Volunteer Ranger

Handbook
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Welcome
Thank you for taking the time to consider becoming a Volunteer Ranger with Outdoor Recreation NI! This handbook will give you all the information you need in order to enjoy a rewarding and successful role as a Volunteer Ranger.

Outdoor Recreation NI is an organisation responsible for developing, managing and promoting outdoor activities including walking, cycling, canoeing and adventure activities throughout Northern Ireland by working in partnership with a wide range of organisations. The organisation is funded by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Sport Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure.

The Volunteer Ranger Programme was set up in 2007, the main aim of which was to audit the outdoor recreation products that Outdoor Recreation NI develops and promotes. The products that are audited include the Waymarked Ways and Ulster Way, Quality Walks, Canoe Trails and Ecotrails. Each activity has its own dedicated website e.g. WalkNI, CanoeNI and EcotrailsNI, which is how the activities are promoted to the public. The audits are carried out on an annual basis by the Volunteer Rangers; the information is then submitted to Outdoor Recreation NI and fed back to the relevant land managers. Maintenance is then carried out by the land manager where necessary. This process helps to ensure that products are fit for purpose for both locals and tourists alike.

The Volunteer Ranger Programme is always expanding with new developments and the addition of new sites and routes that require Volunteers. There are over 100 active Volunteers within the programme, and we would love to welcome you to the group also!

So please read the following information and get in touch if you have any questions.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to working with you!

Diane Crookes
Development Officer
1  Benefits of being a Volunteer Ranger

‘Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and without concern for financial gain.’¹

Volunteering can give you the opportunity to try something new, gain experience, develop skills, improve your career prospects, build confidence and meet new people. All of these things can be achieved by becoming a Volunteer Ranger with Outdoor Recreation NI.

Through volunteering you can:

- Contribute to the management of outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland.
- Take on a challenge.
- Meet new people.
- Increase your sense of wellbeing.
- Increase your personal development.
- Have fun!

Additional benefits of volunteering with Outdoor Recreation NI include complimentary social and training events that happen throughout the year such as the Summer and Winter Social Walks, and First Aid and Navigation Training. Also as a Volunteer Ranger, you are entitled to 15% discount in store and online at Cotswold Outdoor Camping and Clothing.

2  The Role of a Volunteer Ranger

Volunteer Rangers play an important role in the maintenance and promotion of the Waymarked Ways and Ulster Way, Quality Walks, Canoe Trails and Ecotrails. The points below describe what is expected of a Volunteer Ranger:

**Time**

- As a Volunteer Ranger, you will be asked to undertake an audit of your allocated route/product/s, once a year during the autumn months of September, October and

¹ http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/volunteering/get-involved
November. Available audits can be viewed on the vacancy list on the Volunteer Ranger page on Outdoor Recreation NI.

- The amount of time that is required from a volunteer is dependent on how many and which audits are undertaken. For example, one short quality walk close to where you live will take less time than volunteering for three sections of the Ulster Way in a different county to where you live. Volunteers are welcome to take on as many audits as they wish.

- All products are audited once a year during these months, apart from Waymarked Ways and Ulster Way, which may require an additional check during the spring months of March, April and May. An additional audit may be required if maintenance has been identified as being required in the autumn audit. If an additional check is required, ORNI staff will contact the volunteer in the spring.

Auditing and Reporting

- Auditing includes visiting the site or route at a time of the volunteers’ choice within the autumn months (September-November).

- Before visiting the site, the Volunteer Ranger should log on to the Volunteer Ranger website and print off last year's audit or a set of recording sheets, to take with them on their audit (these can be printed for you by Outdoor Recreation NI by request). Details of how to do this can be found in the Volunteer Ranger Website User Guide.

- The Volunteer Ranger will then visit the site and carry out the audit. Details on how to complete an audit can be seen below.

- The information is then submitted to Outdoor Recreation NI by the volunteer via the Volunteer Ranger Website, again details of how to do this can be found in the website user guide.

- Volunteer Rangers are not expected (or insured) to carry out any manual work in their role. Auditing and reporting are the only requirements.

