

THE FIRST 90 DAYS

The first 90 days are a key point in a volunteer's experience.

By this stage, volunteers will usually have a clear sense of:

How much time the role actually takes

Whether expectations match what was agreed

How supported they feel within the club

This is the point where clubs should pause and review, rather than assume everything is fine.

Around the three month mark, clubs should have a short, intentional conversation that covers:

Is the role working as expected?

Does the time commitment still feel manageable?

Is the volunteer getting the support they need?

Would they like to continue as they are, adjust the role, or step back?

These conversations should be open and judgement free.

Clubs should normalise:

Adjusting roles

Reducing commitments

Changing responsibilities

Pausing involvement if needed

When clubs fail to check in at this stage, volunteers often make decisions on their own usually to reduce involvement or leave quietly.



When clubs do check in:

Issues are addressed early

Pressure is shared

Volunteers feel listened to

Retention improves significantly

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The purpose of the 90 day review is not to increase responsibility.

It is to ensure volunteering remains sustainable for both the individual and the club.

WHO SUPPORTS VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers are most confident when they know exactly who supports them and where responsibility sits.

Every club should clearly identify the people responsible for supporting volunteers. This should never be left unclear or assumed.

At a minimum, clubs should have:

Volunteer Coordinator

Responsible for welcoming volunteers, coordinating onboarding, and acting as a first point of contact for support and questions.

Club Safeguarding Officer

Responsible for safeguarding matters, such as safe recruitment, reporting safeguarding concerns, ensuring volunteers are aware of safeguarding responsibilities (including reporting), managing the club safeguarding plan and being the safeguarding advocate on the main committee

Club Committee

Ultimately responsible for the volunteer experience, culture, and standards within the club.

These roles should be:

- Clearly communicated to volunteers
- Visible and accessible
- Supported by the committee

Responsibility for volunteers does not sit with one person alone.

While individuals may lead specific areas, the committee as a whole holds accountability.

Clubs should avoid situations where:

- Volunteers do not know who to speak to
- Issues are passed between people
- Responsibility becomes unclear

Clear ownership builds confidence for volunteers and protects clubs from issues escalating unnecessarily.

The next section focuses on safeguarding and volunteer protection and how clubs can handle this confidently and proportionately.



SAFEGUARDING IS A CLUB CULTURE



When safeguarding is embedded into everyday club life, volunteers feel safer, more confident, and better supported.

The next pages explain how clubs can support volunteers through safeguarding requirements and handle concerns properly if they arise.

Safeguarding is not the responsibility of one individual alone.

It is a culture created and maintained by the whole club.

While every club must have a named Safeguarding Officer, safeguarding works best when:

- Expectations are understood by everyone
- Volunteers feel confident speaking up
- Concerns are handled calmly and consistently

Clubs that treat safeguarding as “someone else’s job” are more likely to experience:

- Confusion about what to do
- Delays in responding to concerns
- Increased risk to individuals and the club

A strong safeguarding culture is one where:
Volunteers know who the Safeguarding

Officer is

- Volunteers understand their role in keeping people safe

- Questions and concerns are welcomed, not avoided

This does not require creating fear or suspicion. It requires openness, clarity, and leadership from the committee.

Safeguarding should be:

- Visible

- Talked about

- Normalised

SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS THROUGH SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding requirements can feel daunting to new volunteers if they are not explained properly.

Clubs play a crucial role in making safeguarding clear, proportionate, and supportive.

Good practice includes:

- Explaining why safeguarding training or checks are required

- Making it clear which roles require them and which do not

- Supporting volunteers through the process

- Reassuring volunteers that safeguarding exists to protect them as well

Volunteers should never feel:

- That they have done something wrong by being asked to complete checks

- That safeguarding is a judgement on their character

- That they are expected to navigate the process on their own

Clubs should:

- Signpost volunteers clearly to training and checks

- Provide help if forms or systems are confusing

- Allow reasonable time for completion

- Keep volunteers informed about what happens next

It is also important to avoid unnecessary barriers.

Over checking volunteers can:

- Discourage people from helping

- Delay involvement unnecessarily

- Concentrate responsibility on too few individuals

Under checking can:

- Create safeguarding risks

- Expose volunteers and clubs to serious consequences

Proportionate, role based safeguarding protects everyone.

When clubs handle safeguarding calmly and supportively, volunteers are more likely to engage confidently and remain involved.



HANDLING CONCERNS PROPERLY

How a club responds when a concern is raised matters as much as the concern itself.

Concerns may relate to:

- Safeguarding or welfare

- Behaviour or conduct

- Something that doesn't feel right

- A situation a volunteer is unsure how to handle

Volunteers should never be expected to investigate concerns themselves or decide whether something is "serious enough" to raise.

