



Congleton Amateur Swimming Club Volunteering Policy

1) Introduction

Congleton Amateur Swimming Club (CASC) is managed and run entirely by volunteers. We believe that volunteering should be a worthwhile and rewarding experience for volunteers. The club intends to encourage people to become volunteers and to develop and support them in their roles.

For the purpose of this policy, a volunteer is a person who does voluntary work on behalf of the club, with voluntary work defined as:

“ Any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment”
 (“Helping Out” survey Volunteering England 2007).

Within CASC, volunteers comprise the management committee, deliver its services and undertake additional supplementary and supportive tasks as required.

CASC believes that the relationship between our volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment and our volunteers have both rights and responsibilities. We hope that volunteers will enjoy their involvement and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives. We will actively seek to involve people in our work, complying with the procedures below.

2) Purpose and Advantages of adopting a Volunteer Policy

This policy presents CASC with a framework of best practice and procedures, which we will follow when recruiting, selecting, managing and supporting co-volunteers.

The policy will:

- recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers;
- establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers;
- give a framework for recruiting and supporting volunteers including people from underrepresented groups;
- commit CASC to identify and adequately meet the financial costs of the volunteer programme and to support volunteering through funding and other forms of help;
- commit the management committee to ensuring that all volunteers are supported in their role; and
- recognise the contribution all its volunteers make in a range of ways.

3) General

In involving volunteers we will be guided by the following principles of good practice:

- Volunteers receive specific role descriptions, ensuring they have clear expectations of their role;
- Volunteers have a named person on the management committee as their main point of contact and are provided with regular opportunities to consider progress, and discuss any concerns;
- Training and support will be offered to volunteers where appropriate; and

- We ensure that volunteers feel that they are an integral part of the club by inviting them to management committee meetings
- Information given to volunteers, and forms they are asked to complete, are clear and easy to understand
- Volunteers are reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- Within resources currently available, CASC will try to meet additional equipment or support needs to enable disabled people to participate fully as a volunteer.
- We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage; procedures are in place to deal with complaints either by or about volunteers
- We do not regard volunteers as unpaid employees and do not expect volunteers to undertake inappropriate responsibilities or roles
- All staff and volunteers are expected and required to follow our Equality and Diversity Policy and treat each other and all visitors with respect and fairness
- Our Health and Safety Policy cover volunteers, and we take care not to expose volunteers to risks to their health and safety, and that of others: volunteers will have a member of staff on site with them at all times
- There is no formal/legal agreement between CASC and its volunteers. When volunteers give their time for a given number of hours, this is entirely at their discretion
- We will update our guidance in line with relevant changes in either law or in the scope of volunteer roles.

4) Identifying Volunteering Opportunities

If a member of the management committee, member of the club or parent / carer identifies a new voluntary opportunity, this can be brought to the attention of the management committee. A Volunteer Role Description will then be drawn up by the management committee and the main contact for the new role will be identified.

5) Volunteer Role Description

Volunteer role descriptions ensure volunteers are clear as to what is required and expected of them and will minimally include:

- The volunteer's role title
- A list of tasks and responsibilities
- Times/days and location of volunteering activity
- Skills/experience that are required/desired/essential
- The person who will be their main contact

For some roles it may be possible for the volunteer to "build on" certain tasks once their confidence and experience has grown.

6) Recruitment

The recruitment process for volunteers will help establish whether potential volunteers and CASC meet each other's interests and needs. The process will include an informal interview, an application form and taking up references, and will be in line with CASC's Equality and Diversity Policy and current legislation.

We will use a variety of approaches to ensure we recruit volunteers that are representative of the community and the people who use our services.

7) Selection

The selection process for volunteers interested in volunteering for CASC will include:

- attendance at an introduction to CASC session where they will learn about CASC and be given specific information on the volunteer role/s

- completing a volunteer registration form with two referees
- an informal interview with the designated member of the management committee with support if necessary from another member of the committee.

References will be accepted from suitably qualified people, who should not be close relatives. Two references are required and no volunteer will commence a placement until both are received and are satisfactory. Any prospective volunteer, for whom this may prove a difficulty, should seek advice from the management committee.

Where a volunteer role requires a volunteer to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check, if the volunteer has completed one within the previous 6 calendar months, we will comply with guidelines from relevant organisations and may not ask them to complete a further check, The club will request to see the original notification. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to anyone who applies to be involved with our work and only relevant convictions will be taken into account when considering a prospective volunteer's application.

At any point in the selection process, if a potential volunteer is considered unsuitable for a role, CASC will explain their reasons to that volunteer.

8) Induction

All volunteers will receive an induction, determined by the management committee, which will be in keeping with the duration and nature of the volunteering activity.

