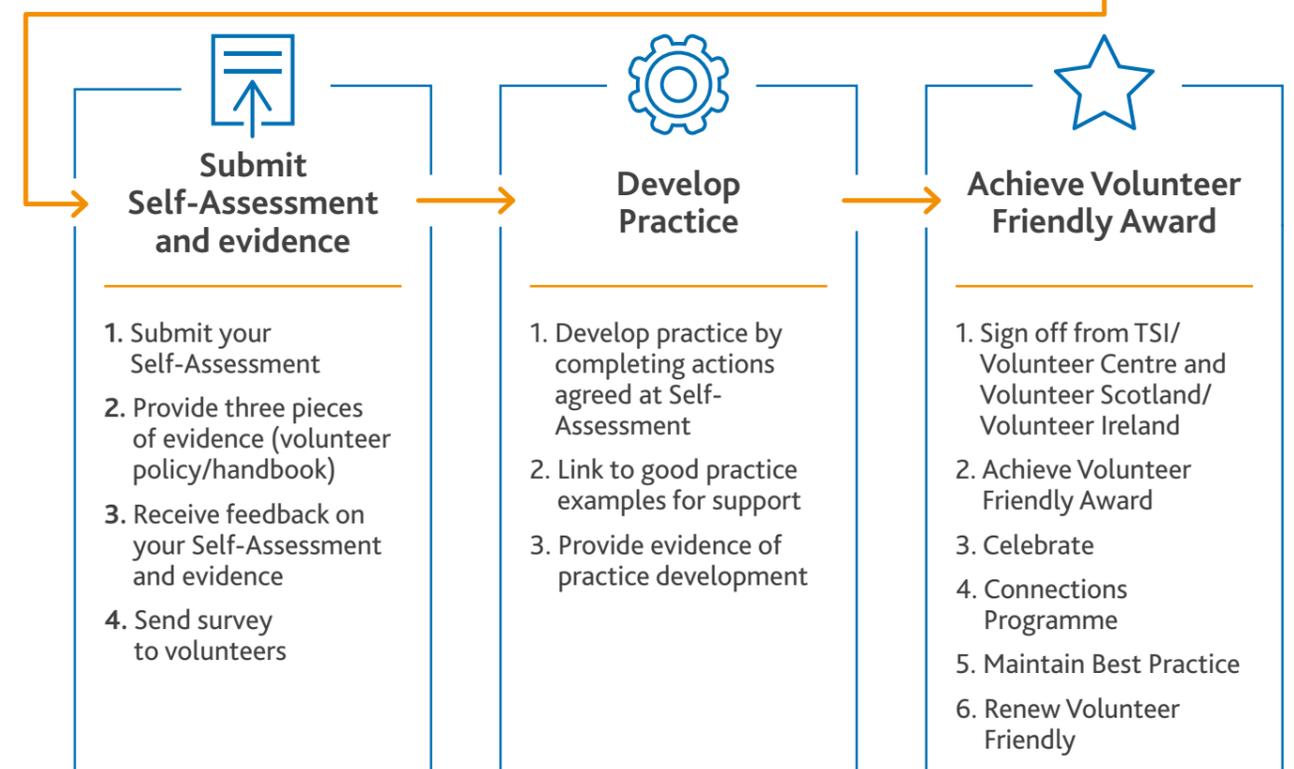
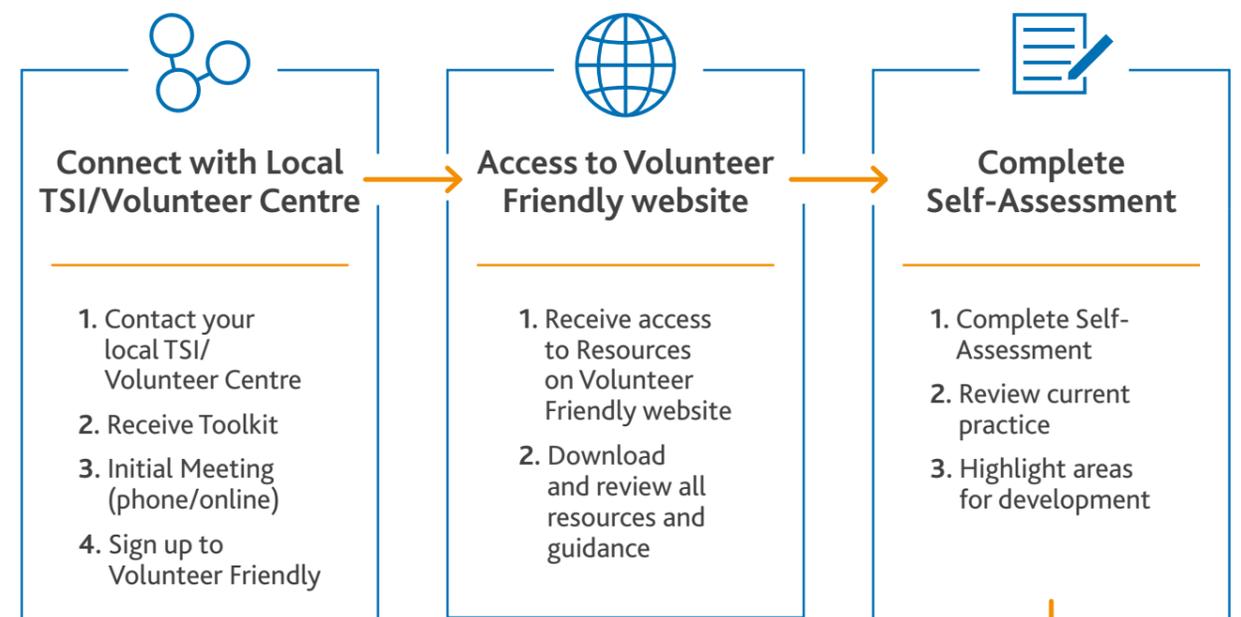
**“Volunteering is any time willingly given, either formally or informally, for the common good and without financial gain.”**

