

# Ulster GAA's Volunteer Policy

2019-2022



# Ulster GAA Volunteer Policy

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## Values

1. With over 580 clubs in Ulster and 250,000 volunteers at all levels of the Association, the GAA is the lifeblood of communities across the nine counties of Ulster and Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Association. Ulster GAA values the contribution made by all volunteers to help promote Gaelic Games and Irish Culture and Heritage in Ulster.

2. Volunteerism is at the very heart of everything that happens in Ulster GAA. We are an amateur sporting and culture organisation and we pride ourselves on our amateur ethos, where everybody involved with Ulster GAA, give their time, energy and experience freely. In return, the men and women of Ulster GAA share in the pride and passion of our association in Ulster. They know that without their participation Ulster GAA could simply not exist.



3. The Council is driven by a group of outstanding men and women who are stalwarts of the Association. Their efforts are ably supported by our staff, who are committed and passionate to developing our games and promoting our culture and heritage.

4. The GAA in Ulster is unashamedly community based. It uses Gaelic games to represent and to energise communities, giving them a focus and contributing to their well-being and sustainability. As communities change and develop, Ulster GAA will reflect and respond to those changes. It will do that from a position which is anti-sectarian; anti-racist; and which encourages the active and enjoyable involvement of everyone. As such Ulster GAA is committed to ensuring quality of access to high quality volunteer opportunities and equality of treatment for our volunteers in all our policies and practices.

## Preparation and Planning

5. Supported by government funding, the Ulster Council now directly employs 56 core staff and works closely with the 9 County Secretaries and County Games Development Managers. All staff employed by the GAA have a core directive that requires them to support 250,000 GAA volunteers in Ulster. This includes offering club development support, coaching, games development support, administrative support and general advice and guidance. The Ulster Council staff are governed by volunteers who set the objectives and policy of the Council. Volunteers are involved at every level of the organisation in roles which complement, but never substitute, the work of government-funded staff.
6. Volunteers will not be used in times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue with their regular tasks, but will not be asked to undertake additional duties.
7. All volunteers are provided with a written role description, outlining the purpose, tasks and main expectations of their role. This role is reviewed at least once a year with the volunteer's supervisor.
8. Ulster GAA Volunteers are fully protected by the organisation's public liability and personal accident insurance. However, drivers using their cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover.
9. Ulster GAA reimburses volunteers' out of pocket expenses for travel when claims are submitted on a standard Volunteer Expenses Claim Form. Where volunteers are asked to volunteer for more than 5 hours, then volunteers can claim for a meal voucher, if a meal is not provided.
10. Ulster GAA endeavours to provide adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment and resources to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles
11. Ulster GAA's Management Committee is responsible for the overall management of volunteer involvement, including overseeing the implementation of this policy and dealing with any problems relating to volunteers. The volunteer's designated supervisor provides support and supervision, identifies training requirements, countersigns expenses claims etc. All staff required to undertake such duties are provided with training in the management, supervision, support and training of volunteers

## Recruitment and Selection

12. Ulster GAA is committed to serving and representing all the Gaels of Ulster and wishes to see all sections of the community represented among our volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are widely promoted throughout Ulster, and we will endeavour to make recruitment and selection materials available in a format accessible to any individual or group, upon request. Furthermore, Ulster GAA regularly monitors the diversity of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s).
13. There is a formal selection procedure for anyone wishing to volunteer with Ulster GAA. All Ulster GAA volunteers are selected by individual county boards and are responsible for representing their county at Ulster GAA Council.

Volunteers will be asked to complete a registration form so that Ulster GAA can monitor motivations for people volunteering and the diversity of volunteer base.

Each County Board is requested to select two volunteers to represent the county at Ulster GAA Council and become full Ulster GAA Volunteers. This may be for a period of between 1 to 3 years.

Anyone wishing to volunteer their time to help with the work of Ulster GAA will be respectfully considered, and assessed on criteria as set in the volunteer handbook.



## Management of volunteers

14. All volunteers are provided with the Volunteer Pack, which outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both the volunteer and their specific role.
15. All volunteers are provided with an induction within six weeks of commencing their voluntary work. The induction: provides background information on Ulster GAA; explains its structures and procedures; describes the volunteer role and the work team and outlines how s/he will be supported, including practical information on e.g. expenses and an introduction to relevant paid staff and other volunteers.

During the induction period volunteers will be provided with written information on relevant legislation, organisational policies and codes of practice and will be given the opportunity to discuss any of the issues with the Project Manager and/or supervisor.

16. All volunteer placements are subject to a settling in period, of one month. During this period volunteers are given additional support and volunteers can request a review meeting at the end of their settling in period if they have any issues to raise or want to request a change in volunteering.
17. Ulster GAA's Management Team are responsible for the management of volunteers. However every committee is allocated a named member of staff who can provide day-to-day help and guidance on any issue related to the voluntary work and is responsible for providing regular support to, and supervision of, the volunteer.
18. Ulster GAA is committed to improving the personal and professional development of volunteers. Volunteers may choose to attend any in-house training course that they feel is relevant to their volunteering.

19. Ulster GAA aims to reflect the voluntary nature of our relationship with volunteers in all our policies and procedures for managing their involvement. Therefore, the volunteer's designated



supervisor deals with minor problems about or by volunteers or their volunteering through the usual support and supervision procedures, in the first instance.

However, we recognise our duty to protect the wellbeing and interests of all our stakeholders and therefore operate a formal 'Dealing with Problems' procedure in the case of more serious complaints.

20. Ulster GAA recognises the core role that volunteers fulfil at every level of the organisation. It endeavours to communicate with volunteers in appropriate ways, including the monthly online newsletter, and viral emails.

It also recognises the importance of seeking volunteers' ideas and opinions at regular intervals and conducts an annual volunteer survey. Feedback from volunteers is always welcome.

21. In order to work effectively Ulster GAA must retain information on volunteers including: contact details and other relevant personal information; training undertaken and any complaints made or received. Most of this information will be recorded in computerised records. All such information is treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and volunteers are entitled to inspect all such information pertaining to their own involvement.





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