



HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

VOLUNTEER POLICY

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PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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VOLUNTEER POLICY

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) recognises the important role volunteers play in supporting and supplementing our staff to deliver a variety of activities across our communities. Volunteers are an important resource in helping SFRS to meet its aims and provide a range of skills and experience which help to support a variety of activities, including but not limited to: youth engagement, heritage, open days, support for the ageing population, road and community safety.

1.2 SFRS seeks and values the following attributes that volunteers bring:

- a genuine interest in helping people;
- a non-judgemental attitude;
- a willingness to listen;
- understanding and empathy;
- time commitment and reliability;

thereby adhering to the SFRS values of Safety, Teamwork, Respect and Innovation.

SFRS is not able to accept applications from those who are not willing to commit to these aims and objectives or from those that SFRS may consider to be unsuitable for the role.

1.3 It is also important to focus on what the Service can do to support volunteers.

Through providing structured volunteer programmes and associated training, individuals can gain a range of valuable skills and experiences, meet new people, and give something back to the community. It is, therefore, important that SFRS

staff understand both the good practice and legal implications of volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering is a safe and positive experience for all.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Volunteer Policy identifies and sets out the framework and principles by which SFRS works with volunteers, what we hope for from our volunteers and benefits that volunteers can expect to gain.

This policy sets out the minimum standards for the engagement, induction and appointment of volunteers to ensure that both volunteer and SFRS expectations are met. It provides for fair and equal treatment of its volunteers and a framework for implementation at both national and local levels.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 The policy is for volunteers who provide this role as a part of their SFRS activities and for staff that work with, and provide support to, volunteers within SFRS.

3.2 Operational Volunteers

Operational Volunteers who provide a defined and specific operational response are not covered by this policy.

3.3 Volunteers Registered under the Community Asset Register

Due to the very specific nature of volunteers registered under the Community Asset Register, they are not covered by this policy and should refer to the

Minute of Agreement and guidance contained within the Community Asset Register General Information Note, Appendices B, C and D.

3.4 Volunteers for any organisation currently associated with SFRS should refer to the volunteer arrangements and policies of the appropriate organisation.

3.5 **Secondments and Work Placements**

SFRS also support a number of secondments and work placements. These posts are not classed as volunteer posts. The policies relating to these roles can be found in the SFRS Secondment Policy.

4. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 SFRS staff managing and co-ordinating volunteers are responsible for ensuring they follow the standards for the engagement, appointment, induction and ongoing supervision of volunteers set out in this policy.

4.2 SFRS volunteers are responsible for ensuring they are aware of the content of this policy, the Volunteer Handbook and their responsibilities as outlined in the Volunteer Statement of Expectations.

5. **DEFINITIONS**

5.1 An SFRS volunteer is someone who freely chooses to give their time to undertake tasks and activities to help SFRS achieve its aims, without payment or the expectation of payment. Volunteers may provide support across a number of SFRS areas.

The arrangement is voluntary on both sides and either party can bring the arrangement to an end.

5.2 **SFRS Employees as Volunteers**

SFRS employees sometimes also wish to undertake volunteer work for SFRS. Whilst this is both encouraged and welcomed, it is important clear distinctions exist between the primary SFRS role and the unpaid volunteer role, both to avoid any internal confusion about the capacity in which the individual is there and also associated management responsibilities.

In addition, a volunteer who is also an employee of SFRS should consider any potential impact their volunteer duties may have on their primary SFRS role within the organisation and discuss this with their line manager. This includes ensuring that appropriate and adequate rest/break periods between periods of work in the primary role and the volunteer role have been taken.

Any SFRS employee interested in undertaking a volunteer role should refer to [section 6.3](#) of this policy.

6. **SFRS PRINCIPLES OF WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS**

6.1 SFRS has a number of defined principles and processes that underpin volunteer involvement in its activities which will ensure fair and equal treatment of all volunteers. These are outlined below. To ensure the standards of good practice are met, these principles apply not only to volunteers but also to any SFRS staff managing and co-ordinating volunteers.

