

**VALUING VOLUNTEERS:
HISTORIC SCOTLAND'S
OPERATIONAL POLICY FOR
PROMOTING VOLUNTEERING**

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Historic Scotland

1. Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Executive. Our mission is to safeguard Scotland's historic environment and to promote its understanding and enjoyment. The agency is directly responsible to Scottish Ministers and carries out its functions on their behalf.

Policy aim

2 Historic Scotland supports the Scottish Ministers' vision for Scotland where every one of its people can contribute towards, and benefit from, making Scotland a better place to live and work; where volunteering is an integral element of this and is valued and recognised across all sectors as an expression of an empowered people and a force for change; and where everyone who wants to volunteer can do so readily.

3. Historic Scotland recognises that the conservation of our historic environment for the benefit of current and future generations depends on a commitment from people to places. Volunteering in support of that commitment is one of the most important things that people can do to ensure the future of the historic environment. Historic Scotland will work in active partnerships with individuals and groups who wish to contribute to our work or to wider work in the historic environment on a voluntary basis. Our aim is to ensure that we follow recognised best practice in working with volunteers and to enable and encourage the organisations we support to do likewise.

4. As a public body, Historic Scotland believes it is important to involve members of the public as volunteers in our work. Our ability effectively to involve members of the public in helping us to achieve our aims and objectives is one way in which we can judge how relevant our work is to the general public.

Definition of volunteering

5. A volunteer is a person who undertakes unpaid work freely and by choice without concern for financial gain. Volunteers include volunteer guides at our properties, such as the primary school guides at Linlithgow Palace, volunteer rangers and volunteer key keepers at unstaffed properties.

Historic Scotland and volunteers: a mutually beneficial relationship

6. Historic Scotland:

- values volunteering for the contribution it makes to helping us safeguard the historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment;
- values volunteering as an inclusive act of participation that is in itself important in promoting public commitment to the historic environment;
- recognises that the distinctiveness and special nature of the properties in our care are protected and enhanced through the practical involvement of volunteers from local community groups; and
- appreciates that volunteering is enjoyable and can change and enrich people's lives while bringing wider benefits to society.

Volunteers' relationship with Historic Scotland

7. The relationship between volunteers and Historic Scotland is one bound by trust, mutual understanding and benefit; volunteers give their time freely and willingly, without expectation of financial reward. Volunteers are not employees of Historic Scotland and nor are they civil servants. The relationship is based on the principle that volunteers add value to the agency's work by performing a wide range of roles, and by contributing time, specialist skills, and a flexible approach. In return, Historic Scotland provides volunteers with the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the conservation, and promotion and enjoyment of some of Scotland's most important built heritage assets.

8. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on any volunteer to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time or carry out the tasks provided. Likewise, Historic Scotland cannot be compelled to provide regular work or benefit for any activity undertaken.

9. Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly, and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged including attaining and maintaining the high standards on which Historic Scotland's reputation depends.

Historic Scotland's expectations of volunteers

10. Historic Scotland recognises that volunteers want to make meaningful contributions that use their skills and experience and provide opportunities for personal development and satisfaction. While respecting that volunteers will seek fulfilment from being involved in a particular aspect of Historic Scotland's work, the agency expects volunteers to be committed to its corporate objectives. Volunteers must comply with expected standards of practice, attend training when appropriate and behave with respect towards visitors, staff and other volunteers.

Involvement, development and management of volunteers

11 Historic Scotland is committed to following good practice in the involvement, management and development of volunteers. This will be achieved by following policies and practices that meet the standards recommended by the National Training Standards Organisation for Volunteers Managers.

12. Historic Scotland is an equal opportunities employer and we believe that this good practice should be extended to the recruitment of volunteers. Volunteering in Historic Scotland is open to all regardless of sex, race, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age. However, not all of the volunteering opportunities may be suitable for everyone and, while seeking to involve people of all ages and ability, the agency reserves the right to specify age limits and to define physical ability to ensure we comply with statutory and other externally imposed duty of care obligations.

13. Historic Scotland will recruit volunteers in a variety of different ways. We may advertise through volunteer centres or work with specific volunteering projects or seek volunteers through our work with local communities. We will always seek to recruit volunteers with the skills, knowledge, experience and attitude required to match our needs and goals.