- Government of Ireland, National Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2025

Volunteer Friendly Award is a user-friendly quality standard to support, recognise and reward groups who are good at involving volunteers. Many essential services in our communities are enhanced by volunteers. The Scottish and Irish Governments recognise that volunteering matters and it’s all about new experiences, feeling good and making a difference. The evidence base is clear on the benefits of volunteering, in terms of: physical health benefits, social benefits, mental wellbeing and instrumental benefits.

Developed and reviewed in 2020 by Volunteer Scotland and several TSI (Third Sector Interfaces) and Volunteer Centres across Scotland, refreshing the standard and new offer, where the requirements are set at an achievable level for each volunteer programme, allowing for more groups to engage with Volunteer Friendly, who will be recognised for the work they do. In the spirit of collaboration and shared learning, in 2021 Volunteer Scotland partnered with Volunteer Ireland to roll out Volunteer Friendly in both countries.

It has never been more important for groups to be able to show how good they are at involving and managing their volunteers. We believe regardless your group/organisation size or set up you should be rewarded and recognised for the difference your volunteers make.





# Volunteer Friendly Standard

**1 Involving Volunteers**  
 Understanding why your group/organisation involves volunteers.

The following pages detail the standard in more detail, providing guidance and example evidence on how you might meet each strand and practice.

**Please note:** The examples are to give you an idea of types of evidence you may have and where you will be likely to find evidence. You are not required to have all example evidence in place to achieve the award.

**2 Making Volunteering Happen**  
 Money, management, resources and keeping volunteers safe.

Evidence can vary from policies and procedures (documented evidence) to pictures, videos, case studies and people's voices and experience (action-based evidence).

**3 Volunteer Inclusion**  
 Equal access to opportunities and fair recruitment.

Evidence can also be used multiple times, for example a volunteer policy/handbook, website, social media and volunteers voice can be evidence for all practices.

Volunteers/people feel and can explain. This is a reflective practice, reflecting group/ organisation practices and processes, to ensure people involved in the group/ organisation understand practices and are able to explain how they understand this practice, from the actions the group/organisation does.

**4 Welcoming Volunteers**  
 Developing roles, induction, training and support needs for volunteers.

Prior to starting your Volunteer Friendly journey please confirm with your local Volunteer Centre what your group/ organisation requirements are and the number of practices you are aiming to meet for each strand.

**5 Valuing Volunteers**  
 Recognition for volunteers' time, contribution, feedback and creating positive endings.

# 1 Involving Volunteers

Understanding why your group/organisation involves volunteers.

## Practice 1(a)

All people involved in the group/organisation understand why they involve volunteers.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Aims and Objectives Volunteer Strategy Website/Social Media Marketing/Leaflets Annual Report Case Studies/Volunteer Voice	All people involved in the volunteer programme can explain why the group/organisation involves volunteers, understanding the role of volunteers, the impact and difference they make. This is usually an opening paragraph in a volunteer policy, website or introduction to the need for volunteers. The need can be included in how the group/organisation meets their aims and objectives.  <b>Example</b> "Volunteers support the delivery of our service; we can reach and support more families to make a difference to people's lives and improve people's health and wellbeing in the community".

## Practice 1(b)

The group/organisation has a written document setting out how volunteers will be involved, supported and protected.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Aims and Objectives Volunteer Strategy Annual Report Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The level of formality of policies and procedures will vary according to the size, scope and maturity of the group/organisation. The most common and best practice is to have a volunteer policy. This document will include why and how the group/organisation will involve volunteers, setting out expectations for both the volunteer and group/organisation. Volunteers should have a copy of this document or access to this document, either online or available as a hardcopy.

