



The  
Grower  
Mentor



Volunteer  
Handbook

# Grower Mentor Volunteer Handbook.

## Contents

	Page
Introduction	2
Transition Turriefield	2
Grow Shetland	2
Volunteer Involvement	3
Volunteer Policy	4
Rights and Responsibilities	4
Practicalities	5
Keeping you informed	5
Induction and Training	5
Health & Safety	5
Key safety points to remember	5 & 6
First aid kit	6
Reporting accidents	6
Lone working	6
Insurance	7
Further Information	7
Comments or Grievance	7
Organic Principles	8

# Grower Mentor Volunteer Handbook.

## Introduction.

Welcome to Transition Turrieffield. As a community group we appreciate your support and the contribution you make as a Volunteer. We aim to make your involvement with us as enjoyable and as safe as we can. This handbook gives a brief description of what Transition Turrieffield does; the focus of the Grow Shetland project; outlines the opportunities for volunteer involvement; sets out your Rights and Responsibilities as a Volunteer; explains how we communicate with our Volunteers; and covers the most essential Health and Safety points for work as a Grower Mentor.

As a new Volunteer all this will be explained to you and you will receive a copy of this document to keep for future reference.

### About Transition Turrieffield.

Transition Turrieffield is a community/social enterprise set up in 2011. Its legal status is a Community Interest Company. Our aim is to increase the amount of fresh local food produced in Shetland to help reduce the amount we import to the Isles. We do this to help the community cut its food related carbon footprint, reduce Shetland's contribution to climate change and increase access to high quality food, which benefits individual's health.

This is achieved by growing a wide range of produce for the community; supporting others to grow their own; offering volunteering opportunities in local food production; gathering and sharing information on methods and techniques appropriate for sustainable, year-round growing in Shetland; raising awareness of the benefits of local food and increasing the understanding of carbon emissions and climate change.

Most, but not all of the produce we grow is sold direct to consumers through our veg box scheme, reducing food miles in delivery and customer travel. We further reduce fossil fuel use by using organic methods of production. Although the croft is not registered organic, our produce is grown without the use of pesticides and agrochemicals, using permaculture principles wherever possible; working with the soil and seasons to get the best out of the land without harming natural ecosystems.

Transition Turrieffield also provides training and education on many subjects, from growing in Shetland, to reducing carbon emissions; practical polytunnel building, to understanding compost production. We deliver courses and workshops, host visits, school trips and open days.

Most of all we are committed to promoting local food and involving the community in our work. Many of our customers have supported our work since we started, and a great number volunteer with us on a regular basis. Not only do our supporters enable us to continue to grow food for the local community, they also create a significant community that is involved with local food production.

### About Grow Shetland

Grow Shetland is our 3-year project (2021-2024) supporting the Shetland community to grow more of its own fruit and vegetables, increase access to affordable food and encourage healthy eating. It's funded by Shetland Islands Council's Crown Estate Fund, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Shetland Charitable Trust.

Grow Shetland is helping individuals, groups, communities and schools to:

- start growing food
- improve their food growing
- gain knowledge, skills and confidence to be productive in your growing
- understand the specific issues growing in the Shetland climate
- think through opportunities for food sharing
- increase composting and reduce food waste
- involve volunteers in opportunities with a food growing focus

Volunteer Grower Mentors are one of the ways we can support growers in their local community.

## Volunteer involvement.

Volunteers are a key part of Transition Turriefield's day to day work. We have a wide age range (16 and 80+) and a huge breadth of abilities in the people who work with us on-site. Elsewhere, as part of our Grow Shetland project, our volunteer Grower Mentors are key to supporting individuals, groups and schools with their food growing in their own communities all across Shetland.

As a Grower Mentor you might work with:

- Individuals
- Groups
- Schools

Providing them with:

- Advice
- Support
- Guidance
- Troubleshooting

On topics such as:

- Plot planning
- Soil health
- Organic food growing and crop care
- Seasonal planting
- Pests and diseases
- Harvesting
- Vegetable/fruit storage
- Composting
- Sharing produce
- Cooking produce

Our work with novice growers has shown that many people lack confidence when starting out. Some are confused by the huge range of information, advice and choices they find online. You are not expected to be able to answer everything, but to be an easily accessible local contact who can visit

growing plots to provide support and help build confidence. Training and guidance are provided to support you to do this.