6.2 **Safeguarding Young People and SFRS**

The SFRS Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children and the SFRS Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Adults provide clear guidance on responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Combined with the associated procedures and guidance, the policy provides a structure for staff and volunteers who may come across concerns of this nature within the context of their work.

Where a volunteer's role requires them to support young people or vulnerable adults they should read the guidance note which gives summary information on the volunteer's role under this policy. If a volunteer is interested in further detail relating to Safeguarding, they can refer to the SFRS Safeguarding policies noted above and the SFRS Young Persons Management Arrangement which can be obtained from the SFRS named contact.

6.3 **Engagement and Selection**

SFRS aim to select and engage committed and enthusiastic volunteers. Selection into an SFRS volunteer post will normally be through response to advertised volunteer post(s). Prospective volunteers may be interviewed to provide relevant information, explore their aspirations and the experience they can bring to role. It is important for all involved to appreciate that the interview is not a competitive process and the sole selection criteria is suitability for the volunteer post in which they are interested. Written references and Eligibility to Work in the UK checks may be required and taken up to help confirm suitability for volunteering and for specific roles.

As part of the selection process, we may require potential volunteers to undertake the relevant level of disclosure check to ensure their suitability to carry out the activities involved in the volunteer role. This may include a

Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check, which is required for volunteers undertaking 'regulated work'. There are 2 types of regulated work – work with children and work with protected adults.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily exclude someone from volunteering with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of their offence. SFRS also asks all new volunteers to complete self-declaration questions which are included within the application form.

- 6.3.1 SFRS staff managing and co-ordinating volunteers locally will be responsible for the selection of volunteers and, where required, subsequent Disclosure checks.

Prior to advertising any volunteer opportunities, it is the responsibility of the host department, in partnership with the local HR Business Partner, to:

- establish the need for the volunteer post;
- ensure the post has a completed role profile;
- ensure the post is approved by the Head of Function or DACO as appropriate.

- 6.3.2 To ensure a record of SFRS volunteers is retained, the Volunteer SharePoint site will be updated by the Resourcing Admin team.

6.4 **Induction and Training**

Volunteers will bring a set of skills, knowledge and experience gained from their education, work, previous volunteering, and life experiences. However, to ensure that volunteers are appropriately equipped for their role, each volunteer must undergo an induction and training process prior to appointment.

Training will be appropriate to the activity and duration of their volunteering. As a minimum, all volunteers are expected to complete the initial induction 'Introduction to SFRS'. Those volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are expected to complete additional training related to their role to ensure robust safeguarding procedures are understood and volunteers are competent in putting these into practice.

6.5 **Appointment**

Only when the selection process, background checks and induction training have been completed fully and it is agreed that the person is suitable for the role, can a volunteer take up their post.

All volunteers must read and sign a Volunteer Statement of Expectations which outlines what is expected from the volunteer and what they can expect from SFRS and clearly sets out the relationship between the volunteer and SFRS. In commencing their role, the volunteer commits to the aims, values and key policies of SFRS related to their volunteer role. They also commit to delivering the key tasks outlined in the relevant role profile.

This Statement of Expectations does not create a contract of employment between SFRS and volunteers.

6.6 **Support and Supervision**

When appointed, each volunteer will be assigned a named contact as their main point of contact who is responsible for their day to day work and who will provide relevant guidance and support. This will include regular and mutually agreed contact to discuss their role, share feedback and identify individual development and support needs to enable the volunteer to get the most from their contribution to SFRS.

6.7 Raising Concerns and Resolving Issues

A volunteer's named contact will have regular review meetings with them and volunteers are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have at any time. If the named contact is unable to resolve the matter, they will refer it to their line manager. Concerns are hopefully resolved informally and at the earliest opportunity.

If there are concerns about the performance or conduct of a volunteer, the named contact should arrange a meeting with the individual to establish if there is an underlying problem or offer further advice or training. Where this does not resolve the issue or where the issue(s) in question is of such severity that it would be inappropriate for the volunteer to continue in their role, SFRS reserve the right to terminate the arrangement immediately.

Where a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding is raised, the person against whom the allegation is made shall immediately refrain from working with children, young people and protected adults until the outcome of further investigations are known. Any such allegation will be treated seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly in accordance with the procedures outlined in the SFRS Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children or the SFRS Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Adults.