When a concern is raised, clubs should:

- Take it seriously

- Listen calmly and without judgement

- Thank the person for raising it

- Follow the appropriate reporting process



Clubs should avoid:

- Dismissing concerns

- Delaying action unnecessarily

- Asking volunteers to handle issues alone

- Discussing concerns widely or informally

Clear processes protect:

- Individuals involved

- Volunteers who raise concerns

- The club and its reputation

It is important that:

- The Club Safeguarding Officer leads safeguarding concerns

- Committee members understand escalation routes

- Records are kept appropriately and confidentially

Volunteers should feel confident that raising a concern will lead to support, not criticism or conflict.

Handling concerns well builds trust, reinforces a positive safeguarding culture, and reduces the likelihood of issues escalating.

The next page focuses on behaviour, conduct, and online risks areas where clear expectations protect everyone involved.

BEHAVIOUR, CONDUCT AND ONLINE RISKS

The way people behave (in person and online) has a direct impact on volunteers, participants, and the reputation of the club.

Clubs have a responsibility to set clear expectations around behaviour and to act when those expectations are not met.

Good practice includes:

- Making expected standards of behaviour clear
- Addressing issues early, before they escalate
- Supporting volunteers who experience poor behaviour
- Taking online conduct seriously

Poor behaviour is not limited to the pitch or clubhouse. It can also occur:

- On touchlines
- In changing areas
- In messaging apps or group chats
- On social media

Clubs should be clear that:

- Abuse, intimidation, or discriminatory behaviour is not acceptable
- Volunteers should not be expected to tolerate poor behaviour
- Issues should be reported and addressed, not ignored

Online communication requires particular care. Clubs should:

- Use agreed communication channels
- Avoid discussing sensitive issues publicly or in group chats
- Support volunteers who are targeted online



Volunteers should never be expected to:

- Respond to abuse
- Defend the club publicly
- Manage conflict alone

Clear standards of conduct protect:

- Individuals
- Volunteers
- The wider club community

Addressing behaviour issues early and consistently helps maintain a safe, respectful environment where volunteers feel confident and supported.

Further support and guidance can be gained from your Club Safeguarding Officer and the WRU Safeguarding tool kit they can access for you.



WHY VOLUNTEERS DRIFT AWAY

Most volunteers do not leave suddenly or dramatically.

They drift away slowly.

Often, this happens without complaint or confrontation.

Volunteers reduce their involvement, stop responding to messages, or quietly step back until they are no longer involved at all.

Common signs a volunteer may be drifting away include:

- Less engagement in conversations or planning
- Hesitation about taking on agreed tasks
- Signs of frustration, fatigue, or withdrawal

Clubs that rely on volunteers to “speak up if there’s a problem” often miss these signals.

Many volunteers do not want to create tension or feel uncomfortable raising concerns. Reduced attendance or availability

Early, informal check ins make a significant difference.

Simple questions such as:

“How are you finding things?”

“Is this still working for you?”

“Is there anything we can do differently?”

Can prevent volunteers from quietly disengaging.

Recognising drift early allows clubs to:

- Adjust roles
- Share responsibility
- Reduce pressure
- Retain people who might otherwise be lost

The next pages focus on how clubs can use regular check ins, boundaries, and recognition to keep volunteers engaged for the long term.

These signs are usually about a lack of commitment.

More often they indicate:

- Unclear expectations
- Growing pressure
- Feeling overworked or unsupported



CHECK INS, SUPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Regular check ins are one of the most effective ways to support volunteers and prevent burnout.

These do not need to be formal meetings. Short, informal conversations are often more effective and easier to sustain.

Good practice includes:

- Checking in at agreed points (for example, after the first month and around three months)

- Asking open, non judgemental questions

- Listening carefully to what is said (and what isn't)

Helpful check in questions include:

- "How are you finding the role?"

- "Is the time commitment still manageable?"

- "Is there anything you'd like to change?"

Check ins should create space for honesty.



Clubs should make it clear that:

- Saying no is acceptable

- Boundaries are respected

- Adjusting roles is normal

Volunteers are more likely to stay involved when they feel able to set boundaries without guilt or judgement.

Clubs should also be mindful of:

- Repeatedly relying on the same individuals

- Allowing roles to grow without discussion

- Assuming availability has increased

Supporting volunteers is not about extracting more time.

It is about protecting the time they choose to give.

Clear boundaries benefit everyone from volunteers, committees, and the club as a whole.



RECOGNITION AND BELONGING

Volunteers are far more likely to stay involved when they feel noticed, appreciated, and included.

Recognition does not need to be formal, expensive, or public to be effective. In many cases, small, consistent gestures have the greatest impact.