14. Individuals interested in volunteering will be treated in line with the agency's recruitment and selection practices and procedures, being provided with a role/task description and volunteer appointment letter. Volunteers will need the relevant disclosure checks for the work in which they will be involved and appropriate references may also be sought.

15. Historic Scotland is committed to the appropriate training and development of our volunteers to ensure their involvement helps us to achieve our aims and objectives. Volunteers will receive induction training when they are appointed to the role, and further appropriate training, during their time with the agency. Volunteer induction training will cover the status and corporate objectives of the agency and the purpose and expectations of their role as a volunteer. Volunteers will also be included, and expected to participate, in relevant health and safety training.

16. To help them achieve more and to ensure their performance meets the standards required by and expected of Historic Scotland, volunteers will be encouraged to develop their skills through coaching, on-the-job training and formalised training courses as appropriate.

17. Volunteers need and are entitled to receive feedback on their performance. In addition to active guidance and feedback about specific tasks, staff involved in the supervision of volunteers will be encouraged to carry out appropriately structured reviews of general performance, including the identification of training and development needs.

General management, communication and volunteer relations

18. Volunteers will be treated fairly and consistently as an integral part of the team. While acknowledging the nature of the relationship between the volunteer and Historic Scotland, line managers will interact with volunteers in the same way as with staff, and adapt their management style as appropriate.

19. Historic Scotland staff, at all levels, will seek and follow appropriate procedures to ensure volunteers receive information and have the opportunity to participate in the communication process.

20. Volunteers have the same right as staff to seek the advice and support of Historic Scotland's Human Resources Group in all matters pertaining to their relationship with the agency. In the event of a complaint about a volunteer or a grievance by a volunteer, the matter will be handled sensitively and timeously, with the volunteer's point of view sought, listened to and included in any action required to be taken by the agency.

21. Historic Scotland staff involved with volunteers will be trained to enable them to involve, support and manage the effective contribution of volunteers confidently and competently.

Health and safety

22. Historic Scotland has a duty to all staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors and others who may be affected by our activities and the aim is to protect all of them from risks to their health and safety as far as is reasonable.

23. The agency aims to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all and employees and volunteers are expected to co-operate fully. The agency will provide the same standard of care for both staff and volunteers. Volunteers have a statutory duty to co-operate with Historic Scotland in the implementation of our Health and Safety Policies and to ensure that they carry out their work without risk to themselves or others and to report risks to their supervisors.

Procedural guidelines

24. Historic Scotland is committed to preparing and providing detailed guidance on the recruitment, selection, training, development, recognition and general management of volunteers. This will be done by means of a *Volunteer Handbook* for everyone who engages in the work of the agency on a volunteer basis. Full details of administrative procedures pertaining to volunteer records, travel/expense claims, protective clothing etc., will be contained within the Handbook.

Responsibilities for implementation and review

25. The responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy, which has been approved by the Historic Scotland Board, rests with the Historic Scotland Senior Management Team. Each Senior Management Team member is responsible for the delivery of the agency's policy and for ensuring that the management of volunteers operating in his or her area is in line with practice and procedural guidelines. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed every three years to ensure it remains appropriate to the needs of Historic Scotland and the volunteers who work with us. To aid the review process there will be an annual report to the Historic Scotland Board on volunteering in the agency. These annual reports will be published on our website.

Volunteering in the Voluntary Sector

26. Historic Scotland works with a range of voluntary sector organisations and provides financial support to a number of them. These organisations are managed by volunteer board members and they may also make use of volunteers in undertaking work to meet their objectives. Historic Scotland will encourage the organisations we work with and support to follow good practice in their recruitment and management of volunteers. Where we are awarding grant we will recognise as legitimate expenditure the expenses occurred in the recruitment and management of volunteers. We shall also explore with partner bodies the opportunities for joint training and support of volunteers and volunteer managers.

Historic Scotland involvement in key volunteering initiatives

27. Historic Scotland is committed to helping to meet the wider objectives of Scottish Ministers. Promoting volunteering and creating opportunities for volunteers from all ages and all walks of life are high on Ministers' priority list. To support this, Historic Scotland will, in particular, contribute to Ministers' objectives on young people's volunteering by seeking opportunities to work with Project Scotland and Millennium Volunteers. We will also seek to provide volunteering opportunities for older people through projects such as Community Service Volunteers' RSVP initiative and other initiatives that include people from other groups who are under-represented in volunteering.

Historic Scotland
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