SAFE RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN ATHLETICS CLUBS

Introduction

Volunteers are the lifeblood of athletics and their dedication and commitment drives our sport forward and delivers success. However, every club has a duty of care to its members which extends to ensuring that anyone recruited to undertake regulated work is a suitable person for the role.

PVG scheme membership is important in any recruitment process for staff and volunteers but it is only one part of it. This document offers guidance on safely recruiting volunteers and the role of PVG within that process.

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1. Role Specification:

It is beneficial to specify and describe the roles within your club to provide clarity to prospective volunteers on what would be involved should they undertake the role. **scottish**athletics has provided role descriptors for all of the common roles within clubs and they are listed at the link here:

It is a good idea to have a volunteer information pack ready to send to potential volunteers. This could contain a welcome letter, information about the club, the volunteer role(s), practical information about expenses and training, and information from existing volunteers about the benefits of volunteering with the club. Create a recruitment flow chart and share this with your potential volunteers, it will help to explain your interview process and the timescales involved.

Try not to include formal policies at this stage as these are better dealt with during induction. You should view the volunteer information pack as part of your recruitment material.

2. Application:

Every prospective volunteer should complete an application form. The content and structure of the form will vary dependant on the size of the club and the role being applied for.

Volunteer expression of interest form:

Most clubs will ask volunteers to complete a short expression of interest form and then gather more detailed information when they meet the volunteer in person. Having a lengthy formal application form to complete in the initial stages can be a barrier to potential volunteers. An expression of interest form can be a useful way of recording basic information such as the person's name, address and other contact details.

Full application form:

Depending on the role, a more detailed application form can be completed at the interview which will provide a more rounded picture of the potential volunteer, their motivations and skills.

3. References:

Always try to request and check 2 references. If recruiting to a regulated position working with children, at least one reference should be from a role that involved working with children (professionally or voluntarily).

References from relatives are not acceptable. References can be verbal or written but always make a written record of any verbal references and keep with the employee record.

4. Interview & evidence of qualifications

Interview:

Everyone who applies to volunteer or work with a club should at the very least be interviewed informally to gauge their suitability for the role. Ideally this should be done by two members of the committee, one of whom should have training and/or experience in safeguarding and child protection.

The volunteer interview should be a two-way process. It is as much about the volunteer deciding whether they like the club as it is the club deciding to take on the volunteer. An ideal process will reflect both.

As well as outlining the volunteer roles and responsibilities, if you have not already done so prior to interview, you should provide some background information about your club. You may want to discuss:

- the role descriptions and types of tasks
- training and support offered to volunteers, including any compulsory training
- how the volunteer will be supported in their role
- role progression
- your club expectations of volunteers
- the days and times available
- resources available to volunteers whilst they are volunteering for you

You may want the potential volunteer to tell you:

- what attracts them to volunteering with your club or to take part in athletics
- what they hope to gain from volunteering
- relevant skills, interests and experience
- time availability
- any additional support needs
- names of potential referees
- when they would be able to begin volunteering, or start any required training

Evidence of Qualifications:

Where necessary any relevant qualifications should be seen by the club before an appointment is made.

Where the applicant is a UKA licensed coach the club should ask to see their qualification certificates and license. Every UKA registered coach is issued with a licence card which is valid for 3 years and which contains a photograph, an expiry date, and details of the qualifications held by the individual. It will also state whether they are licensed to work with children and/or adults only. If the license has expired (i.e. is more than 3 years old from date of issue), the individual will not be licensed or insured via UKA until it is renewed.

If the applicant is transferring from another club, the club welfare officer should contact the previous club welfare officer to check the applicants safeguarding record and to verify any explanation for leaving.

5. Criminal Record Check

Self-Declaration

Self-declarations provide an initial opportunity for applicants to disclose to the club/**scottish**athletics any previous convictions or relevant investigations they were the subject of, and which would be relevant to a recruitment decision. Self-declaration forms should ideally be completed prior to someone applying for membership of the PVG scheme with a club.

PVG

Membership of the PVG scheme is a requirement for any role that involves regulated work with children or protected adults. **scottish**athletics has produced separate guidance documents to

support clubs with the digital PVG application processes and this is available in the Welfare section of the website.

Note: Jog Leaders are not licenced to work with under 18s and do not require to join the PVG scheme. New jog leaders will be guided through the self-declaration procedures by the welfare team at **scottishathletics. Existing jog leaders looking to renew their licence should follow the specific guidance for jog leader licence renewal on our website).*

6. Appointment and Induction

Induction training

When a new post holder starts at the club, in conjunction with the welfare officer should:

- Agree what training the new volunteer requires (e.g. Coaching qualifications / Child Wellbeing and Protection Training) and when it should be done by (some positions may require mandatory training – for further information contact the welfare team at **scottish**athletics).
- Explain and get written agreement to the key policies such as child protection, complaints, grievances, and misconduct etc.
- Have the new volunteer read and sign up to the codes of conduct. This is important as the purpose of any code is to clarify:

    - what behaviours are acceptable, and unacceptable.
    - the standards of practise expected.
    - the basis for challenging and improving practise.

The Codes let everyone know what they can expect from the club, coaches and volunteers, but also what standard of behaviour is expected from club members, athletes and parents. They can be used prior to, or during training sessions, at club or team meetings, and at annual renewal of membership.

It should be made clear that the codes are an important part of monitoring and improving the behaviour and practice of volunteers. When a club member does not meet the expectations set out in the codes, disciplinary or performance management action may be taken by the club.

7. Ongoing Supervision and Management

Trial period:
It is recommended that the club and any new members of the sports volunteers/staff agree a trial period to make sure that the role is a good fit for both – normally 6 months with a review thereafter.

