

# Volunteer Policy



Northern Ireland

Date Approved by Board:
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Date Reviewed:
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## Introduction

The RYA Northern Ireland (RYANI) Volunteer Policy is written to recognise the contribution made by volunteers and to provide a framework for how we will manage volunteers whilst recognising the voluntary nature of our relationship with volunteers.

The RYANI is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is a not for profit organisation. Our purpose is to promote and protect safe successful and rewarding boating in Northern Ireland. We are a volunteer- led organisation with a Board and sub committees overseeing the work and strategic direction of the organisation with (currently) 5 full time staff and a number of contracted and volunteer roles.

Our volunteers are anyone who gives their time freely to support the work of the organisation, including committee members or in named roles that support the organisation. At times our volunteers may include those who support the work we do for a limited time e.g. at promotional events.

## Values

The core values of the RYA Northern Ireland are outlined in our Strategic Plan and form the basis of the work that we do in order to achieve our objectives including:

- Inclusivity
- Responsibility
- Excellence
- Integrity

With the breadth of areas of interest, the RYANI values the involvement of volunteers in our work because they help reflect the interests and needs of the boating community.. We recognise volunteers as a core part of our team, with a distinctive but complementary role alongside paid staff.

The RYANI believes that volunteering should be a mutually beneficial experience whereby the organisation benefits from the skills, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers, and they too gain personal benefits from the experience. We are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures that the needs of both parties are met.

The RYANI strives to create a diverse and inclusive organisation. We are committed to ensuring equality of access to high quality volunteer opportunities and equality of treatment for our volunteers in all our policies and practices.

## RYANI Policies and procedures

The RYANI has a number of roles for volunteers which extend the work of the organisation. Volunteers are involved across the organisation in roles which complement, but never substitute, the work of paid staff.



## Risk management

A full assessment of potential risk to volunteers is carried out when designing relevant volunteer roles and strategies put in place to control the risks. The majority of roles involve giving of time to support the organisation through meetings in order to set strategic direction. Where RYANI run any events, these will be risk assessed, controls put in place and shared with volunteers.



## Roles

All volunteers are provided with a written role description, outlining the purpose, tasks, main expectations and boundaries of their role. This role is reviewed regularly as and when the needs of the organisation are met or need assessed.

## Insurance

Volunteers with RYANI 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.

## Expenses

The RYANI reimburses any reasonable out of pocket expenses for volunteers (for e.g. significant travel to meetings/ events to represent the RYANI) when claims are submitted on the standard *Expenses Claim Form* and accompanied by proof of expenditure (e.g. receipts).

The RYANI endeavours to provide adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment and resources to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles.

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the overall management of volunteer involvement, including overseeing the implementation of this policy and dealing with any complaint or difficult situation relating to volunteers. The Office Administrator provides support and supervision, identifies training requirements, countersigns expenses claims etc.

## Recruitment and selection

The RYANI is committed to involving all sections of the community as volunteers and will promote opportunities widely throughout the boating community in NI. We will endeavour to make recruitment and selection materials available in alternative formats upon request and use images and/or descriptions that reflect the diversity of the community. We regularly review the make-up of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s).

The RYANI implements a fair, effective and open system in the recruitment and selection of volunteers and treats all information collected in this process confidentially. Volunteers for key roles within the organisation will go through a recruitment and selection process that is appropriate to the role offered and is outlined below.

### Recruitment Process

The RYANI has 4 areas where volunteers support the organisations:

1. Board Directors
2. Committee members
3. Supporting Roles
4. Event Volunteers



The degree to which these volunteers interact with the organisation may be from a one-off, time limited engagement, to regular support for staff and other volunteers throughout the year.

There is a procedure for dealing with unsuccessful applications whereby individuals will be offered an opportunity to discuss the outcome and identify possible alternatives within or outside of RYANI.

The process aims to allow both parties to give and receive sufficient information to assess whether the volunteer opportunities available match the potential volunteer's skills, qualities and interests.

## **1. Board Directors**

The RYANI has up to 10 Board Directors with related role descriptions. Each Board Director can serve up to 3 x 3 years in office. Each role will be staggered for election by the RYANI membership at the Annual General Meeting. Applications for allocated roles open annually and on a rolling basis, with 7 roles requiring nomination by an affiliated club and 3 independent roles selected via an independent application process. Board Directors should be members of RYA and we welcome applications for roles from a wide variety of backgrounds.

## **2. Committee Members**

The RYA NI has a number of sub- committees, whose Chair will sit as a Director on the Board. Each of these committees has a *Terms of Reference* outlining their purpose and aspects including e.g. number of committee members. Details of these committees can be obtained from [ryani@rya.org.uk](mailto:ryani@rya.org.uk) and are outlined in our *Articles of Association*.

Recruitment is made through an open application process, where a role becomes available or a need is identified to support the committee's purpose.

For Committee members, the RYANI uses application form, references and meets the volunteers face to face for a discussion about their suitability. Additional measures may be implemented depending on the nature of the volunteer role and AccessNI checks are conducted where appropriate.

