



OPEN HOUSE

FESTIVAL

**VOLUNTEER
HANDBOOK**



VOLUNTEER

- 2019 -

Welcome

Welcome to Open House Festival and thank you for your interest in volunteering. As a volunteer you'll make a valuable contribution to our Festival. This handbook will give you all the essential information you'll need about us, our policies and our procedures.



Open House Festival

Our Mission

Transforming people and places through festivals and events.

Our Vision

Our vision is to contribute to the regeneration of the local economy, create positive social impact, increase civic pride and develop cultural tourism. Our activities are delivered by a professional, well-governed and transparent organisation that meets local needs.

History of the Festival

The first Open House Festival took place in Belfast in November 1999. It was created by Kieran Gilmore and Alison Gordon, who envisioned a key role for music in the cultural, political and economic renaissance that was about to transform Northern Ireland. It was the first festival in the newly appointed Cathedral Quarter.

Over the next 25 years, Open House gained a reputation for quality events and cutting edge programming by anticipating trends in music, and investing in the cream of emerging artists such as Mumford and Sons, Seasick Steve, Laura Marling, The Civil Wars and Fleet Foxes.

Open House Bangor initially began with a pilot series of five events in Bangor in 2012. This developed into the first Open House Festival in

Bangor, which took place throughout the whole month of August 2013 as part of the 400th anniversary celebrations for Bangor getting its town charter. It was a major success and has resulted in Open House Festival putting our focus entirely on Bangor.

Each year the Festival attracts thousands of people to dozens of events at The Walled Garden and around Bangor. This includes Seaside Revival Vintage Festival, which celebrates Bangor's heyday as a seaside town, and free live music on Sundays throughout the summer at Picnic In The Park. In 2022, we opened our own venue too, The Court House, which sees a year-round programme of events in the heart of Bangor. We will continue to organise one off gigs in Belfast and Bangor too.

The Festival Team

Open House Festival Limited is a charity, run on a not-for-profit basis. Most of our income is from ticket sales, and we receive support from several funders including Ards and North Down Borough Council and the Arts Council NI. Any income generated is used to cover running costs and investing in the next programme of events and free events.

It is governed by a Management Board, and headed by its two founding members, Kieran Gilmore (Group Director) and Alison Gordon (Development Director) who are still at the helm. For a full list of current Board members please visit our website as shown below. Kieran and Alison are supported by an able team of Court House and specialist Festival staff, including Event Managers, Volunteer Co-ordinator, Operations Manager, Finance Manager, and Digital Marketing Manager.

Open House Festival Ltd is a non-profit organisation registered with the Northern Ireland Charity Commission - Charity No. NIC103648 and a company limited by guarantee - Company Reg No. NI42872

openhousefestival.com



Our Volunteers

Open House Festival has worked hard to build a strong and dynamic festival volunteer programme. Our volunteers are vital to the delivery of Festival events and provide a valuable link between the Festival and the local community. Without you we wouldn't be able to deliver half of what we do.

Our small team works hard throughout the year to put together an exciting and varied programme, but during the festival we rely on our volunteers to help keep everything running smoothly and bring an all-important community atmosphere to Festival events.

Who volunteers for Open House Festival?

There is no such thing as a typical Open House Festival Volunteer. Volunteers like you come from all walks of life and join us for a variety of reasons.

Why volunteer for Open House Festival?

There are many reasons to volunteer. Perhaps you want to try something new, give something back to the community or further your interests in the arts and music? You will have the opportunity to experience working in a busy arts environment and understand how festivals work. You will meet people and learn skills working in a friendly and supportive team. Volunteering is also a great addition to your C.V.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for people who are:

- Friendly, positive and calm under pressure
- Comfortable speaking with the public
- Excited to meet new and like minded people in the local area
- Reliable versatile and energetic
- Passionate about the arts and music and engaging new audiences
- Over 16 years old

Recruitment

Each year we have an open recruitment process, advertised widely through social media. We ask you to fill in an application form giving information about yourself including past work and volunteering experience. Our Volunteer Coordinator will chat with you to see if you are suitable for volunteering with us, and to help us find a role that works for you. In certain circumstances we may ask to seek references with your permission.

Volunteer Roles

Front of House Duties

- Assisting with the smooth running of the event
- Collecting and selling tickets
- Handing out wristbands
- Assisting customers who have forgotten their tickets
- Distributing programmes
- Assisting with evacuation in case of emergency
- Answering customer queries about the venue and event
- Keeping customers informed about other upcoming Open House Festival Events

Stewarding

- Directing people within venues to seating, bars, toilets, fire exits and First Aid
- Being the friendly face and eyes and ears of the festival
- Keeping venues attractive, safe and tidy
- Reporting any hazards or problems to staff and security

Team Leaders

We sometimes need Volunteer Supervisors and Team Leaders for our larger festival events. These are generally volunteers who are already experienced with Open House Festival. They must be reliable, enthusiastic and able to deal with volunteers, the public and Open House staff in a fair and calm manner. Please speak to the Volunteer Co-ordinator if you are interested in one of these roles. Roles will be assigned at the discretion of the Volunteer Co-ordinator.