- Every April, Outdoor Recreation NI will contact the Volunteers to ask them to complete an online survey regarding the programme itself. The survey will ask questions such as how many hours have been dedicated to volunteering that year, opinions on the programme and also asking for suggestions for training and social events for the next year. So please emake a bnote of how many hours you spend volunteer as you go, to include travel time to the site, the audit itself and time spent submitting information.
Commitment

- As previously mentioned, the volunteer can choose as many audits as they like from the vacancy list on the Volunteer Ranger page on Outdoor Recreation NI.
- The audits are completed once a year in the autumn months, so are not time consuming throughout the year.
- It is beneficial to select a route and continue to audit it year on year. The volunteer becomes familiar with the route and is aware of maintenance issues, knowing what to look out for each time an audit is completed.
- The time the volunteer has to dedicate to volunteering year on year may change, so the amount of audits undertaken can be increased or decreased accordingly. The volunteer may also stop volunteering at any point, simply get in touch with Outdoor Recreation NI to discuss.

Skills and resources

- The Volunteer should be able to make their own way to their route or site of choice. This can either be by car or by public transport. It may be helpful to choose a route or site close to home or close to an area that the volunteer visits already or intends to visit.
- A Volunteer Ranger should have a basic understanding of maps and grid references, in order to complete the audits, and also for their own safety. Complimentary training on such topics is available on request.
- If a Volunteer wishes to undertake audits for a route that is remote and where there may be hazardous conditions, it is preferable that the Volunteer has experience of similar routes and conditions. The Volunteer should have clothing, food and equipment (maps/compass/first aid kit) appropriate to their chosen route and the weather conditions on the day of the audit. The Volunteer may wish to bring someone with them to complete the audit, or to carry a mobile phone as well. Please note that it is the decision of the Volunteer Ranger whether to proceed with the audit each time.
- A handheld GPS device is available to borrow from Outdoor Recreation NI, should a Volunteer wish to borrow it in order to provide accurate grid references. It is the responsibility of the Volunteer to pick up and return the device to the Outdoor Recreation NI office in Belfast.
- Basic computer skills are required in order to complete the audit process. The Volunteer should have access to an internet ready computer, in order to download previous records and to input information collected during the audit process. Outdoor Recreation NI can print off and send out previous audit reports if required.
3 The Role of Outdoor Recreation NI

Outdoor Recreation NI organise and administer the Volunteer Ranger Programme and are here to support your volunteering experience. We will provide:

Support, Supervision and Recognition
- Provision of a dedicated Volunteer Co-ordinator. They can be contacted at any time via email, but are only able to respond by email or phone during office hours, Monday-Friday. Feel free to get in touch with any queries, no matter how small. Contact details are provided at the back of the Volunteer Ranger Handbook.
- Public Liability Insurance is provided by Outdoor Recreation NI for Volunteer Rangers. The policy covers the activities of the Volunteers, namely product audit and assessment, and liability towards them. (Outdoor Recreation NI does not insure the Volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage).
- Promotion of the outstanding work undertaken by the Volunteer Rangers, through Outdoor Recreation NI newsletters, e-zines, meetings and conferences.

Encouragement
- Induction into the programme when the Volunteer first joins. This can be via email, on the phone or face to face. The Volunteer Co-ordinator is available to accompany volunteers on their first audit by request.
- Ongoing contact between the volunteer and the Volunteer Co-ordinator to encourage Volunteers to be able to complete their role each year.
- Outdoor Recreation NI will keep volunteers updated on the ongoing work of the organization, by circulating the organizations biannual newsletter.

Development
- In order to thank the Volunteers for the time and effort they dedicate to the Volunteer Ranger Programme, Outdoor Recreation NI organise a series of complimentary training and social events throughout the year. These include summer and winter social walks, and training such as First Aid and Mountain Navigation. **Outdoor Recreation NI unfortunately cannot cover expenses for costs incurred by through volunteering.**
- Volunteers are welcome to put forward any suggestions for training needs or development of the Volunteer Programme at any time they wish. Volunteers are actively encouraged to use the end of year survey to put forward suggestions for personal development or development of the programme.
3 Audit Procedures

Basics
The purpose of the audit is to highlight any issues with the route or site in terms of its outdoor recreation provision. Each annual audit compares the information collected in the previous year’s audit, to what can be found on site at that time. (If this is the first time the route or site has been audited, the baseline information is collected and submitted, to be compared against next year).

