

# VOLUNTEER SAFETY POLICY

## INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

### HSP-14

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## CONTENTS PAGE

| Item no | Item                                   | Page |
|---------|--|------|
| 1       | Introduction and background            |      |
| 2       | Scope                                  |      |
| 3       | Aim                                    |      |
| 4       | Legislation                            |      |
| 5       | Risk Assessments                       |      |
| 6       | Health and Safety                      |      |
| 7       | Liability & Insurance                  |      |
| 8       | Reporting of accidents and near misses |      |
| 9       | Training                               |      |
| 10      | Support and staff contacts             |      |
| 11      | Other relevant documents               |      |

**This H&S Guidance Note is relevant to and must be implement by H&S Committee and specifically: -**

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| Chief Executive Officer               |
| Director of Nature Recovery           |
| Director of Action for Nature         |
| Director of People and Resources      |
| Head of Engagement                    |
| Wilder Communities Manager            |
| Volunteer & community Support Officer |
| All volunteers, staff and trustees    |

## 1. Introduction and background

The operational Health and Safety Policy HSP-14 sits directly under the Health and Safety Policy for Somerset Wildlife Trust and its subsidiaries (hereafter 'the Trust') and is reviewed at least every two years, or immediately following an accident or change of legislation, etc.

## 2. Scope

HSP-14 applies to all Volunteers, Trustees, Directors, managers, staff and trainees. It provides guidance for everyone regarding their role and responsibilities when recruiting, supervising and planning the work of volunteers. It also details volunteers' health and safety responsibilities.

## 3. Aim

The purpose of the 'Volunteer Safety' H&S Policy is to ensure consistency in risk management across the Trust, including its subsidiaries, in all aspects of health and safety relevant to the tasks undertaken by its volunteers.

## 4. Legislation: The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of H&S at Work 1999

Organisations have a 'duty-of-care' towards their volunteers. This means that reasonable steps must be taken to reduce the probability and seriousness of injury to volunteers. This could include providing them with suitable information, training, safety clothing and PPE, supervision and so on. The Trust should provide the same level of protection to volunteers where they carry out similar activities and are exposed to the same level of risk as employees.

There are also duties on employers to take account of the health and safety of those people (other than their employees) who may be affected by their activities, and to give them relevant health and safety information.

## 5. Risk assessments

There is a duty on employers to carry out risk assessments and ensure they are implemented effectively, including by and with volunteers. Risk assessments should be explained to volunteers in an appropriate manner fitting the competence, age, knowledge and responsibilities of the volunteer.

Risk assessment follow the Trust format of:

1. Generic Risk assessment (detailing the task or activity risks)
2. Site Risk assessment
3. Supplementary risk assessment (completed for each individual activity with specific details about location, group, task etc)

As per the Volunteer Agreement, Somerset Wildlife Trust will:

- Ensure volunteers are in a safe working environment. This includes carrying out, sharing and explaining risk assessments to volunteers as necessary and in an appropriate format.
- Provide clear instruction, relevant training, Personal Protective Equipment and tools for the tasks that volunteers are asked to carry out, so that they can complete all aspects of their roles competently and safely as detailed in the risk assessment.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Carry out their role to the best of their ability and adhere to their role description, unless an activity that goes beyond the remit of the role description is agreed in advance. Consult their contact if they are ever unsure.
- Always follow instructions, comply with the risk assessments and adhere to safety working practices. Inform their contact if they have concerns or require clarification. Report all incidents, accidents or near misses.

Volunteers who have specific responsibilities for completing their own risk assessments (for example Event Leads and Wildlife Watch Leads) should have appropriate training, support and guidance to do so competently.

## **6. Health and safety Policy**

HSP-14 Volunteer Safety, sits under the Trust's 'Health and Safety Policy', which sets out the organisation and arrangements for health and safety and includes a section on Volunteers' responsibilities.

All registered volunteers are provided with a copy of the Volunteer Handbook which incorporates the Volunteer Agreement and lays out the roles and responsibilities of volunteers including in relation to safe working practices.

## **7. Liability and insurance**

The Trust's Employers' Liability and Public Liability insurance that extends to the work undertaken by its authorised volunteers.

All registered volunteers must be assigned a role profile, detailing the responsibilities and expectations of their involvement. Role descriptions for volunteers must be approved by the Volunteer & Community Support Officer.

## **8. Reporting of Accidents and 'near-misses'**

All volunteers must have access to the Trust's 'Accident Report form' and 'Near-miss/Incident Report form' and they must be aware of the importance of reporting all accidents and 'near misses'. This is encompassed into the Volunteer Agreement.

## **9. Training**

The Trust are committed to providing relevant and necessary training to ensure volunteers can deliver their role competently and safely. This may include mandatory training in order to carry out specific roles such as land-management qualifications, Safeguarding or First Aid. Training requirements are detailed within the volunteer's role profile.

## **10. Support and staff responsibilities**

All volunteers are assigned a Staff Contact. The Staff Contact is responsible for the day-to-day management of the volunteer's tasks including ensuring the volunteer is equipped with appropriate PPE, training and has clear instructions. Staff Contacts must undergo appropriate internal induction and volunteer management training.

The Volunteer & Community Support Officer is responsible for coordinating all volunteering activities across the Trust, and provides a point of contact for both volunteers and volunteer managers (Staff Contacts). Responsibilities include: sign off of all Volunteer Role profile, oversight of all volunteer recruitment and onboarding, induction and support of Staff Contacts, and monitoring training requirements.

The Wilder Communities Manager manages the Volunteer & Community Support Officer and oversees policy, procedure and strategic changes relating to volunteers.

#### **11. Other relevant documents:**

<https://www.somersetwildlife.org/useful-information-volunteers>

#### **Volunteer Registration Form**

Volunteers are required to complete a registration form as a necessity of our insurance to ensure implementation of safe working practices for all volunteers.

#### **Role Profiles**

All volunteers are assigned an approved Role Profile which specifies the scope, tasks and responsibilities of their volunteer role. The Role Profile includes details such as who their Staff Contact is, where their place of volunteering is and whether training or references are required for the role.

#### **Volunteer Handbook**

The Volunteer Handbook is issued to all registered volunteer. It details general information about volunteering for the Trust including representation, support structures, policies to be aware of and encompasses the Volunteer Agreement.

#### **Volunteer Agreements**

The Volunteer Agreement is for all volunteers registering with the Trust and excludes only “Casual” volunteers attending “volunteering”-events such as beach cleans. The Volunteer Agreement is NOT a contract of employment, nor does it imply that it is. It is purely an agreement, so each party is clear about their roles and responsibilities.