In accordance with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, SFRS is required to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland where harmful behaviour has been identified and which may make the individual unsuitable to work with children and/or protected adults.

In cases where harmful behaviour has been identified, further guidance must be sought from an HR Adviser regarding a referral to Disclosure Scotland.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 7.1 The SFRS will ensure that all volunteers are provided with information, instruction, supervision and training to enable them to complete their voluntary work safely. This includes the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), where required, and providing organisational arrangements, such as risk assessments, safe systems of work, and compliance with all associated management arrangements and guidance, as outlined in the Health and Safety Policy and Working with Volunteers Management Arrangement.
- 7.2 Volunteers must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions while volunteering for the SFRS and follow any health and safety advice and instruction given for their role. Volunteers should co-operate with the SFRS on health and safety matters and immediately report accidents / incidents (including near misses that may have led to injury). Volunteers should not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.
- 7.3 In the unlikely event that an SFRS volunteer is required to work by themselves, the responsible manager will develop health and safety arrangements in accordance with the SFRS Lone Working Management Arrangement.
- 7.4 The SFRS has a duty of care to volunteers to ensure they are supported in their role. If a volunteer finds themselves in a situation which is a threat to personal safety, they should withdraw and report this immediately to their SFRS named contact.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 8.1 SFRS is committed to building a diverse organisation that is responsive to the needs of our communities and our stakeholders. SFRS is also committed to equal opportunities at all stages of recruitment and selection. Interviewing and selection of volunteers should always be carried out without regard to protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
- 8.2 SFRS is committed to providing an environment where individuals feel accepted for who they are, valued for their contribution and are able to prosper free from unlawful discrimination, bias, harassment or victimisation.

9. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

- 9.1 SFRS provide a facility for all authorised out-of-pocket expenses to be reimbursed to volunteers. This should be a genuine reimbursement of costs incurred as part of the voluntary work and is normally limited to travel to and from the place of volunteering or any travel undertaken during volunteering, e.g. transporting clients, going to meetings or events at the request of SFRS. We encourage volunteers to claim expenses, as this enables SFRS to build a complete picture of the costs and to allow accurate budgeting for future activities. Volunteers' expenses will be paid in accordance with the principles outlined in the SFRS Business Travel and Reimbursement of Expenses Policy and should be submitted on the relevant expenses claim form and must be supported by relevant VAT receipts.
- 9.2 If volunteering for five hours or more, and where refreshments have not already been provided, SFRS will also reimburse for reasonable subsistence expenses,

i.e. meals taken whilst volunteering, based on receipted expenditure. Volunteers should consult with their named contact regarding what is reasonable, prior to expenses being incurred. Please refer to section 10 of the SFRS Travel and Subsistence policy for further guidance on upper limits set by the Inland Revenue.

10. LIABILITY INSURANCE

10.1 The SFRS provides Employers Liability, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity cover for all volunteers whilst working on SFRS activities. The SFRS does not provide motor insurance cover.

All volunteers that hold Business Class motor insurance will be automatically covered for their work on behalf of SFRS. However, if their insurance is limited to social and domestic use, then they will have to discuss their role as a volunteer with their insurance company to ensure that they are fully covered. Volunteers will be asked to sign the employee declaration section of the Expenses form to confirm that they have agreed their driving on SFRS business with their insurers before we can reimburse mileage costs.

10.2 SFRS Vehicles

10.2.1 SFRS Volunteers approved to drive SFRS vehicles will be covered by our insurance once they receive vehicle familiarisation and their driving licence details are logged with SFRS Fleet. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring their driving licence details are current, including vehicle entitlement and photocard expiry dates. Driving licence details will be checked by SFRS on an annual basis.

10.2.2 Please note, SFRS volunteers are not permitted to fuel a vehicle, neither from external nor internal SFRS pumps, nor are they authorised to use an SFRS fuel card.

10.2.3 SFRS Volunteers are not permitted to drive mini buses in any circumstances until a further review has been completed.