Issues identified during the audit are then reported to the relevant management body for remedial action. The relevant body is usually the Local District Council, but it can be organisations such as the National Trust or Forest Service NI.

The audit should be completed between the months of September and November of each year and the findings should be returned to Outdoor Recreation NI by the end of November.

To carry out the audit:

- Download and print out the previous years report from the Volunteer Ranger website.
- Download and print out the relevant website details, for example the route description and map for the Quality Walk that you are assessing (from WalkNI), the Canoe Access Point details from the Canoe Trail Guide and website (from CanoeNI) and the Ecotrail and Orienteering maps (from EcotrailsNI). You should read this before carrying out the audit and check the details provided online against what is present on site.
- Pick a day with suitable weather conditions.
- Carry the previous audit report and/or blank paper to write up your findings whilst on site.
- Bring food/ snacks and sufficient water.
- Bring all relevant equipment, including maps and a compass if necessary.
- If you are carrying out the audit alone, let someone know where you are going and what time you should be expected back. Carry a mobile phone.
- If you find that you can’t complete the audit in one day, return another day. If completing a longer linear route, remember you have to get back to your starting point.
Ulster Way and Waymarked Ways
The following points describe how to complete an audit of a section of Ulster Way or Waymarked Way.

- Make a note of the date that the audit was completed on and the weather conditions on the day of the audit.

- Locate the first feature listed on the previous audit report using the grid reference or point description. Check that the grid reference is correct. The feature will be labeled Point 10. All features are then labeled in increments of 10 i.e. Point 10, 20, 30 etc, to allow for inserting additional points if necessary i.e. Point 25 may be a newly installed post between Points 20 and 30.

- The report will state what kind of feature you are looking for. It can be one of the following items: Information Panel, Metal Sign, Post and Disk, Kissing Gate, Step-over Stile, A-frame Stile, Bench, Boardwalk, Picnic Table, Cattle Grid, Bridge, Metal Access Gate and Wooden Access Gate.

Metal road signs should be in place where an off road section of trail meets an on road section, or vice versa. Disks should be in place where there are junctions between two off road sections or two on road sections. Disks can be placed on a post, gate or sometimes boulders as well. The metal signs and disks can also have the name of the Waymarked Way on them, for example Ulster Way/ Antrim Hills Way. Disks should also have a directional arrow beside them, so you should note the presence or absence of two disks.

- Updating the information on the audit report from last year is a simple way to record the information you collect, some features may have nothing to report. Make a note of as much detail as you can if you intend to report an issue, this helps the land manager identify the problem and prioritize maintenance.

- Look at the feature and assess if it is fit for purpose or if action is required. ‘Action required’ should be noted for issues such as: missing signage, damaged signage, structural issues such as steps missing from a stile, vandalism, signs of rotting wood etc. Include anything that you think the land manager should be made aware of.
• Look at the path or area adjacent to the feature, make a note of any issues such as path erosion, fly tipping, excessive standing water etc. Again anything you think the land manager should be aware of or that might be an issue in the future if left unchecked.

• You are able to submit two photos per feature, if you wish to take a picture to illustrate a point you wish to make. You do not have to take a photo of each feature, only if you wish to in order to make the feature more familiar when you carry out the audit next time.

• Continue to find the next feature listed in the audit report, for the majority it will be Point 20. Please note that more than one feature may be located in one location, for example the car park at the start of the route may have picnic table, an information panel, an access gate and Ulster Way signage.

• Make the same assessment for each feature listed on your report, and record the information as described. Continue until you have found all the features listed on the report.

• If you find a feature on the route that is not listed in the previous years report, please make a note of the feature type, its grid reference, its condition and any comments on the adjacent path. An example may be that a new waymarker post has been installed by the land manger since the previous audit. This new feature will be added to the report to be included in next years audit.

• Once completed, you should log on to the Volunteer Ranger Website and submit the information you have collected. Details on how to submit the information can be found in the Volunteer Ranger Website User Guide.