Good practice includes:

- Saying thank you regularly and sincerely
- Acknowledging effort, not just outcomes
- Noticing when someone has gone above and beyond
- Including volunteers in the social life of the club

Belonging is closely linked to recognition.

Volunteers who feel part of the club are more likely to:

- Enjoy their involvement
- Stay involved for longer
- Encourage others to help

Clubs can strengthen belonging by:

- Learning and using people's names
- Making volunteers feel welcome in shared spaces
- Keeping people informed and included
- Avoiding "inner circles" that unintentionally exclude others

Recognition should be:

- Genuine
- Inclusive
- Consistent

It should not rely solely on annual awards or end of season events.

Day to day appreciation is just as important. When volunteers feel valued and included, they are far more likely to continue giving their time and to do so with positivity and commitment.



WHEN VOLUNTEERS STEP BACK OR LEAVE

Volunteers stepping back or leaving is a normal part of community sport.

People's lives change.

Availability changes.

Priorities shift.

How a club responds at this point has a lasting impact on its culture and future volunteer recruitment.

Good clubs understand that:

- Stepping back is not failure

- Reducing involvement is not disloyal

- Leaving does not erase the contribution someone has made

When a volunteer needs to step back or leave, clubs should:

- Thank them genuinely for their contribution

- Avoid guilt or pressure

- Keep conversations respectful and positive

- Leave the door open for future involvement

Clubs should avoid:

- Taking decisions personally

- Applying pressure to stay involved

- Allowing frustration to shape the response



How a volunteer leaves is often remembered more clearly than how they joined.

Handling departures well helps clubs to:

- Maintain positive relationships

- Protect reputation within the community

- Encourage people to return at a later stage

- Signal to others that volunteering is safe and supported

Clubs with mature volunteer cultures recognise that sustainability comes from treating people well at every stage (including when their involvement comes to an end).

The final section of this guide focuses on standards, assurance, and how clubs are supported to improve over time.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CLUBS

To ensure volunteers are supported consistently across community rugby, all clubs are expected to meet a set of minimum standards.

These standards are not about perfection.

They are about ensuring a safe, supportive baseline for everyone involved.

Minimum standards all clubs must meet

Every club must have:

- A named Volunteer Lead or Coordinator
- A named Club Safeguarding Officer
- Clear safeguarding reporting routes
- A basic onboarding process for new volunteers
- Clear role expectations for volunteers

Every club must ensure that:

- Volunteers know who supports them
- Volunteers know who to speak to if something feels unclear
- Safeguarding requirements are applied proportionately
- Volunteers are treated with respect and fairness

These standards are designed to:

- Protect volunteers
- Protect participants
- Protect clubs
- Protect the game

Meeting these minimum standards does not require large committees or complex systems.

It requires clarity, ownership, and a shared commitment to supporting volunteers properly.

All clubs must have a safeguarding plan.



Clubs that meet these standards consistently are better placed to:

- Retain volunteers
- Reduce burnout and conflict
- Identify and address issues early
- Build positive, sustainable club cultures

The next page explains how clubs can use the volunteer self assessment tool and a maturity model to understand where they are and what support might help them improve.

HOW THE WRU SUPPORTS CLUBS

Supporting volunteers well is a shared responsibility between clubs and the Welsh Rugby Union.

This framework is not designed to leave clubs to exist in a void, but to provide clarity, consistency, and support.

While recognising the realities of volunteer led communities, this support is:

The WRU's role is to:

- Set clear national standards for volunteer support
- Provide practical guidance and tools for clubs
- Support clubs to improve over time
- Share good practice across the game
- Monitor themes and risks to protect volunteers, clubs, and participants

The WRU will support clubs through:

- Advice and problem solving support
- Development conversations with WRU staff
- Signposting to relevant training and resources

This support is:

- Proportionate
- Development-focused
- Designed to help, not to punish

Clubs are encouraged to:

- Be open about challenges
- Report issues honestly
- Ask for support early
- Share what works well

Strong volunteer cultures are built through partnership, trust, and shared responsibility.

By engaging with this framework, clubs are taking a positive step towards:

- Retaining volunteers for longer
- Reducing burnout and pressure
- Creating safer environments
- Strengthening long-term sustainability

Supporting volunteers well is not an additional task.

It is a core part of running a healthy, resilient successful rugby club.



A FINAL WORD TO CLUBS

Community rugby exists because people choose to give their time.

Every volunteer who helps at your club is making a decision (often repeatedly) to show up, contribute, and care.

How that experience feels will shape whether they stay involved, step back, or encourage others to help.

Supporting volunteers well does not require perfection or complex systems.

