

# Volunteer Policy

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Author:	Head of People and Culture
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## Record of changes

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## **Key Definitions**

Volunteers are individuals or groups who offer us their time, experience, knowledge, and skills without financial gain helping us to achieve our service objectives, or with the aim of providing a benefit to the local community.

The role of volunteers is very different from that of councillors, employees, consultants, students on work placements and secondees (staff doing a different job for a set amount of time).

There is no contract of employment or services between The Outdoors Group Ltd and its volunteers.

## **Aims and Principles**

The Outdoors Group Ltd is fully committed to providing resources, time, and energy to the local community. To do this effectively we require active two-way participation within the community, and we believe volunteers provide that link.

Volunteering at The Outdoors Group Ltd can be in any activity areas we provide to the public, from maintenance of the grounds to help on courses. The only area volunteers are unable to provide any help to the company is in administrative tasks.

We fully value volunteering and are willing to provide training and other course opportunities to those volunteers who have provided continued interest and commitment to the company.

Any volunteers on a smaller scale will have 1:1 tuition in the areas they are working on and access to all equipment and advice necessary to do the job effectively.

## **Statement of Intent**

The Outdoors Group Ltd has, from the beginning, had a clear and structured approach to all activities that take place. We have an active and participatory approach to work where the directors are fully approachable regarding volunteer worker's ideas and questions regarding the work they are being asked to do.

We operate a 'buddy' process involving 1:1 work with an active member of staff to introduce volunteers to the processes they will be working in/with. We are also fully in favour of continued improvement of schemes of work or activities and will listen carefully to proposals for improvement from any member of staff or volunteer.

As stated above The Outdoors Group Ltd is fully committed to supporting and encouraging volunteer work. We will endeavour to provide help and support whenever possible and, at least in part, allow volunteers to actively control the training they

receive, these qualification and course opportunities will be provided solely from the range The Outdoors Group Ltd offers. The Outdoors Group Ltd reserves the sole right to determine when and who this will apply to and will arrive at this decision based on internal criteria and knowledge of candidates.

The Outdoors Group Ltd remains flexible regarding all volunteer work undertaken for the company. We require a week's notice of any changes to schedules wherever possible, but volunteers are under no obligation to turn up, return to, or remain at work.

Actions taken with no prior notice, however, may affect a volunteer's future with the company. All volunteers have full access and recourse to all company policies regarding equal opportunities and complaints procedures.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

Our recruitment process may require a submission of CV and an explanation of why you want to volunteer. There will be an informal interview, most probably by phone, and, depending on demand for positions, an invitation to our workplace for a day's experience.

We will advertise all formal posts within the local community and on the The Outdoors Group Ltd website. Depending on the length of time for the position and/or the level of responsibility, the post may also be advertised on websites such as the Institute of Outdoor Learning as well.

All volunteers should supply details of someone willing to provide a reference, references will only be sought by The Outdoors Group Ltd for the safety and/or security of staff, volunteers, and course participants upon the appointment of a volunteer to a post.

We are fully committed to equal opportunities and diversity, for full details of our commitments, please see our Equal Opportunities Policy.

## **Security and Screening**

Due to the nature of our work with school groups and vulnerable adults a full DBS check will be required by every volunteer.

The processes involved in compiling data will fully comply with both the Human Rights Act and the Data Protection Act. No information will be shared with companies outside The Outdoors Group Ltd unless information is necessary to work volunteers are doing with other organisations or at the request of government bodies (i.e., police investigations or court orders). The sharing of this information in this way will not conflict with data protection; if it is deemed to do so then the data protection policy takes precedence.

## **Induction, Training, Support and Supervision**

Induction and training will be largely conducted at the pace of the volunteer. There will be compulsory elements such as equipment training, health and safety talk and induction into procedures for on-site activities.

All volunteers will begin work with a member of staff and are free to shadow them for as long as they feel necessary.

Support and supervision will all be co-ordinated by the member of staff appointed to work with the volunteer if the member of staff is not present; volunteers should co-ordinate with the site office.

Regardless of where volunteers come from, they are all expected to fully adhere to the Outdoors Group Ltd volunteer policy when on site, working with our staff members or representing our company off site.

Each volunteer will need to read and abide by the volunteer pack that will be provided. Volunteers will be expected to turn up for sessions they have agreed to do, and agreement must be sought before sessions are attended. Volunteers who show up without agreed session times may be turned away.

## **Expenses**

Expenses will only be paid for services, equipment, travel or other expenditure that has been expressly permitted by the Company Directors and/or the Company Secretary. No reimbursement will be forthcoming for anything not agreed prior to the purchase being made.

## **Health and Safety**

The health and safety of employees and volunteers is a priority for The Outdoors Group. We will provide a health and safety talk and other information to volunteers on induction and will happily supply any other information on request.

All risk assessments and dynamic risk assessment updates are kept in the site office and are freely available to all volunteers who wish to review the information.

## **Insurance**

All activities on site will be covered by public liability insurance. No work will be expected of volunteers that requires specialist training or handling of potentially dangerous machinery or processes. Volunteers are welcome to assist a trained member of staff in these activities; if this is requested by the volunteer then the staff member will fully brief them in the job and make sure they are safe at all times. Volunteers are free to decline any job offered them by staff members on the grounds of preserving personal safety. This decision will be respected by staff members and a task suitable to the volunteers' skill and confidence levels will be found.

Volunteers are not automatically covered by The Outdoors Group Ltd if:

- In direct contravention of any company policy.
- In contravention of The Outdoors Group Ltd risk assessments.
- If they are off site and not with staff members.
- Volunteers are not insured by employers' liability cover.
- In contravention of a direct instruction from a staff member.

## **Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

The Outdoors Group Ltd is fully committed to equal opportunities and volunteers are covered by the entirety of our policy.

## **Confidentiality**

Due to the nature of our business, there will be a substantial interaction between volunteers and children, students, and vulnerable adults. Therefore, all volunteers are subject to the full confidentiality of our Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures. Copies of all The Outdoors Group Ltd policies are available for any staff or volunteer to view at any point.

Regarding volunteers' access to their own personal records, The Outdoors Group Ltd will comply fully with the Data Protection Act.

## **Resolving Problems**

Volunteers can make formal complaints in the same way that staff members are (See Complaints Policy and Procedure). If the complaint is about a member of staff working with a volunteer but no formal action is requested by the volunteer, they should inform the line manager of the member of staff.

No guarantee of formal action is given if the complaints procedure is not followed, and the grievance is not submitted in writing.