• If the route, map or site detail differs from the description and details provided on WalkNI, please contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator to make this information known.
Quality Walks
The following points describe how to complete an audit of a Quality Walk:

- Make a note of the date that the audit was completed on and the weather conditions on the day of the audit.

- Quality Walks are not all waymarked on the ground, though some of them are. They can be waymarked using the waymarkers below or they can be the land managers own, e.g. Forest Service NI waymarking. As waymarking is not essential for a route to be a Quality Walk, it is important that the route description and map that are present on WalkNI, are accurate compared to the route on the ground, so this should be checked as part of the Quality Walk assessment.

- For a Quality Walk audit, you are not required to detail every feature that you come across, rather only if there is an issue with a feature on the route. Features can include: Information Panel, Metal Sign, Post and Disk, Kissing Gate, Step-over Stile, A-frame Stile, Bench, Boardwalk, Picnic Table, Bin, Car Park, Toilets, Cattle Grid, Bridge, Metal Access Gate, Wooden Access Gate, Path Surface or other facilities such as play equipment.

- You should make a note of anything you wish to report on a copy of last year’s audit, which can be downloaded from the Volunteer Ranger Website. If an audit has not been previously completed online, the Volunteer Co-ordinator can send you a copy of the ‘Quality Walk Audit Sheet’.

- Walk the route as described on WalkNI and make a note of anything that you think that the land manager should be made aware of. This can include issues with/ repairs
required for the items above or issues with the site in general such as anti-social behavior, dog fouling, toilet opening times etc.

- Suggestions for further development of the route or site can also be included, for example, an area that you think may benefit from the provision of picnic tables or bins.

- You are able to submit two photos per route, if you wish to take a picture to illustrate a point you wish to make, or a particularly nice photo of the site. You do not have to submit photos as part of the audit but you are welcome to do so.

- Once you have walked the route and completed the audit, you should log on to the Volunteer Ranger Website and submit the information you have collected. Details on how to submit the information can be found in the Volunteer Ranger Website User Guide.

- If the route, map or site detail differs from the description and details provided on WalkNI, please contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator to make this information known.
Canoe Trails
The following points describe how to complete an audit of a Canoe Trail access point:

- Make a note of the date that the audit was completed on and the weather conditions on the day of the audit.

- For a Canoe Trail audit, you should check that every feature that is listed on the Canoe Trail Guide and on Canoe NI is present on site and fit for purpose. Features that should be included in the audit are: Interpretation Panel, Jetty, Slipway, Historic building, Shop, Telephone, Parking, Public House, Café, Restaurant, Toilets, Life Ring, Fresh Water, Official Camping and Rough Camping. If there are facilities on site that are not present on the guide, these should be noted too.

- Travel to the access point either by canoe or by car. Check that the grid reference is correct. Make a note of anything that you think that the land manager should be made aware of, this can include issues/ repairs required for the items above or issues with the site in general such as anti-social behavior, presence of height barriers, toilet opening times etc.

- You should make a note of anything you wish to report on a copy of last year’s audit, which can be downloaded from the Volunteer Ranger Website. If an audit has not been previously completed online, the Volunteer Co-ordinator can send you a copy of the ‘Canoe Trail Audit Sheet’ for the relevant Canoe Trail.

- Suggestions for further development of the access point can also be included, for example an area that you think may benefit from the provision of picnic tables or camping facilities.

- You are able to submit two photos per access point, if you wish to take a picture to illustrate a point you wish to make or to share a nice image of the site in question. You do not have to submit photos as part of the audit unless you wish to do so.

- Carry on to the next access point that you volunteer for and repeat the process described above, and so on.

- Once you have visited all the access points that you have been allocated and completed the audit, you should log on to the Volunteer Ranger Website and submit the information you have collected. Details on how to submit the information can be found in the Volunteer Ranger Website User Guide.

