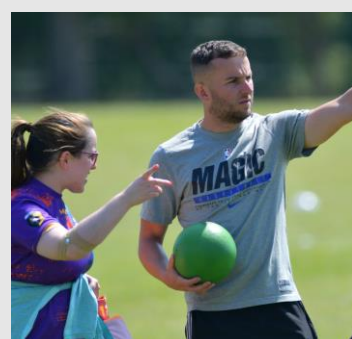
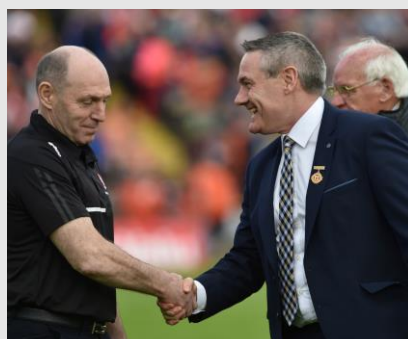




Volunteer Policy

Polasaí na nOibrithe Deonacha

2024-2028



Ulster GAA Volunteer Policy

Polasaí na nOibrithe Deonacha

Values - Maitheasaí

1. With over 382 clubs in Ulster and 137,320 volunteer members 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 cultural organisation and we pride ourselves on our amateur ethos, where everybody involved with Ulster GAA, give their time, energy and experience freely. In return, we share in the pride and passion of our association in Ulster. We know that without their participation Ulster GAA could simply not exist
3. Ulster GAA is driven by a group of outstanding volunteers who are stalwarts of the Gaelic Games Associations. Their efforts are ably supported by our staff, who are committed and passionate to developing our games, our clubs, our volunteers and promoting our culture and heritage.



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

Preparation and Planning – Ullmhúchán agus Pleanáil

5. Ulster Council employs 50-60 core staff and works closely with the 9 County Secretaries and County Games Development Officers. All staff employed by the GAA have a core directive that requires them to support GAA volunteers in Ulster. This includes offering support in Governance and Safeguarding, Club Development, Coaching and Games Development, Community Development, Health and Wellbeing, Irish Language and Culture, Administrative and general advice and guidance. Our staff are governed by volunteer Executive Officers and a Management Committee who set the objectives and policy of the Council through our 'Ulster GAA - A Future for All Strategic Plan 2024-2028'. Volunteers are involved at every level of the organisation in roles which complement, but never substitute, the work of staff.
6. Ulster GAA Volunteer Handbook details written volunteer role descriptions, outlining the purpose, tasks and main expectations of volunteer roles. The Handbook is available on Ulster GAA website (<https://ulster.gaa.ie/council/volunteering/>)



7. 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.
8. Ulster GAA endeavours to provide adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment and resources to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles. All volunteers have access to the GAA E Learning platform Tobar (<https://learning.gaa.ie/>). Specific training may be mandatory for certain roles and volunteers will be made aware of any mandatory training required.
9. 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 issues or matters relating to volunteers. The volunteer's servicing officer provides support and supervision, identifies training requirements, etc. All staff required to undertake such duties are provided with training in the management, supervision, support and training of volunteers.

Recruitment and Selection - Earcaíocht agus Roghnú

10. 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, through County Boards and Clubs and also on Ulster GAA online platforms. Furthermore, Ulster GAA regularly monitors the diversity of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s).



11. There is a formal selection procedure for anyone wishing to volunteer with Ulster GAA. Ulster GAA Committee volunteers are selected by individual county boards and are responsible for representing their county at Ulster GAA Council. 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.

Volunteers for other roles, such as stewarding, events team and specific programme volunteers are recruited in an open and fair manner. 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.

12. Volunteers who will be working with children, young people or vulnerable groups will be recruited according to the GAA safe recruitment guidelines in the Code of Behaviour. Volunteers will be required to adhere to this policy, complete the required AccessNI/Garda Vetting, Safeguarding training and any other training relevant to the role in advance of commencement of position. Renewal of Vetting and Safeguarding training will be required every 3 years.

Management of volunteers - Bainistíocha na nOibrithe Deonacha

13. All volunteers of Ulster GAA must be registered members of the GAA. Membership is managed through our official membership platform, Foireann (www.foireann.ie)



14. All Volunteers must adhere to the GAA Official Guide and Adult Code of Conduct (Rule 1.12 of Official Guide), which sets out the basic principles that establish standards of behaviour for all who attend our events or participate in the GAA, including all Ulster GAA Volunteers (<https://www.gaa.ie/api/pdfs/image/upload/ectlpvl71cp2lpjd7my.pdf>)
15. All volunteers must adhere to the GAA Code of Behaviour (Underage) (Rule 1.11 (c) of Official Guide). This is a mandatory Code of Behaviour for all Gaelic Games Associations in our work with underage participants. (<https://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/child-safeguarding-and-protection/code-of-behaviour>)
16. Ulster GAA Volunteer Policy and Handbook is available to all our volunteers on our website, which outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both the volunteer and their specific role.
17. All volunteers are offered an induction (verbal, written or online). The induction provides background information on Ulster GAA, explaining its structures and procedures. It describes the volunteer role and the work team, and outlines how volunteer support, including practical information on expenses etc..., as well as providing an introduction to relevant paid staff and other volunteers.
18. New volunteer placements can avail of an optional 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.



19. Ulster GAA's Management Team are responsible for the management of volunteers. In addition, 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.
20. 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. All volunteers have access to the GAA E Learning platform Tobar (<https://learning.gaa.ie/>). Specific training may be mandatory for certain roles, volunteers will be made aware of any mandatory training required.
21. Ulster GAA aims to reflect the voluntary nature of our relationship with volunteers in all our policies and procedures for managing their involvement. As per point 14, our volunteers agree to adhere to the GAA Code of Conduct. Any alleged breaches of this code shall be dealt with in line with GAA Official Guide.
22. 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 online communications and through corporate publications and statements. 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.
23. In order to work effectively Ulster GAA must retain personal information on volunteers. All such information is treated in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The GAA has a Data Protection Officer ('DPO'), who can advise on any data protection and privacy queries you may have in relation to, for example, the processing of personal data or the rights afforded under the applicable data protection law. The GAA Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotection@gaa.ie



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