Monitoring and Performance review:

The club should monitor the performance of the individual doing regulated work. This gives an opportunity to check on progress and address any problems or concerns.

Misconduct:

Everyone takes part in athletics for the enjoyment of the sport, whether they are an athlete, coach or a volunteer. However, there are occasions when things go wrong and it's important to have procedures in place to manage them when they come up. Experience tells us that even small issues

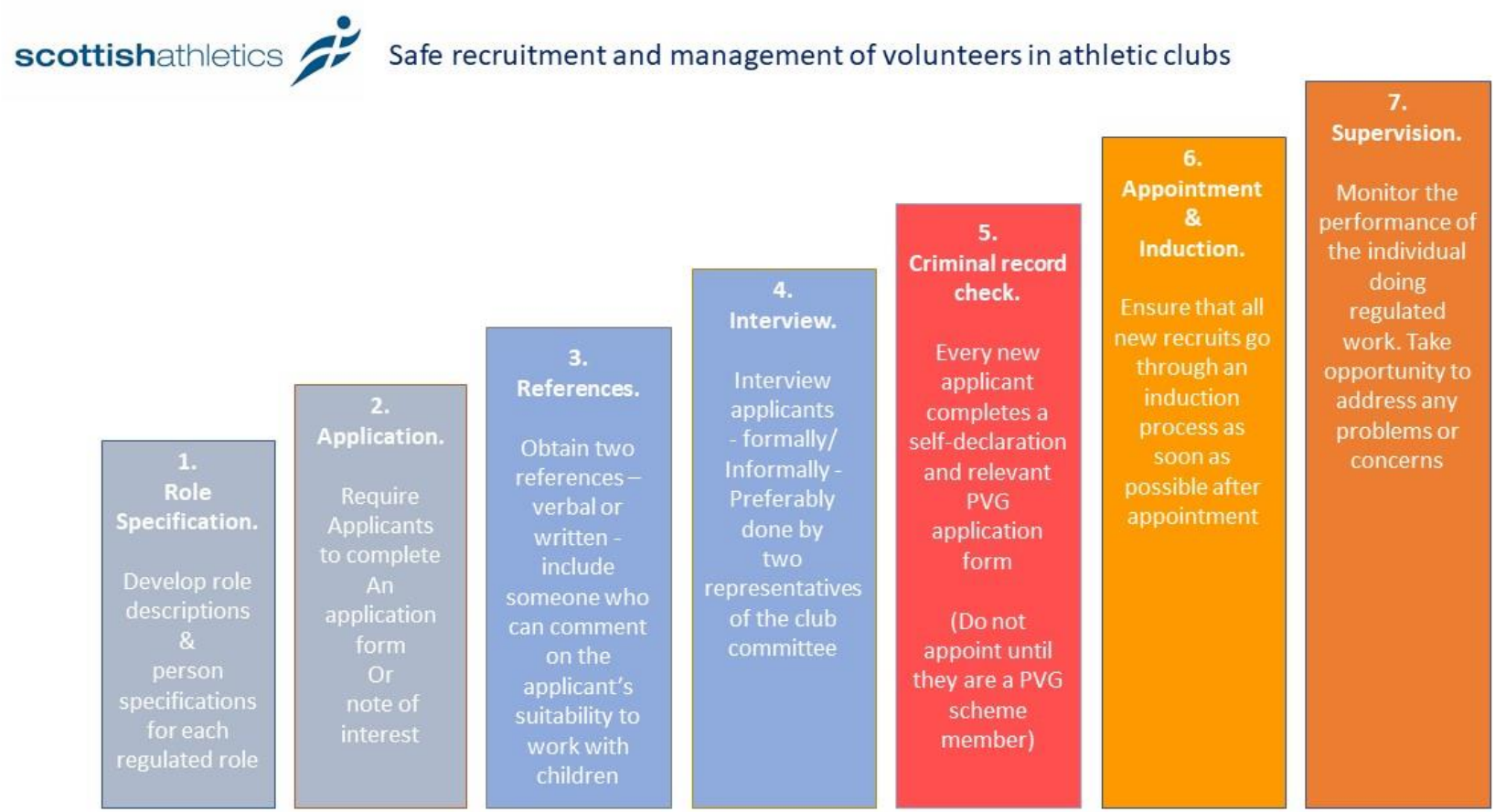
can quickly get out of control if a club does not have processes in place to manage them. Having transparent and easy to access guidance on what is and is not acceptable, and which clearly explains how a club will respond is key to successful resolution.

Having a clear process also shows that you'll deal with anything that comes up in a consistent and proportionate manner. It's part of making sure that all members are treated fairly with respect.

All complaints about volunteers should be dealt with in accordance with the club's constitution. Clubs are advised to adopt the national standards and procedures in this regard, but if they chose to develop their own it should be clear, concise, easy to read and understand.

Remember by joining a club, members are bound by the constitution, policies, codes of conduct and procedures of the club, this applies equally to: office bearers, coaches, adult helpers, athletes and anyone registered with your club in any capacity.

Appendix A:


scottishathletics
Safe recruitment and management of volunteers in athletic clubs
1. Role Specification.
Develop role descriptions & person specifications for each regulated role
2. Application.
Require Applicants to complete An application form Or note of interest
3. References.
Obtain two references – verbal or written - include someone who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
4. Interview.
Interview applicants - formally/ Informally - Preferably done by two representatives of the club committee
5. Criminal record check.
Every new applicant completes a self-declaration and relevant PVG application form
(Do not appoint until they are a PVG scheme member)
6. Appointment & Induction.
Ensure that all new recruits go through an induction process as soon as possible after appointment
7. Supervision.
Monitor the performance of the individual doing regulated work. Take opportunity to address any problems or concerns