

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland

Volunteering - Code of Practice

1.0 Your Importance to MCofS Work

Volunteers guide and support the work of our paid officers, providing corporate and strategic direction, expert knowledge, experience and hands-on resources. Volunteers are often critical to how stakeholders, the public and members perceive the MCofS and its work.

The volunteer relationship is one of trust and mutual understanding. The MCofS is committed to giving volunteers the best experience possible and in return makes certain expectations of how volunteers conduct themselves.

2.0 Who is a Volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who does not receive financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses and who performs a task at the request of, or on behalf of, MCofS.

The volunteer relationship is binding in honour, trust and mutual understanding. With the exception of Board members, no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise can be imposed on volunteers. Likewise MCofS does not undertake to provide regular volunteering opportunities, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.

3.0 Types of Volunteer

There are four types of volunteer:

3.1 Elected Members

Elected members serve on the Board and Executive. Their duties are defined by law in the case of Board members, and in the Articles of Association. Elected members are elected by the membership at an AGM.

3.2 Co-opted Members

Co-opted members volunteer to support the work of officers through their work on the Executive, specialist committees or working groups. Co-opted members are approved by the Executive prior to co-option to the Executive, committee or working group.

3.3 Event Volunteers

Event volunteers assist at MCofS co-ordinated events. They may be un-qualified, active experienced participants, or qualified to appropriate National Standards. National Standards are the National Awards in outdoor education recognised by the MCofS and operated by Mountain Leader Training UK. Event volunteers may hold recognised qualifications including qualifications / awards / certificates relating to sport development activities provided by courses other than MLTUK (e.g. route-setting awards, judging courses).

3.4 Casual Volunteers

Casual volunteers provide assistance to the MCofS on an ad-hoc basis. Examples may include office duties, research activities, etc.

4.0 What Volunteers can expect from the MCofS

- To match MCofS needs with the skills, knowledge, experience and motivation of the volunteer.
- To recognise that successful volunteer involvement incorporates the individual's motivations, aspirations and choices.

- To ensure that paid staff are trained to work with volunteers.
- To ensure that volunteers receive appropriate training and support to help them deliver in their roles.
- To celebrate success and recognise loyalty and dedication.
- To respect volunteers, listen and learn from what they have to say, consistently encouraging two-way communication.
- To provide timely and accurate information about MCofS work, policies and procedures.
- To foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere - aiming to make volunteering fun.
- To make financial and other provisions in operational planning and budgets for the needs of volunteers.
- To try to resolve fairly any complaints or grievances.
- To ensure every volunteer has access to a member of paid staff to guide and advise them.
- To take necessary steps wherever possible to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers whilst undertaking their volunteering activities.

5.0 What the MCofS expects from Volunteers

- To maintain and uphold the reputation of the MCofS at all times.
- To co-operate with paid members of staff and operate within specialist committee remits.
- To support the achievement of MCofS strategic aims, taking necessary steps to read and understand relevant plans.
- To effectively represent the MCofS by accurately interpreting its policies, position statements and guidelines.
- To aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability and quality in all aspects of your contribution.
- To respect the need for confidentiality whenever you have access to restricted or privileged information.
- To take reasonable care of your own health and safety whilst volunteering and that of others who may be affected by your actions or omissions.
- To encourage two-way communication with other volunteers and paid staff, fostering a pleasant and friendly atmosphere.
- To support MCofS equal opportunities and other policies and help promote the diversity of its staff and membership.
- To accept that the ultimate responsibility for MCofS affairs rests with the Board and paid staff.
- To declare any actual or potential conflict of interest as soon as possible, and to work within the law.

6.0 Recruitment

MCofS encourages involvement by volunteers from all sections of the community and will not discriminate against any volunteers.

All volunteers will be paid-up Individual, or Honorary, members of the MCofS, or a member of a Club Member. In exceptional circumstances, this policy will be waived where the Board consider that the volunteer's specific skills will be of benefit to the MCofS.

In all cases the MCofS must be satisfied that the volunteer possesses the appropriate personal qualities e.g. responsible, reliable and considerate of those around them.

The MCofS does not specify an upper age limit and recognises the valuable contribution made by older volunteers in terms of knowledge and experience. Younger volunteers can bring fresh perspectives and enthusiasm to MCofS whilst gaining valuable skills and experience. The MCofS has a minimum volunteering age of 18 years.

7.0 Recognising and Recruiting Volunteer Requirements

The requirement for specific volunteer skills or resources will usually be brought to the attention of the Senior Officer, or a specialist officer, who will take steps to advertise the requirement through the magazine, website or by emails to club secretaries.

