

Volunteering Policy



Document Owner Chief Executive Officer

Approval Date June 2024

Review Date June 2026

Approved By General Council

Document Family

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Staying Safe | ☐ Finance |
| ☒ Volunteering | ☐ Programme |
| ☐ Inclusion | ☐ Governance |
| ☐ Staffing | ☐ Communications |

Applies To

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ Volunteers | ☒ Staff |
| ☒ Groups & Districts | ☒ Centres & Campsites |
| ☐ Contractors & Partners | ☒ Projects & Events |

Purpose

Woodcraft Folk's provision for children & young people is made possible by a wide range of volunteers who support its projects, centres, events and local groups across the UK. To deliver safe, successful activities, and ensure that volunteering with Woodcraft Folk is a mutually rewarding experience, Woodcraft Folk will screen and induct its volunteers, and provide appropriate ongoing support and training to develop their skills.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out how Woodcraft Folk engages volunteers
- Clarify what volunteers can expect from Woodcraft Folk and in return what is expected of them
- Confirm volunteer selection and screening requirements
- Signpost volunteers and volunteer coordinators to a range of policies and resources that have been designed to support their engagement within Woodcraft Folk on a local and national level.

Volunteer definition

Woodcraft Folk's work is delivered with the support of a diverse group of volunteers, including those who volunteer:

- On a weekly or regular basis
- On a one-off basis to provide advice or guidance, in support of a specific event or a time-limited project

- Working directly with children and young people
- Doing administrative or 'back office' tasks, such as being a group treasurer or managing social media accounts
- Overseen by staff members or by another volunteer
- At a Woodcraft Folk centre/campsite, from home or in another venue
- In the UK and abroad
- As part of an organised volunteering programme, recognised, administered or accredited by an external organisation

All volunteers give their time freely and, regardless of their level or length of involvement, are responsible for following the policy and guidance that applies to their role, and working in line with Woodcraft Folk's [aims and principles](#).

Woodcraft Folk will take reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all volunteers, and provide appropriate support and training to help them fulfil their role.

Volunteer recruitment

Woodcraft Folk will recruit volunteers to perform a wide variety of roles within the organisation. To ensure that volunteering is a mutually fulfilling and beneficial experience for the organisation and the individual, it is necessary to match volunteers to roles that are appropriate to their level of enthusiasm, interest, skill and experience. Those engaged in the recruitment of volunteers are therefore strongly advised to ensure that each volunteering opportunity has a role description that highlights tasks to be undertaken, commitment required and any previous experience or skills needed.

Volunteers are recruited to these opportunities through a wide range of activities, which may include:

- Proactive recruitment of young people and parents from existing Woodcraft Folk groups
- Targeted promotional material e.g. posters, flyers, website and news articles
- Social media and recruitment events
- Working in partnership with local Volunteer Centres and student volunteering groups
- Word of mouth and informal contacts

It is recommended that Groups/Districts appoint a Volunteer Co-ordinator to support the recruitment and retention of volunteers. This role may also be valuable to Centres and larger Events.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Woodcraft Folk is firmly committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in all areas of its work. Woodcraft Folk believes that inclusion is critical in cultivating diverse

environments that are also safe, and that our young members are best served by a diverse volunteer workforce that reflects the cultural landscape of the communities that we seek to engage. We have much to learn and gain from diverse cultures and perspectives, and understand that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of children, young people and group leaders. Inclusion is critical in cultivating diverse environments that are also safe. Woodcraft Folk can seek additional learning for a greater understanding of diversity in practice.

Woodcraft Folk is committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and all are supported and empowered to participate and contribute.

Selection and screening of Volunteers working with children and young people

All prospective volunteers wishing to work with children and young people should be:

- Provided with welcome information, including a summary of the aims and principles of Woodcraft Folk
- Asked to provide two references (at least one should be from an individual external to Woodcraft Folk and neither should be related to the individual seeking to volunteer)
- Required to complete an Enhanced DBS disclosure, or PVG in Scotland, if relevant to their role, and in all cases where they will be volunteering at an overnight camp or residential

These references and checks are important in order to safeguard children and young people. Please see woodcraft.org.uk/safeguarding for further information.