10.2.4 SFRS Volunteers are not permitted to drive under blue light conditions.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY, SOCIAL MEDIA AND COPYRIGHT

11.1 Confidentiality

All volunteers are required to keep any confidential information disclosed by SFRS secure and not to disclose such information in whole or in part to any third party. This requirement continues to apply both during the volunteer's time providing volunteering services to SFRS and after the volunteer's departure from SFRS.

11.2 Social Media

All volunteers are required to comply with the SFRS Social Media Policy and to keep confidential any SFRS information they become aware of through their volunteering that is not in the public domain.

11.2.1 SFRS regularly make use of social media in order to communicate, advertise and report on events and post pictures, etc. Social media is an important tool and one which we rely on to keep our people informed.

11.2.2 Volunteers may have access to the group's social media accounts, depending on their role. Volunteers must keep their own personal social media accounts private and, if the volunteer role involves working with young people and/or vulnerable adults, under no circumstances should the volunteer link their own accounts to the personal accounts of those within their group. No social media interaction should take place unless it is via recognised SFRS discussion groups.

11.3 **Copyright**

Volunteers are required to assign copyright to SFRS of any work produced as a part of their volunteering role or activity.

12. **PRIVACY STATEMENT**

12.1 The SFRS, in complying with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR), will treat in confidence the information it holds about volunteers.

12.2 The Service processes personal data collected in relation to the engagement, induction, training and ongoing supervision of volunteers as set out in this policy in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. In particular, data collected as part of this policy is held securely, accessed by and disclosed to individuals, only for the purposes of supporting a volunteer.

Any personal data gathered in respect of using this policy will be restricted to its use within the boundaries of the volunteer's retention.

The lawful basis for processing is set out in GDPR Article 6 (b) – to fulfil a contract with an individual. Please refer to our iHub to see the full Privacy Notice and further information on your rights.

- 12.3 This link can also be used to access further information and current documents relating to GDPR – [internal link only].

13. LEAVING AN SFRS VOLUNTEER POST

- 13.1 Volunteers are free to cease volunteering with SFRS at any time. Wherever possible, an agreed period leading up to this point would be helpful in order to give time to make any alternative arrangements required.
- 13.2 There may also be times when SFRS will no longer be able to continue with an individual's volunteer post. For example, by reason of the volunteer's continued lack of availability or where the volunteer role comes to a natural end or a reduced confidence in the volunteer's ability to effectively represent the Service. Any such circumstance will be fully explored and discussed with the volunteer prior to a decision being made.

SFRS reserve the right to halt a volunteer's commitment as a last resort if we feel their performance or their conduct is not in keeping with SFRS values or where there has been an irresolvable complaint. Where this is the case, we will inform the volunteer personally and in confidence, of the decision. In such circumstances and where the volunteer is also an SFRS employee, their line manager must be informed and a decision reached as to whether the employee's actions impinge upon the employment relationship to the extent that disciplinary action should be reviewed or considered.

- 13.3 The SFRS volunteer ID card and SFRS branded t-shirt/polo shirt, where provided, together with any other items provided by SFRS, clothing/PPE must be returned when the volunteer ceases their role.

- 13.4 Wherever possible, volunteers will be afforded the opportunity to feedback before leaving their post and appropriately thanked for their support.
- 13.5 If required and where appropriate, SFRS will provide suitable references and confirmation of the nature and duration of the volunteering activities.

14. VOLUNTER FEEDBACK

- 14.1 We encourage volunteers to offer feedback on our processes, support and work. The opportunity to do so is via the regular discussions with their SFRS named contact.

15. CONSULTATION

- 15.1 This policy has been developed in consultation with Representative Bodies.

16. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

Volunteer Handbook

Working with Volunteers Management Arrangement

Whilst SFRS policies relate specifically to our employees, the policies noted below also have relevance to our volunteers in terms of their awareness of these policies and procedures:

Business Travel and Reimbursement of Expenses Policy

Code of Conduct

Dignity and Integrity at Work Policy

Employment and Criminal Convictions Policy
General Information Note – Community Asset Register
Health and Safety Policy
Lone Working Management Arrangement
Social Media Policy
Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Adults
Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children
Secondment Policy
Young Persons Management Arrangement