



## **Paths for All Volunteer Policy**

### **Paths for All Volunteer Mission Statement**

Paths for All strives to invest in the inclusion, development and support of volunteers to contribute to a happier, healthier, greener more active Scotland.

### **Paths for All Vision for Volunteers**

The network of Paths for All volunteers is a valued asset which will continue to grow and develop with further support and training. Every volunteer will have an equal opportunity to participate, and a sense of ownership that their local project is a valued part of a national initiative.

## **Introduction**

1. Paths for All aims to support the development of local walking for health schemes and community path groups to improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of participants in Scotland.
2. Volunteers are recognised by Paths for All as a major resource and they make a vital contribution to our work. This is mainly through their role as Walk Leaders and community path group members, but volunteers can also be involved in a variety of roles, including as Board members.
3. Volunteers are already important stakeholders in the work of Paths for All. We will continue to encourage, develop and support volunteer involvement in health walk projects and community path groups. In doing so, we recognise that the roles of volunteers will complement and not replace the roles of paid members of staff.
4. Paths for All recognises that a volunteer is a person who does voluntary activities on its behalf and on the behalf of their local community. Volunteering is undertaken freely by choice and it is unpaid. Paths for All aims to assist local schemes and groups to manage volunteering effectively.
5. Paths for All is committed, through the implementation of its Equality Policy and the provision of support, resources and advice to local projects, to ensure

that no volunteer, either current or potential, is discriminated against either directly or indirectly. This includes discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, colour, nationality, cultural origin, religion, disability, experience of mental distress, HIV status, caring responsibility, class, education, employment status, political belief or unrelated criminal conviction (this is not an exhaustive list). We also ensure that no volunteer is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements of their volunteering role, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

7. We will ensure that projects we fund have volunteer policies in place which are frequently reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and a commitment to increasing equality through their work. Also that volunteers will not be discriminated against in the advice and support they are given. Nor will they be denied access to opportunities because of their assumed abilities, skills or behaviour and each volunteer will be judged on his/her own merits.

8. Throughout the Paths for All network, the majority of volunteers train as Walk Leaders to lead local health walks across Scotland or work on developing and maintaining local path networks. Volunteers are also involved in many other aspects of local health walk and community path schemes including, for example, sourcing new walking routes, undertaking feasibility studies for new paths, path maintenance, completing risk assessments, serving on management committees, administrative work and producing newsletters. It can be useful for an organisation to have a portfolio of roles for volunteers, so when anyone is interested in volunteering there is a variety of information on roles for volunteers to aid their consideration of what role might be most suitable.

9. Paths for All believes that the relationship with the volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment, within which Paths for All and the volunteers both have rights and responsibilities. We hope that volunteers will enjoy their involvement and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives. Experience and research has shown that volunteering also brings benefits to volunteers themselves and to those with whom they are involved.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

10. In engaging volunteers, we recognise their right to expect the following support from Paths for All:

- Support, resources and best practice guidance available to volunteer managers to assist them in providing a high quality and mutually beneficial volunteering experience

- Provision of Walk Leader and additional training to support volunteers in their role. (Current training portfolio includes Walk Leader and Refresher, Safety Outdoors, Disability Inclusion, Walk@Work, Paths Maintenance Basics, Path Survey and Design Basics, Funding, Promotion, Path Construction Basics, CMD Regulations, Biodiversity and Paths and Innovative Design Approaches)
- Provision of free insurance for Walking for Health Volunteers who complete the Walk Leader training course. Scheme Coordinators must register schemes with Paths for All to qualify.
- E-bulletin fortnightly via email to share updates from Paths for All.
- Quarterly newsletters for Walking for Health and community path group volunteers.
- Regular networking events to share ideas and hear from other volunteers and projects.
- Advice and support from Development Officers to help volunteers to carry out their roles effectively, with first point of contact being the local Scheme Coordinator.

In return, Paths for All expects the following from volunteers:

- Carry out volunteering activities in a way which corresponds to the aims, values and working practices of Paths for All.
- Attend training and support sessions when required or selected.
- Respect other volunteers, walkers and staff.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Complete required registration and evaluation paperwork.
- Carry out tasks with regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

### **Disclosure Scotland/PVG Scheme**

11. Disclosure Scotland's PVG Scheme is a service designed to enhance public safety by providing employers and volunteer involving organisations with criminal history information on individuals applying for posts. If it is part of a volunteer's role to be involved with vulnerable groups, then the managing organisation will discuss the need for a Disclosure, under the revised Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme, prior to taking on a volunteer. For further information on PVG please see the Paths for All information sheet or website.

### **How information about Volunteers will be used**

Paths for All holds Volunteers' contact details on a secure contacts database with access restricted to Paths for All staff. We may use these details to send e-bulletins, newsletters and other information of interest to Volunteers. Volunteers

may opt out of receiving any or all information and may request to be deleted from the Paths for All contacts database at any time.

Paths for All is involved in research on the effects of walking and path network development on the health and well-being of the Scottish people. We may make requests to Volunteer Coordinators for Paths for All or our external researchers to contact Volunteers for information to assist with this research. Volunteers will not be contacted for this purpose before Paths for All receives permission from their Volunteer Coordinator.

Paths for All will never sell or pass on Volunteer details to third parties for marketing purposes.