



horseScotland
enable develop excel

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Within

Equestrian Sport in Scotland

horseScotland is the national organisation for all equestrian sports and activity in Scotland, our shared vision is to: **Enable** those in our sport and sector, by supporting their **Development**, to **Excel** in what they do best.

Volunteers make a huge contribution to Scottish Equestrian Sport, judges, officials, coaches, organisers, club secretaries, treasurers, council members, chairpersons, helpers, people who provide transport, make refreshments, write newsletters, sit on committees, etc. Each and every volunteer plays a vital part in keeping sport alive and thriving in Scotland.

While there has been an increase in the numbers of employed staff managing sport in Scotland over the last decade, sport in Scotland is still heavily dependent on volunteers. The majority of sports bodies are managed by a board or council made up of volunteers, only a few Equestrian sports have paid staff providing day-to-day management, administrative or technical input.

Many of the Equestrian disciplines rely on a club or group structure with volunteers managing, supporting and developing sports clubs at the grassroots level, introducing beginners, and developing talent at higher levels. Equestrian Sports have an extremely strong and successful competition structure, which is dependent on a huge number of volunteers.

In spite of this continuing reliance on volunteers, Equestrian sports have not done much to address the needs of volunteers or their management. Volunteers are assumed to be having fun and finding the process of volunteering rewarding, but we do not always consider their needs. This volunteering policy provides an effective means for engaging, supporting, and recognising volunteers.

Before we go any further we must clarify what we mean by a Volunteer within **horseScotland**.

A **horseScotland** volunteer is a person who freely chooses to give their time, skills and experience to support club, event or equestrian activities."

VOLUNTEER PLAN

Engaging

We engage volunteers through word of mouth, adverts in monthly magazines, websites and social media. We also try and encourage everyone to participate in helping out when they can even if it is only for a few minutes as it's a great way to meet new people and be involved in a sport you enjoy.

The Equestrian sports and in particular, Eventing and Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA), are two of the most volunteer intensive of all the sports that are recognised by **sportscotland**.

Engaging volunteers starts as soon as they join our sport. New volunteers need a proper induction procedure, to explain their role, help them to fit in with existing volunteers and staff, and give them the tools they need to do their job. We should consider mentoring, to give guidance and support to the volunteer, especially in the early days.

Volunteers have needs, they are not a “free” resource, and they need to be nurtured and encouraged if they are to stay involved and committed to sport.

- Volunteers need to **be understood**
- Volunteers need to **feel important**
- Volunteers need to **feel comfortable**
- Volunteers need to **feel welcome**

If these needs are met, volunteers will continue to contribute to sport.

The need to be UNDERSTOOD

A volunteer must feel that they can communicate freely with others, staff and volunteers alike. Communication must be a two-way exercise with both parties being given the respect they deserve.

The need to feel IMPORTANT

horsescotland is enriched by people who have worked tirelessly for many years as volunteers without any recognition of their contribution. Too often, they are only recognised when they announce their intention to ‘retire’, possibly because they are fed-up with being undervalued! There are now several award schemes for volunteers within **horsescotland** and Scottish sport but clubs, events and member organisation must make sure they are nominating their volunteers for these awards.

The need to feel COMFORTABLE

Every volunteer should be aware of the equality framework adopted by **horsescotland**, and be happy to sign up to it. Volunteers must be fully engaged in equality policies and training; they must feel comfortable with monitoring and vetting procedures, such as Protection of Vulnerable Group (PVG) checks.

The need to feel WELCOME

All volunteers should be treated fairly and equitably, in accordance with policies on equal treatment for all. And remember, everyone who comes into contact with an Equine is a potential volunteer – they should be made welcome from the first contact.

In order to ensure that the volunteers’ needs are met adequately, **horsescotland** and our members will:

- Be clear about what the volunteers will be required to do
- Produce volunteer job descriptions for volunteer posts
- Use a registration process
- Adopt a simple, easy selection procedure
- Take out insurance to cover volunteers' risks
- Pay adequate expenses where possible

Supporting

Volunteers are valuable so everyone should try and make sure they enjoy helping out to encourage them to volunteer again. Even competitors just saying please and thank you make all the difference, to making the volunteer's day more enjoyable. Ongoing reminders of how valuable volunteers are to the Equestrian world should be made more public and to raise the awareness of the importance of the valuable volunteer input into the sport.

All Volunteers have ongoing training and support by the various equestrian disciplines, each discipline requires different skills. **horsescotland** contributes to this training and introduction to new skills by inviting all volunteers to attend workshops, seminars, and also the annual Gathering days that are organised. Volunteering is high on the agenda within **horsescotland** development plans as well as within the development of the new data management system, which will link Volunteer roles to volunteer opportunities within the equestrian community in Scotland.

Recognising

Equestrian Sports acknowledge and recognise all the volunteers who give generously of their time, skills and expertise to help. Without volunteers the sports' competitions rallies and organised training days would not be able to run. Everyone should acknowledge the volunteers hard work, **horsescotland** does this by having a policy of thanking all volunteers in all the programmes, supporting them in their development and acknowledgement with the annual volunteer of the year award.

This award not only raises the profile of the volunteer who wins the award but a number of volunteers who are nominated by the different disciplines and this gives us the opportunity to remind the community of the importance of Volunteering. Recognition of volunteering and each individual's valuable input is important to ensure that where there is a tradition of volunteering nothing or no one is taken for granted.