It requires:

- Clear expectations
- Shared responsibility
- Honest conversations
- Respect for people's time and boundaries

This guide is not about adding pressure or paperwork.

It is about helping clubs create environments where volunteering feels positive, manageable, and valued.

Strong clubs are not defined only by results on the pitch.

They are defined by the cultures they create off it.

Clubs that look after volunteers:

- Retain people for longer
- Reduce burnout and conflict
- Create safer environments
- Build long term sustainability

Use this guide as a reference, a conversation starter, and a support tool.

Focus on progress, not perfection.

Most importantly, remember that volunteering is about people.

When people feel supported, rugby thrives.



THE WELSH RUGBY VOLUNTEER CHARTER

Volunteering is at the heart of Welsh rugby.

This charter sets out a shared understanding between volunteers, clubs, and the wider rugby community. Built on respect, care, and belonging

As a rugby volunteer, you can expect:

To be welcomed and treated with respect
Clear and honest expectations about your role
Support, guidance, and someone to turn to
A safe, inclusive, and positive environment
Recognition and appreciation for your contribution
Respect for your time, boundaries, and wellbeing

You should never feel pressured, overlooked, or expected to give more than you can.

Your rugby clubs commits to:

Valuing volunteers as people, not just helpers
Providing clear roles, support, and checkins
Creating environments where volunteers feel they belong
Supporting volunteers to speak up and be heard
Looking after volunteers' wellbeing, not just delivery

Strong clubs are built on shared responsibility and mutual respect.

As a rugby volunteer, you commit to:

Treat others with respect and fairness
Act in a way that reflects the values of rugby
Work within agreed roles and boundaries
Ask for support when something feels unclear
Help create a safe and welcoming environment

You are not expected to know everything, only to act with care and integrity.

As Welsh rugby, we believe:

Volunteering should be positive and sustainable
Belonging is the starting point
Support matters more than pressure
People matter more than process

Rugby in Wales exists because people choose to give their time.

Our shared commitment

This charter is a reminder that volunteering works best when it is:

Agreed, not assumed
Supported, not stretched

FURTHER SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Use these only if they are helpful to you. Everything on this page is optional.

You are not expected to read or complete anything here unless it applies to your role or is something you choose to explore

This page is here so you know where to go if you ever need more information or support.

Safeguarding & Welfare

If your role involves working with children or adults at risk, your club will guide you through any required training or checks and explain what is needed and why.

You can find further information on:

Safeguarding training and workshops

- How to raise a concern

- What happens after a concern is raised

If you ever have a concern about someone's safety or wellbeing, speak to your Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

You will be supported for doing so. For further Safeguarding information and support please email:

safeguarding@wru.wales dbs@wru.wales

Training & Learning

Some volunteers enjoy learning new skills or gaining qualifications. Others are happy contributing without additional training. Both are completely valid.

Optional opportunities may include:

Coaching or refereeing courses

- First aid training

- Welfare or wellbeing workshops

- Personal or leadership development

Any training should:

- Be optional

- Be supported by your club

- Fit around your availability

There is no expectation that you take part unless you want to.

For optional training and learning opportunities please email:

ref.admin@wru.wales

coach.admin@wru.wales

clubvolunteering@wru.wales

FURTHER SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Looking After Yourself

Volunteering should feel positive and manageable.

If at any point volunteering begins to feel stressful, overwhelming, or difficult, it's okay to pause and talk to someone.

Support may include:

Adjusting your role

- Reducing your time commitment

- Taking a break

- Stepping away if needed

Looking after yourself helps you enjoy volunteering and stay involved for longer.

Wellbeing and support resources:

integrity@wru.wales clubdevelopment@wru.wales

WRU Volunteer Support

Further guidance, updates, and support for volunteers are available through the WRU.

This may include:

Volunteer guidance

- Updates and information

- Additional support signposting

Your club can help you access the right support if you're unsure where to go.

WRU Volunteer Support can also be accessed via these emails:

clubvolunteering@wru.wales

clubdevelopment@wru.wales



DIOLCH

Thank you for choosing to volunteer.

By giving your time, energy, and care, you are helping to create positive rugby experiences for players, families, and communities across Wales.

Your contribution whether regular or occasional matters more than you may ever fully see.

Volunteering is not about perfection.

It is about presence, effort, and care.

There will be moments that feel rewarding, moments that feel challenging, and moments that feel ordinary.

All of them matter.

Every hour you give helps make rugby possible.

You are part of the game not because of a title or a role, but because you show up.

If at any point you need support, reassurance, or a conversation, it is okay to ask.

You are not expected to carry things alone.
Rugby is stronger because of people like you.

Clubs are stronger because of people like you.
And whatever your journey in volunteering looks like now or in the future your contribution is valued.

Thank you for being part of it.