## Practice 1(c)

The group/organisation has or includes volunteers in policies that relate to management and involvement of people.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Health and Safety Policy Equal Opportunities Policy Data Protection Policy PVG Act 2007 Confidentiality Policy Social Media Policy	The level of formality of policies and procedures will vary according to the size, scope and maturity of the group/organisation. Volunteering should be included in policies and procedures relating to the involvement of people and Human Resources. Volunteers can be included in general policies or have their own equivalent policies when appropriate. Policies and procedures should be live and accessible documents. Volunteers should have a copy of these documents or access to these documents, either online or available as a hardcopy.

## Practice 1(d)

The group/organisation is committed to developing a Volunteer Culture.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Aims and Objectives Volunteer Strategy Vision and Values Website/Social media Annual Report Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation communicates the role volunteers and staff play within the group/organisation and in creating a group/organisation's values and vision. Identify the symbols, behaviours, attitudes, rituals and beliefs that make up your group/organisation culture. Consider the impact a culture has on the volunteering experience. Volunteers should feel the organisation creates a positive volunteer environment.

## 2 Making Volunteering Happen

Money, management, resources and keeping volunteers safe.

### Practice 2(a)

The group/organisation has a named person or team who has responsibility for recruiting and managing volunteers.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Role/Job descriptions Volunteers Know Who Manages/Supports them. Case Studies/Volunteer Voice	There can be any number of people in the group/organisation supporting volunteers. It should be clear to volunteers and others who they are and what their responsibility is. The group/organisation should consider what skills are required to support different types of volunteer involvement. It also needs to be clear to the individuals that their role involves supporting and managing volunteers. Volunteers should be able to identify who supports and manages them.

### Practice 2(b)

The group/organisation plans for volunteering involvement, where volunteers can be part of planning and setting objectives.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Aims and Objectives Annual Report Funding Proposals Meeting's Agenda and Minutes AGM and Board Meetings Volunteer Feedback Forms/ Surveys Case Studies/Volunteer Voice	The group/organisation include volunteer activities in all planning at all levels, where volunteering is a standing agenda item at all levels. Volunteer activity is also part of the vision, strategy, aims and objectives. Consider the resources required to support the volunteer activity; training, equipment, clothing etc. Volunteers should be invited to be involved in all planning that affects their role and asked for their opinion and feedback. This can be done through emails, newsletters and online surveys.

### Practice 2(c)

The group/organisation seeks to secure enough funds to provide volunteers with appropriate resources to undertake their volunteering and cover out-of-pocket expenses.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Funding Proposals/Budget Plans Petty Cash Records/Receipts Annual Accounts Volunteer Expenses Policy Expenses Claim Forms Case Studies/Volunteer Voice	The group/organisation is clear about volunteer expenses. Good practice is to provide "out of pocket" expenses to volunteers. Where expenses are not provided for smaller groups/community activities, the organisation should consider the impact on inclusion and the barrier to potential volunteers. The group/organisation considers how expenses could be funded in the future. Volunteers should be able to explain how they can claim expenses.

### Practice 2(d)

The group/organisation is committed to keeping volunteers safe from risk, comply with data protection and are covered by appropriate insurance.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Boundaries/Lone Working Policy Risk Assessments Volunteer Insurance Data Protection Policy PVG Act 2007 Case Studies/Volunteer Voice	The group/organisation takes responsibility to ensure that all volunteers are kept safe whilst volunteering. Safeguarding of volunteers is considered in relations to volunteers' roles, who's involved, where and when volunteer roles will take place, the boundaries of each role, insurance required, risk assessments, data protection and lone working. Volunteers should be able to explain how they are kept safe.

### 3 Volunteer Inclusion

Equal access to opportunities and fair recruitment.

#### Practice 3(a)

The group/organisation creates an atmosphere that is inclusive; open to involving volunteers from all backgrounds and abilities.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Equality & Diversity Policy Ex-Offenders' Policy Website/Social media Marketing Support Available Options Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation and people involved can describe the actions taken to welcome all individuals into volunteering, through equality, diversity and ex-offenders' policies, and training. Groups/organisations consider; advertising that they are inclusive, meeting all support needs, using images that reflect how inclusive the group is and allow potential volunteers to see themselves in the volunteer programme.

#### Practice 3(b)

The group/organisation is consistent and fair in carrying out recruitment, reference checks, disclosures and selection of volunteers.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Application forms Formal/Informal Interview Questions Recruitment Process PVG Act 2007 Equal Opportunities Form Reference Checks Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation has a recruitment process that is fair and consistent, asking for information that is only relevant to the volunteer role and decision making. The group/organisation follows disclosure legislation and good practice and thinks of barriers potential volunteers may have and how to support this. The group/organisation considers having an ex-offenders policy, identifying the skills and experience required for the role and reference check options such as employment, volunteering and character reference.