All volunteers will have a named contact on the management committee who shall be responsible for:

- Providing the volunteer with a written description of the volunteering role outlining specific and general tasks, responsibilities and who they will report to;
- Ensuring that volunteers are aware of their agreed responsibilities with regards to confidentiality.
- Organising a planned induction to the organisation, ensuring volunteers are aware of the Volunteers' Information File which contains policies, procedures and forms
- Ensuring volunteers have adequate work space, equipment and services necessary to perform their tasks effectively and safely.
- Arranging a short, trial period during which volunteers will learn about what is required of them and give them the chance to feed back their views and concerns. At the end of the period, if it is decided that the volunteer is not best suited to the needs of CASC an alternative voluntary role may be suggested and support will be given to find this. It is hoped that, if a volunteer considers a volunteer role does not fulfill their requirements, they feel able to withdraw their help without fear of embarrassment.
- Making up and maintaining a confidential file for the Volunteer. The file will be held in a secure manner in compliance with the Data Protection Act. The file should contain the application form, references, the volunteer agreement, induction record, record of the dates, times and activities undertaken, training record and emergency contact details.
- Providing on-going support including one to one meetings on a regular basis

9) Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers will sign a Volunteer Agreement, which outlines the voluntary arrangement between the volunteer and CASC. It will also be signed by the CASC named contact on the management committee member who will be the designated supervisor for the volunteer. It is binding in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment. This agreement is intended to be flexible enough to take account of changes in a volunteer's circumstances or in the requirements of CASC.

10) Volunteer Expenses

CASC believes that no one should be at a financial disadvantage, through volunteering their time on a freely chosen basis, and is committed to meet, within resources available, reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by our volunteers.

These will include:

- Travel between home and place of volunteering activity. This includes public transport or a mileage allowance. If traveling by public transport, the ticket must be retained, by way of a receipt. If the volunteer is using his/her own transport, a record of all mileage must be kept.
- The mileage allowance paid will be in line with HMRC rules for payment without incurring income tax. Volunteers must be aware that travel to their place of volunteering is classed by motor insurance companies as if they were in paid employment.
- Car parking charges. The car park ticket must be retained, by way of receipt.

Claims for expenses should be made on a CASC Volunteer Expenses Claim form and are paid retrospectively.

11) Problem solving

In any organisation, problems can sometimes occur and whilst it is hoped that this will not be the case, if there are any concerns volunteers should in the first instance speak to either their named contact on the management committee or the Chair of the committee who will try and resolve the matter informally.

If the matter remains unresolved, reference will be made to the Problem Solving Procedure for volunteers, a copy of which is in the Volunteer's information File. All complaints will be dealt with within 10 working days and treated in a confidential manner.

Volunteers will not be subject to disciplinary procedures nor have access to any grievance procedures.

If there are concerns about the conduct or performance of a volunteer, their named contact should investigate to find out what is happening. This includes talking with the volunteer concerned. If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the volunteer should be informed that s/he will be offered 'special guidance' for a period. The object of 'special guidance' will be to encourage improvement. If a volunteer does not meet our standards of performance or the steps we have taken to encourage them to improve do not work, the volunteer will be offered more suitable voluntary activities. If behaviour, which in CASC's view, is equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred, then the volunteer activity will be terminated immediately.

12) Ending Involvement

Although both CASC and a volunteer can end their volunteering arrangement at any time and without any notice, unless there is an emergency or misconduct, CASC will aim to give a volunteer at least 2 weeks notice, hoping that they will offer the same to us.

The decision to ask a volunteer to leave will be a last resort. It may be necessary ask a volunteer to leave due to, for example, poor performance, misconduct, attendance irregularities, DBS issues or criminal convictions.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the reasons for ending an involvement are clarified, recorded and shared with the volunteer. Where a specific volunteer role within CASC has proved not to be suitable for a particular person, the named contact will assist them to explore other options.

At the end of a volunteer's time with CASC their views and experiences will be captured in an exit questionnaire.

This will gather information on the following areas:

- Their "highs and lows" whilst volunteering with us
- Their views on the training and support they were offered or received during their time
- Feedback on how the volunteer performed

13) References

If asked, either during a volunteer's time with us or when it ends, we will supply a reference, based on a volunteer's service with CASC, indicating the skills and knowledge acquired as well as personal qualities observed.

14) Insurance

CASC Volunteers are covered by its Employers and Public Liability insurance policies.

CASC is responsible for the actions of its volunteers in the course of their duties and will take all reasonable precautions to prevent or minimise accident, injury, loss or damage.

15) Monitoring and Review

It will be the responsibility of the management committee to ensure that the Volunteer Information File is in accordance with current legislation and best practice in relation to managing and supporting volunteers.

16) Document references

1. Volunteer Recruitment Procedure
2. Volunteer Registration Form
3. Volunteer Reference Form
4. Volunteers Information File
5. Volunteer Agreement
6. Volunteer Role Descriptions
7. Problem Solving Procedure
8. Equality and Diversity Policy
9. Health and Safety Policy
10. Volunteer Expenses Claim Form