Where Event Volunteers are required, the responsibility for recruitment lies with the Specialist Officer, or as delegated by the Executive or Specialist Committee Chair.

The person responsible for recruiting the volunteer will also be responsible for responding to all enquiries in a timely and efficient manner.

Volunteer candidates will usually be selected and proposed for acceptance by the responsible officer, and may be subject to approval by the Executive, specialist committee or committee chair, according to the circumstances. See section 3.0 for guidance.

8.0 Training and Development

New volunteers are made to feel welcome and will be provided with a Volunteer Information Pack and induction to their role. The induction will be undertaken by the Senior Officer in the case of the Executive, or the appropriate specialist officer in the case of committees and working groups.

At the end of an agreed period of time an informal meeting will be held to clarify any areas of concern. This will normally be undertaken by the Senior Officer accompanied by a Director, or a specialist officer and the respective committee or working group chair.

For the purpose of personal development, MCofS courses, events, seminars and the Annual Gathering may be made available to volunteers on a reduced-cost basis as appropriate.

9.0 MCofS Policies and Procedures

MCofS Policies and Procedures provided for the guidance of, and relating to, staff are included in the Human Resource Handbook which is located in the Reception area at the Head Office in West Mill Street, Perth.

The following sections of the Handbook apply equally to volunteers:

Section 4:

Alcohol and Drugs

Confidentiality

Declaration of Interest (see Conflict of Interest Policy)

Copyright, Design Rights and Intellectual Property

Contact with the Press, Media, Radio and TV (see Media Communications Guidelines)

Email and Internet Security

Fraud

Section 5:
Bullying and Harassment
Sexual Harassment
Whistle Blowing
Data Protection
Equal Opportunities

10.0 Grievance and Conduct Issues

Grievance and conduct issues will be resolved by reference to the relevant procedures which apply to paid staff and contractors. These are detailed in the MCofS Human Resource Handbook (Section 2) which is located in the Reception area at the Head Office in West Mill Street, Perth.

11.0 Moving on

The MCofS recognises that volunteers may cease their involvement at any time. It is recommended that when a volunteer chooses to cease their links with MCofS that their reasons for leaving are sought, any learning points are shared and it is established whether they might wish to be involved again in the future.

12.0 Expenses

Volunteers may claim previously agreed out-of-pocket expenses, such as travelling expenses. Payment of expenses must be authorised by the volunteer's committee chair and can only be reimbursed upon production of a completed expense claim form and receipts. Expense claim forms are available from the MCofS office.

13.0 Health and Safety

The MCofS is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers on its premises and to giving appropriate instruction, training and supervision for their welfare. Our written health and safety statement and accompanying procedures is available from the Senior Officer, MCofS, West Mill Street, Perth.

Volunteers should report any accident / incident occurring on the premises to the Senior Officer.

14.0 Support

The Volunteer Information Pack and website contain information concerning MCofS activities.

The first point of contact for any volunteer should be the Senior Officer or a Director (for the Executive), the Specialist Officer or specialist committee chair (for committees), or the respective Specialist Officer for Events.

Volunteers are encouraged to contact the Senior Officer for advice concerning MCofS policies, strategies and plans, or any other matter.

15.0 Insurance

The scope of MCofS Civil Liability Insurance (CLI) is wide and the policy and documentation is managed by the Senior Officer. Volunteers are covered against public liability claims by third parties for all their activities undertaken on behalf of the MCofS, providing they are a paid-up Individual Member, an Honorary Member or a member declared as active by their Club. CLI does not provide Personal Accident Cover.

MCofS does not provide motor insurance for volunteers using their own vehicle. Volunteer work is normally classed as social domestic pleasure use and not business use, but volunteers may wish

to check with their insurer. At 30p per mile, the standard mileage allowance claimed through expenses includes a contribution for insurance, maintenance, tax and depreciation.

Volunteers requiring further guidance on risk or insurance related matters should contact the Senior Officer in the first instance.

16.0 Media relations

Responsibility for responding to media enquiries, or issuing press statements, rests with the Senior Officer and specialist officers as detailed in the Media Communication Guidelines. Any request for information from the media should be referred to the Senior Officer in the first instance.

17.0 Conclusion

MCofS would like to thank the volunteers who helped draft this Policy.

Our volunteers contribute a wealth of skills and experience. Wherever you are and whatever your skills, MCofS welcomes and values your support. Without our volunteers the MCofS would not exist!

David Gibson
Senior Officer
Approved by the Executive 13 March 2008