Open House Festival Values

Quality

We will always strive to be the best we can be. We will constantly innovate and challenge ourselves to show leadership - nurturing staff, participants and volunteers.

Integrity

We are independent and will not be compromised by political, commercial or any other third party pressure. We will respect our participants, the work they produce and our shared belief that great festivals transform communities.

Accessibility

Our events will always be warm, welcoming and community-based for our audiences, participants and partners.



We will expect you to...

- Be a part of Open House Festival and understand what we do
- Understand our values and mission and behave appropriately
- Treat others with respect, consideration and appreciation no matter who they are
- Take part in any training and meetings required for your role
- Be professional and safe when volunteering
- Carry out your designated duties to the best of your abilities
- Comply with the Volunteer Code of Conduct & dress code
- Talk to us - if you have a problem, let us know
- Be an ambassador for the Festival and for Bangor
- Have fun!

You can expect us to...

- Value and respect you
- Make sure you know what your role is and how to do it
- Provide training and support to enable you to carry out your role
- Ensure you are safe while volunteering
- Recognise your contribution

How we will support you

We will hold induction meetings that include training specific to each role, and ask that you attend these so you can feel confident when you come to volunteer for us.

We will have a short meeting prior to the start of each Festival event when the Event Manager will give you a tour of the site or venue, assign you an activity, discuss health and safety at the event and let you know when you can take a break. New volunteers will be supported by more experienced volunteers to help them learn how we do things. The Event Manager will answer any queries during the meeting or festival event.

Feel free to contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator for support, advice and help to resolve any problems.

Essential Information

Please read the following guidelines carefully. Our policies are listed on the Volunteer page on the Open House Festival website. Once you start volunteering with us, we will ask you to familiarise yourself with them.

Volunteer Policy

Our volunteer policy emphasises the value we attach to volunteering and our relationship with our volunteers. It outlines how and why we involve our volunteers including how we recruit, select and manage them, and our principles of best practice. You can see a summary of our policies below, and read the full versions at openhousefestival.com

Code of Behaviour

This sets out how we expect our volunteers to conduct themselves plus details of health and safety points we expect our volunteers to adhere to.

Reliability and Time Keeping

While we don't have a legal contract with you, we do have certain hopes and expectations for our volunteers. We depend on our volunteers so it is really important that we can rely on your support when it is needed. Please try to keep to any arrangements you make. If you can't make a shift let the Volunteer Co-ordinator know as soon as possible. If you miss several slots the Volunteer Co-ordinator may have a chat with you to make sure you are still able to volunteer.

Health and Safety

The Festival takes the health and safety of its volunteers very seriously; it is a key issue in our volunteer training and

management. In the training, volunteers are asked to share some of the responsibility for Health and Safety by behaving sensibly and being proactive in helping us implement good health and safety practices. This includes reporting concerns or any possible improvements to a member of staff as soon as possible. If you witness an accident, incident or a near miss while volunteering, please report it immediately to the Event Manager, the Volunteer Co-ordinator or another member of staff as soon as possible.

Every year we carry out risk assessments on all our events to identify, evaluate and put in place actions to manage any risks to artists, volunteers, staff and audiences, including children and adults at risk. We ask our volunteers to let us know of any risks they see so we can manage them safely.



Diversity

Open House Festival is committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation. We seek to create a harmonious working environment where the dignity and self-esteem of individuals are important. Any behaviour which may cause offence to a member of staff or volunteer because of their disability, gender, marital status, religious belief, political opinion, age, race, colour or sexual orientation, is not acceptable.

We are committed to providing equal opportunities to our volunteers and protecting them from discrimination.

Confidentiality

While volunteering you may have access to information about Open House Festival or our customers. We expect you not to use or disclose this information during your volunteering experience

or at any time afterwards. We also expect you to maintain confidentiality about any information which is commercially sensitive or not public knowledge, that you may gain access to in the course of your work.

Dress Code

We will provide you with a Festival T-Shirt and a High Visibility Vest. We ask that you wear these at all times while volunteering so you are visible both to staff and to audiences.

Many Festival events are outdoor and it is absolutely essential that you wear warm clothing and bring extra layers. Being outside for an entire shift or Festival event, even in the summer, can be cold and sometimes wet. Volunteers must also wear closed toe shoes e.g. no sandals or flip flops.