#### Practice 3(c)

The group/organisation is committed to supporting everyone into volunteering, providing a range of opportunities, flexible roles and aims to meet additional support needs.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Role Description Website/Social media Marketing Support Available Options Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation has a process in place on how they involve volunteers, thinking about the steps they take to support all individual into volunteering, with an aim to increase the diversity of the volunteer programme. Offering adaptable roles to suit the volunteer's individual needs, skills and availability. Considering creating new roles to meet the needs of volunteers.



# 4

## Welcoming Volunteers

Developing roles, induction, training and support needs for volunteers.

### Practice 4(a)

The group/organisation develops a range of volunteer opportunities that are fair, provide a choice to volunteers, benefiting both volunteers and service users.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook The Volunteer Charter Role Description Website/Social media Marketing Support Available Options Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation develops opportunities in the spirit of the government's definition that "volunteering is a choice". The group/organisation considers relevant best practice documents such as the Volunteer Charter 10 Principles when developing volunteer roles. Volunteers' reasons for volunteering are explored and considered when matching and developing opportunities. Tasks and activities benefit both volunteers and service users.

### Practice 4(b)

The group/organisation provides all volunteers with an induction to their role, including all policies, procedures and training required for the role.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Role Description Induction Checklist Training Plans Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation offers volunteers an induction suitable for the role. This can be formal or informal depending on the nature of the service and role. Information shared may be in writing, a short verbal briefing or formal training. Inductions can vary from half or full days to several weeks. Volunteers should feel prepared and ready to start their role.

### Practice 4(c)

The group/organisation offers ongoing support to volunteers throughout their volunteer journey and aims to offer additional support when required to meet the needs of the volunteer.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Role Description Support Available Case Studies/Volunteers Voice One-to-One Records Team Meeting Agendas/Minutes	The group/organisation offers ongoing support to volunteers throughout their journey. This can be formal or informal depending on the nature of the service and role. Support can be one-to-one/group support scheduled regularly and/or ad hoc check ins when you see the volunteer. It can also be virtual through emails/phones/video conferencing. Volunteers should feel supported and be able to explain the support they receive.

### Practice 4(d)

The group/organisation provides volunteers with ongoing relevant updates, where volunteers can provide feedback on their involvement.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Website/Social media Newsletters/Emails One-to-One Records Team Meeting Agendas/Minutes Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation has processes in place to ensure volunteers are kept up to date and have an opportunity to feedback on their involvement. This can be done through newsletters, emails, surveys, meetings, catch-ups, website and social media. The organisation/group takes into consideration everyone's capacity to be involved.

## 5 Valuing Volunteers

Recognition for volunteers' time, contribution, feedback and creating positive endings.

### Practice 5(a)

All people involved in the group/organisation are aware of the need to give volunteers recognition for their time and contribution.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Social Media Marketing Newsletters Volunteer Culture Aims, Objectives and Values Volunteer Strategy Meeting Agendas/Minutes Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation encourages all people to recognise volunteers' time and contribution by communicating the difference volunteers make, creating a volunteer culture, leading by example and creating opportunities for everyone to be involved. All people in the organisation should be able to explain their role and involvement in recognising volunteers.

### Practice 5(b)

The group/organisation can demonstrate how they report on and celebrate volunteering.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Website/Social Media Photos Social Events Certificates/Written Thanks Volunteers Week Annual Report Newsletters Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation communicates the impact and difference volunteers make to their group/organisation/ community/service delivery. This can be shown by sharing figures, statistics, good news stories, pictures, videos, feedback from beneficiaries and volunteers. Volunteers' contribution should be highlighted in the annual report and AGM if you have one. Informal groups may do this through meetings, social media, and celebrated events such as Volunteers Week, coffee mornings and Christmas events.

### Practice 5(c)

The group/organisation supports their volunteers' development, providing opportunities to develop and offers references.

Possible Evidence	Guidance
Volunteer Policy/Handbook Volunteer Charter Role Description One-to-One Meetings Training Records Certificate/ Volunteering Record Reference Letter Case Studies/Volunteers Voice	The group/organisation supports their volunteers' personal development, where appropriate, by offering development opportunities to grow volunteers' skills and experience through training, tasks and activities. The group/organisation offers volunteers references for future employment or volunteering, or a record of their volunteering through letters or certificates. The group/organisation should create positive endings, supporting volunteers to develop, even if this means leaving their opportunity with you.





**Volunteer Friendly Award<sup>®</sup>**

**Volunteer**  
Scotland



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obair dheonach éireann



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