Woodcraft Folk seeks to be open and accessible to all. Lack of experience and/or a criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent an individual from volunteering. Please see our [Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy](#) for further information

Volunteer expectations

All Woodcraft Folk volunteers are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Volunteers have a right to:

- Accurate information on the organisation and its policies
- A clear description of the tasks that they are expected to undertake and the skills needed to undertake those tasks effectively
- Have a safe working environment
- Negotiate a choice of roles and tasks

- A named person they can go to for advice, training, support and peer mentoring
- Protection from exploitation by other volunteers and service users
- Say 'no' without feeling guilty
- Have their contribution valued by all sections of the organisation
- Receive constructive feedback on their contribution

Volunteer responsibilities

In return, volunteers are required to commit to Woodcraft Folk values and principles and abide by agreed organisational policies and procedures.

Specifically, volunteers are asked to:

- Treat everyone associated with the organisation (children and adults) with courtesy and respect
- Co-operate with other volunteers and staff
- Undertake a level of training relevant to their role within the organisation
- Exchange information and offer feedback
- Ask for support when and where it is needed
- Carry out agreed roles and tasks
- Notify the appropriate person if they are unavailable or unable to fulfil their volunteer duty
- Ensure that they understand and follow safeguarding, health and safety, equal opportunities and data protection policies.

Volunteer Induction, Training & Supervision

In addition to the screening requirements outlined above, new volunteers must be provided with suitable induction to enable them to fulfil their role effectively.

As a minimum this will include:

- A discussion of the role, responsibilities and expectations
- Ensuring that the volunteer has read and understood key policies and procedures, including the local safeguarding plan and relevant event/activity risk assessments
- Identifying any specific support that the volunteer needs to perform their role
- Clarifying who the volunteer should raise any queries or concerns with

This induction should either be completed with the volunteer by the group coordinator, or by another suitably experienced volunteer to whom they delegate this responsibility.

All volunteers are encouraged to undertake regular training to develop and consolidate their skills and knowledge. All volunteers must complete essential basic training relevant to their role; the requirements applicable to different volunteer roles are laid out in Woodcraft Folk's [Training Policy](#).

Group and Event Coordinators, Activity and Session Leaders are responsible for supervising other volunteers supporting the activity, and should be the first point of contact for queries and concerns.

Insurance

Woodcraft Folk has Public Liability cover in place for its activities. Volunteers are protected by this cover provided that they are acting in accordance with Woodcraft Folk's policies and procedures, and the measures identified to control risks in the risk assessment for the activity concerned.

Volunteers leading groups and other activities should ensure that they are familiar with the terms of Woodcraft Folk's insurance cover, and arrange additional cover if they are planning activities that fall outside the scope of the existing policy.

Group and Event Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that venues that are hired, or used without charge, for group activities have appropriate Public Liability Insurance to protect volunteers and participants in Woodcraft Folk's activities held on these premises.

Any Volunteer using their own or another vehicle to transport children, adults or equipment must ensure that their motor insurance policy provides adequate cover for this.

Expenses

Woodcraft Folk strongly believes that expenses and fees should not be a barrier to participation. It is recommended that volunteers should be able to claim back reasonable and agreed expenses they incur in the course of their activities. If expenses are not being offered, this should be made clear to the volunteer in advance.

The following expenses can be claimed without affecting entitlement to benefits:

- Travel to and from the place where the volunteering takes place
- Travel whilst volunteering
- Miscellaneous expenses – such as telephone calls, postage, meals (if agreed in advance)
- Partial or whole subsidies for camps and national events in which the individual is participating as a volunteer

All expenses need to be claimed by following Woodcraft Folk [Expenses Procedures](#), and require original receipts.

See Also

Policies

- Training Policy
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Expenses Policy](#)
- [Recruitment of Ex-Offenders](#)

Guidance

- [Code of Behaviour](#)