- If the guide, map or site detail differs from the description and details provided on CanoeNI, please contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator to make this information known.
Ecotrails
The following points describe how to complete an audit of an EcoTrail:

- Make a note of the date that the audit was completed on and the weather conditions on the day of the audit.
- You should audit the Ecotrail and the Orienteering Trail on site. An orienteering map of each site showing the Ecotrail and the Orienteering Trail, can be downloaded from EcotrailsNI.
- For an Ecotrail and Orienteering audit, you should check that every control point that is listed on EcotrailsNI is present on site and is fit for purpose. Completing an Ecotrail and Orienteering Trail audit requires the volunteer to have a basic level of map reading. Complimentary training can be provided if necessary. Contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator for further details.
- You should make a note of anything you wish to report on a copy of last year’s audit, which can be downloaded from the Volunteer Ranger Website. If an audit has not been previously completed online, the Volunteer Co-ordinator can send you a copy of the ‘Ecotrail Audit Sheet’ for the relevant Ecotrail.
- Locate each control point and make a note of anything that you think that the land manager should be made aware of, this can include issues with/ repairs required for the control points. You should also make a note of issues with the site in general such as anti-social behavior, vegetation maintenance, toilet opening times etc.
- Suggestions for further development of the sites can also be included, for example an area that you think may benefit from the provision of picnic tables or bins etc.
- You are able to submit two photos per site, if you wish to take a picture to illustrate a point you wish to make or to share a nice image of the site in question. You do not have to submit photos as part of the audit unless you wish to do so.
- Once you have visited all the control points on site and have completed the audit, you should log on to the Volunteer Ranger Website and submit the information you have collected. Details on how to submit the information can be found in the Volunteer Ranger Website User Guide.
- If the Ecotrail differs from the map provided on EcotrailsNI, please contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator to make this information known. (You do not need to include the additional educational materials provided online for each site, in your audit).
Contact

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Useful Links

WalkNI
CanoeNI
EcotrailsNI
Outdoor Recreation NI
Walking Clubs in Northern Ireland
Canoe Clubs in Northern Ireland
Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs
Canoe Association NI
Volunteer Now
Appendix 1 – Outdoor Recreation NI Volunteer Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Outdoor Recreation NI. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is endorsed by the Board of Directors of Outdoor Recreation NI and will be reviewed annually, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of Outdoor Recreation NI and its volunteers.

Commitment

- Outdoor Recreation NI recognises the right that people have to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering. It also acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves.
- Outdoor Recreation NI values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.
- Outdoor Recreation NI recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Statement of values and principles

- Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Outdoor Recreation NI and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment.
- The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.
- Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.
- Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.
- The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding in trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.
• Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

**Volunteer Co-ordination**

• All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.
• ‘Volunteer co-ordination’ will be explicitly referred to in all relevant job descriptions within the organisation.
• The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is Diane Crookes, Development Officer. She is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation’s volunteers.

**Recruitment & Selection**

• Outdoor Recreation NI is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual’s suitability to carry out agreed tasks.
• Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.
• Volunteering opportunities will be promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.
• Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organisation or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.
• References and either a Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure (CRB check) and/or to meet the requirements of registration with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) Vetting and Barring Scheme, are not required to volunteer with Outdoor Recreation NI, as this does not involve working with children or vulnerable adults.
• Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed every September. The task description will be agreed between the volunteer and the designated person referred to above.
• New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation.
• Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

**Training & Development**
• All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety and equal opportunities.
• The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.
• Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those staff with direct responsibility for same.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

• Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.
• Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement and identify individual training needs, including those relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development.
• Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation through the process of an annual review.
• Promotion of volunteer contribution to the work of Outdoor Recreation NI will be carried out through articles in e-zines and newsletters as well as presentation of this contribution at Outdoor Recreation NI meetings and conferences.

Expenses

• Outdoor Recreation NI is not in a position to be able to directly reimburse volunteers for their time or mileage costs. Reimbursement is in the form of a programme of social and training events spread throughout the financial year.

Insurance

• Outdoor Recreation NI’s liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers, namely product audit and assessment, and liability towards them.
• Outdoor Recreation NI does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

Settling Differences

• Outdoor Recreation NI aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. Outdoor Recreation NI seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.
The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible.

Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's wider disciplinary, grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which includes volunteers) will be referred to.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- work within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organisation's policies

Further information

Outdoor Recreation NI
http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com/

Local Volunteer Centre
http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/
Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.