



Volunteer policy – Liquid Therapy – 29/1/2021

1. Purpose

Liquid Therapy is a Foundation and surf club affiliated to Irish Surfing based in South Donegal. We aim to provide a supported environment that enables children and vulnerable persons to experience the fun and benefit of Surf, Play and Water therapy. We provide access to surfing to children and vulnerable persons who might not be able to access the sport under normal circumstances. Liquid Therapy is a unique organisation which relies largely on volunteers to deliver most of its services at every level in the organisation, this means that volunteers are at the core of the Liquid Therapy ethos. Liquid Therapy recognises that both our organisation and our service users greatly benefit from the time, energy and experience of our volunteers.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines that deal broadly with the practical aspects of involving Volunteers, to provide a policy that can develop good and consistent practice with regard to involving Volunteers and to respect and accommodate the diversity of volunteers' backgrounds. In addition, we recognise that volunteers require satisfying volunteering experiences including personal development, as well as providing the necessary training and support for them to undertake their voluntary activity effectively.

2. Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to all volunteers, staff, directors, working groups and applies to all projects, publications, events and research undertaken in the name of Liquid Therapy.

3. Our Volunteer Programme

The Volunteer Officer is responsible for the overall management of volunteer involvement, including overseeing the implementation of this policy and dealing with any complaint or grievance relating to volunteers. Designated staff/volunteers or other core members of the Liquid Therapy team are at times responsible for providing support and supervision to new volunteers as needed. Liquid Therapy provides suitable training, equipment and resources for our volunteers in order to fulfil their roles.

4. Volunteer Recruitment

Liquid Therapy implements a fair, effective and open system in the recruitment and selection of volunteers and treats all information collected in this process confidentially.

All potential volunteers are recruited in the same manner:

- Fill out a written application form (written or electronic)
- Attend a face to face interview
- Provide two references
- Complete Garda vetting as required by the volunteer post
- Attend a Liquid induction and/or further training as needed

- Receive support from a 'mentor' for a minimum of two 'water' sessions or until comfortable in their role.

5. Volunteer Management

Liquid Therapy is committed to ensuring the best possible experience for both our volunteers and our service users, by providing a thorough management structure for volunteers. The following outlines how we manage our volunteers:

- All volunteers are provided with a role description and 'Code of Conduct', outlining the purpose, tasks and main requirements of the role. This outlines expectations and responsibilities of both parties. These documents are not legally binding.
- Liquid Therapy is committed to the safety of its volunteers and service users. Risk is managed by our thorough recruitment process, role descriptions, in house training and external training as needed. In addition, volunteers will be given regular safety briefings and guidance when out on site.
- Liquid Therapy is an Irish Surfing affiliated Club and registered surf school. Therefore, volunteers are fully protected by Irish Surfing public liability insurance whilst on sessions with Liquid. Sessions start at the designated time and location.
- Any out of pocket expenses are agreed in advance with the Liquid Therapy management team or volunteer manager. Reimbursement is discussed and agreed on a case by case basis. Expenses not agreed in advance will not be reimbursed.
- All volunteers must attend an induction prior to commencement of their voluntary work. The induction provides background information Liquid Therapy; explains our structures and procedures; describes the volunteer role and the staff team and outlines how the volunteer will be supported. During the induction period volunteers will be provided with written information on organisational policy and codes of practice and will be given the opportunity to discuss any of the issues with the Liquid Therapy Core Management Team.
- All new volunteers are allocated another more experienced volunteer or core team member as their 'mentor'. Our volunteers are given additional support for a minimum of two 'water' sessions, but can avail of this for as long as needed. Volunteers under the age of 18 will always work with a mentor.
- Liquid Therapy is committed to developing the personal and professional skills of our volunteers. Volunteers may be provided with training (both in-house and external) when applicable to their role and subject to availability of resources and the scope of the project.
- Liquid Therapy recognises the importance of seeking volunteers' ideas and opinions regularly. Feedback from volunteers is always welcome. In addition to other communication opportunities, Liquid Therapy will host at least one formal volunteer 'debrief' per year.
- Liquid Therapy appreciates the valuable contribution its volunteers bring to the organisation and makes regular efforts to recognise and celebrate them.
- Whilst the Core Liquid Therapy Team and allocated 'Mentors' all have a role to play in the support and supervision of volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator has responsibility for the overall management of volunteer involvement including overseeing the implementation of this policy.
- Exit interview: in order to both improve our service to our participants and our volunteer experience when a volunteer formally leaves Liquid Therapy, we will conduct an exit interview to capture any possible feedback about their volunteer experience and participation with Liquid Therapy.

5.1 Skills Audit

A skills audit is a useful tool for mapping out the skills and expertise of volunteers to identify any gaps in overall skills. A skills audit will be conducted on a yearly basis in order to review the needs within the organisation. Proactive recruitment of any identified areas of deficit will be carried out following an audit.

6. Discrimination

This foundation does not and will not discriminate on the basis of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, nationality or ethnic or national origin, or membership of the traveller community, in accordance with the Equal Status Act, 2000.

7. Confidentiality

Liquid Therapy respects the volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, we expect our volunteers to maintain the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with Liquid Therapy.

8. Complaints

Liquid Therapy recognises the importance of established procedures for dealing with complaints and/or challenges that may occur while volunteering. Any minor complaints made about or by volunteers or their work are dealt with by the Core Management Team through the usual support and supervision process in the first instance. If a volunteer has any problems or complaints about volunteering, they should talk to the Core Management Team immediately. Liquid Therapy takes the concerns of its volunteers very seriously and will make every reasonable effort to resolve any difficulties.

In the case of more serious complaints Liquid Therapy operates a formal complaints procedure, and in exceptional instances the volunteer may be asked to leave. Serious complaints include, but are not limited to the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, misuse of equipment and materials, abuse of clients and co-workers, breaches of confidentiality, and repeated failure to abide by Liquid Therapy policies and procedures. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be handed over to the Gardai.

9. Review & Contact

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as required to be in line with national policy and best practices. Any updates will be approved by the Board of Directors prior to being implemented and subsequently all staff and volunteers will be made aware of any changes. For questions about this policy, contact the board.