Expenses

We are very grateful to the vast majority of volunteers for not only providing their time free, but also choosing to meet incidental expenses themselves. Otherwise, with the number of volunteers involved, we could not afford to deliver the number and variety of events as part of Open House Festival. However, should you wish to claim travel expenses, you are entitled to do so by completing the volunteer expense claim form.

It is important to provide a receipt of payment along with your expenses form to the Volunteer Co-ordinator. If you are driving your own car, you may claim the standard mileage rate for volunteers at 25p per mile.

Boundaries and Media

It's important that all volunteers

maintain clear boundaries. This means making sure that what you say and do is within the limits of your role. In your induction the Volunteer Co-ordinator will tell you more about your boundaries relating to your volunteering.

As a volunteer you are representing Open House Festival. We would like you to be involved in promoting Open House Festival, but getting the right message across can be tricky, so if you are approached by the media to make a comment or answer a question, its best to refer them to a member of Open House Festival staff.

Open House Festival also has a Social Media Policy which can help you understand how you as a volunteer should use social media in relation to volunteering with Open House Festival.



Data Protection

We pledge to always keep details about you safe and secure. In your role as a volunteer with Open House Festival you may have access to information about customers. You must only use this data when necessary and dispose of it securely when you have finished using it. Any customer lists should be handed back to the Event Manager.

Open House Festival in compliance with The General Data Protection Regulations 2018 will treat in confidence the information it holds about volunteers. The information will be held while there is a legitimate business purpose for doing so. Volunteers have the right to request to see all the information held about them by Open House Festival.

Complaints

If you want to make a complaint relating to volunteering, please follow our complaints policy.

IT and Communications Policy

This policy outlines Open House Festival's IT practice and acceptable internet/email use.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is only permitted in specific and designated areas at Open House Festival events. We expect volunteers to respect and abide by this. We ask that volunteers who smoke do so only during breaks, outside, and away from Open House Festival events.

Criminal Convictions

We expect you to let us know about any previous criminal convictions which are not protected, or criminal investigations, and to complete a form giving details. Our Volunteer Co-ordinator will speak with you to see if this will impact on your suitability for volunteering. We also expect you to let the Volunteer Co-ordinator know as soon as possible if you become subject to any criminal proceedings, charges or convictions. If you don't tell us then we will have to review your volunteering and you might be asked to leave.



Volunteer Duties

Where possible we try to match our volunteers to events that they are interested in. However to ensure the smooth running of the Festival, we will allocate shifts based on your availability and the requirements for each Festival event. We ask that you attend the event and carry out the activity designated to you to the best of your ability. Let us know if there is a reason why you feel you are unable to assist at outdoor events, as this may affect the number of events you can volunteer at.

The Event Manager or Volunteer Co-ordinator will hold a short meeting before each Festival Event when volunteers will be assigned an activity. We would ask that you carry out the task assigned to you and remain at the Festival event until your shift ends. Please let the Event Manager or Volunteer Co-ordinator know if you need to leave early.

Employment

When you volunteer with us your status will be as a volunteer. Neither you nor we intend any employment relationship nor any employment rights or workers' rights to be created either now or at any time in the future as a result of you volunteering with us.

Volunteering is a great way to boost your CV and improve employability. It shows commitment and dedication to prospective employers. If you are unemployed or receiving benefits you should contact your local Job Centre and let them know that you are volunteering. This should not affect your benefits.

It is your responsibility if you are not a UK citizen to ensure that you are legally entitled to volunteer within the UK. It is a criminal offence for you to take on a role illegally. You could also jeopardise any visa entry clearance rights, or permission to remain requirements, if you volunteer in circumstances where you are not permitted to. Volunteers may request references when seeking employment. References will be given at the discretion of the Festival Director.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Open House Festivals Employer's Liability insurance while volunteering for Open House Festival. Personal equipment and belongings however, are not covered under this insurance.

Dee & Don Award

In recognition of the amazing work of our volunteers we have set up an annual award for the Volunteer of The Year in honour and memory of Dee Cooke & Don Thompson, who volunteered with Open House Festival. Staff and volunteers are welcome to make nominations for this award.



Thank You

Thanks for taking time to read this handbook. We hope it answers most of the questions you might have. If you have any questions about the information provided in this handbook or at any time when you are volunteering, you can speak to our Volunteer Co-ordinator. We would also like to say thank you to all our volunteers, old and new, for your amazing work. By volunteering with us you are playing an essential role in the success and future of the Open House Festival. Your enthusiasm and willingness to support us is very much appreciated.

Contact Information

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