

Health and Safety for volunteers

We have a duty of care to protect our volunteers from harm. Failure to meet that duty could result in GMDT and its trustees being liable if a volunteer is injured as a result. We will assess any potential risks that volunteers may encounter and take the necessary steps to minimise them. Each volunteer role should will be subject to a risk assessment.

Carrying out a risk assessment

We will use the recommended 5 step approach to risk assessment

1. Look for the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed, and how
3. For each hazard, evaluate the chance, big or small, of harm actually being done and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done
4. Record the significant findings of your risk assessment, eg the main risks and the measures you have taken to deal with them
5. Review your assessment from time to time, and revise if necessary

What will be done to minimise risk?

This will depend on the nature of the hazard but it may include:

- Giving information and training to volunteers
- Introducing more supervision
- Introducing different working practices
- Use of protective clothing or equipment
- Stopping the activity altogether

Volunteer records and data protection

The Data Protection Act

The 1998 Data Protection Act is the legal framework for the storage and processing of personal information.

The act covers two areas –

- principles of good practice in relation to processing personal information.
- the individual's right to access information held about them

All organisations that process personal information are subject to the act and most are required to notify the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) that they process such information. Some Not-for-Profit organisations however are exempt from the obligation to notify. The rules governing this are fairly complex. They can be accessed via The Information Commissioners Office.

We will ensure personal data relating to volunteers is:

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed only for specified and lawful purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up-to-date
- Not kept for longer than the purpose specified
- Processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject
- Secure from the point of collection through to disposal

Types of information about volunteers

The sort of personal information about volunteers that we need to keep includes

- Contact details
- Details of experience, skills and preferences used to assess suitability for a role (recorded on application form or gained through interview)
- Monitoring information including ethnicity, disability etc.
- Supervision notes

Some of this information is regarded as “sensitive data” under the act and must be processed accordingly