## **3. Supporting Roles**

A number of named support roles exist within RYANI, where specific expertise is identified to assist in the progression of the RYANI Strategic Plan. These may be time-limited in order to achieve those aims and will be openly advertised to allow suitable candidates to apply.

RYA may also recruit roles within a region, where the application process is undertaken by RYA Hamble. RYANI will then interact with those individuals and RYA in support.

All volunteers will be able to engage with specific RYANI staff and invited to various events throughout the year.



#### **4. Event Volunteers**

On occasion, RYA NI may seek volunteers to support initiatives and specific events, these are largely time- limited. Where this is required, the RYANI will identify key roles and suitable role descriptions. These will be advertised along with an outline process and any requirements for the role. They will be overseen by a specific member of staff and/ or Board member.

### Induction

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Volunteers will receive an induction into the organisation, outlining the purpose of the role and any relevant policies and procedures.

Directors will receive an induction to RYANI and the Chair and Vice Chair will be supported to attend the RYA National induction in order to meet other regional volunteers and understand the various roles and departments within RYA.

For time-limited events, inductions will include an overview of the event and purpose, any relevant policies and procedures and who to report to. Volunteers will be given support from staff and/ or committee members in attendance to support them in their role.

### Management of volunteers

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Volunteers are provided with a written letter of welcome, which outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both the volunteer and RYANI and acknowledges the voluntary nature of the relationship. This agreement may be reviewed at any time with the consent of the volunteer and his/her supervisor, including at the review meeting at the end of any settling in period.



All Directors and committee members are provided with an induction before commencing their role and this can continue as required during the settling in period. The induction provides background information on RYANI, 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 the building, health and safety, confidentiality, claiming expenses and code of behaviour. Access to organisational policies will be outlined and an opportunity given to discuss issues with the Chief Operating Officer.

The Chair and Vice Chair will also attend RYA Volunteer induction by way of introduction and to develop an understanding and relationships with RYA.

## Oversight

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The Chief Operating Officer oversees the operations of RYANI, including volunteer oversight. In certain cases, volunteers may be supported by a specific member of staff.

Volunteers on Committees or Board will receive support from their Chairperson and, where possible, a relevant member of staff. Staff will work in support of each committee group.

The Chair shall hold appraisals annually, that is an opportunity for Board members to review their own progress and provide feedback to the organisation in how best to support them.

For event volunteers, a member of staff will be allocated in support and an additional emergency contact may be provided where relevant. This individual can provide day-to-day guidance on any volunteering issue and is responsible for providing regular support to, and supervision of, the volunteer.



## Expectations of Volunteers

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The RYANI has a duty to protect the well-being and interests of all of its stakeholders. In the event of serious issues or breach of our volunteering standards, the RYANI has the right to terminate the partnership with the volunteer. Where a criminal offence is suspected the matter will be handed over to the police.

Board, Committee members and Support volunteers are asked to sign up to the RYANI's (or RYA where relevant) *Code of Conduct*. This outlines the values of the organisation and expectations of an individual's conduct when representing RYANI.

## Personal Development

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The RYANI is committed to improving the effectiveness of volunteers and providing relevant opportunities for development. Volunteers are invited to key relevant RYANI events, including e.g. AGM, Club Conference and Instructor Training Days.

RYANI may run courses for volunteers, this may include compulsory training required for their role.

## Complaints/ grievances

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The RYANI takes complaints about or by volunteers seriously. A complaints procedure is in place whereby the Chief Operating Officer or relevant Chair will try to resolve minor complaints or issues about or by volunteers or their work through the usual support and supervision procedures, in the first instance.

In the case of more serious issues, formal procedures will be followed which will include, in the case of particularly serious offences (as specified in the Code of Practice). Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be handed over to the

[police.](#) [Volunteers wishing to leave](#) Volunteers can leave the RYANI and end the partnership if they wish to do so. They must notify the RYANI, and upon leaving will be asked to undertake an exit questionnaire or interview, which will assess their reasons for leaving. The RYANI will use this information to shape volunteering structures and processes.

## Communication and feedback

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The RYANI recognises the core role that volunteers fulfil at every level of the organisation. It endeavours to communicate with volunteers in appropriate ways, including e-mails, social media platforms and access to regular RYANI Ezines. It also recognises the importance of seeking volunteers' ideas and opinions at regular intervals. Feedback from volunteers is always welcome (even after they decide to leave) and any volunteer may make representations to the Board of RYANI.

## Personal Data

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Volunteers' personal details will be held in line with the RYA Data Protection Policy, that is available through the RYA website. Only information relevant to the role shall be requested for the purposes of management of that role.

## Safeguarding

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The RYANI has a Safeguarding policy in place to protect children and vulnerable adults. Where applicable, AccessNI checks and safeguarding training may be required for volunteer roles.

## Intellectual rights

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Both volunteers and the organisation agree that the intellectual property rights of original work produced by volunteers automatically transfers to the RYANI for future use.