## Volunteer Policy.

Transition Turriemfield operates a comprehensive Volunteer Policy as part of its commitment to our volunteer team. This ensures all Staff, Volunteers and Directors of the Board are clear about the roles, responsibilities and expectations of everybody involved. The most important Rights and Responsibilities for Volunteers are:

<p>A Volunteer has a <b>Right</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A clear Volunteering role</li> <li>▪ Suitable instruction in the job they are undertaking, including safe handling of tools</li> <li>▪ Access to gloves, eye protection, boots and waterproof clothing where necessary</li> <li>▪ An opportunity to learn more about working with individuals and groups/sharing knowledge and experience/ food production/organic growing/climate change.</li> <li>▪ The opportunity to opt in and out of volunteer activities</li> <li>▪ A safe working environment</li> <li>▪ Support and guidance to achieve their volunteering role</li> <li>▪ Confidentiality</li> <li>▪ Be respected as an individual</li> <li>▪ Equality of opportunity</li> <li>▪ Insurance cover whilst undertaking volunteering activities on behalf of the Grow Shetland project</li> <li>▪ Reimbursement of travel expenses incurred whilst undertaking site visits on behalf of the Grow Shetland Grower mentor programme</li> <li>▪ References if they have been regularly involved with Transition Turriemfield for 6 months or more</li> <li>▪ Access to policy and procedure documents</li> <li>▪ A grievance procedure when required</li> </ul>	<p>A Volunteer has a <b>Responsibility</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertake a Grower Mentor role in a capacity agreed with Transition Turriemfield</li> <li>▪ To inform Transition Turriemfield if tasks cannot be undertaken</li> <li>▪ Provide regular reports of activities undertaken on behalf of the Grow Shetland project</li> <li>▪ Participate in training and regular support and supervision sessions</li> <li>▪ Act responsibly at all times, when using tools and moving around growing sites</li> <li>▪ Seek to ensure the safety of themselves and others when undertaking volunteering activities</li> <li>▪ Make Transition Turriemfield aware of any physical limitations they may have</li> <li>▪ Communicate any role or situation they believe to be unsafe</li> <li>▪ Report any personal accidents and injuries occurring as a result of their Grower Mentor role to Transition Turriemfield as soon as possible following the event</li> <li>▪ Submit activity reports and expense claims in accordance with requirements</li> <li>▪ Be sympathetic to Transition Turriemfield and its work</li> <li>▪ Be prepared to work alongside others without prejudice and respect all those involved with Transition Turriemfield</li> <li>▪ Be non-discriminatory in their relationships with others</li> </ul>
---	--

Copies of the Volunteer Policy and Grievance Procedure can be obtained on request.

## Practicalities.

### Keeping you informed.

When you sign up to become a Grower Mentor your name and contact details will, with your permission, be added to our Grower Mentor contact address list. You will be kept informed by email. You might also be contacted by text, Facebook Messenger and telephone where necessary. Contact details are kept, used and removed from the Grower Mentor contact list, in accordance with Transition Turrieffield's Data Protection Policy.

Information about individuals or groups requiring support for growing will be passed on to the Grower Mentor living in the nearest geographical area. Grower Mentors will be asked to confirm they will follow up the request and feedback the outcome of any involvement. Records of contact hours and activities must also be kept and forwarded to Penny Armstrong, or other previously agreed supervisor.

### Induction and training.

We will make every effort to provide a basic induction before you start volunteering with us. Induction includes, but is not limited to:

- An explanation of Transition Turrieffield's activities.
- An explanation of the Grow Shetland project.
- An overview of organic principles and growing methods
- A general overview of volunteering with Transition Turrieffield.
- Details of Grower Mentoring volunteer roles and responsibilities.
- Details of Grower Mentor policy and procedure.
- Guidance on record keeping and feedback to your supervisor.
- Support and supervision.
- Information about expenses and claims.
- Health and safety guidelines for general activities.

Further induction, guidelines and safety procedures will be outlined as appropriate, if you take up other roles out with the Grower Mentor responsibilities.

## Health and safety.

The Grower Mentor role involves physical activity including site visits. You are not required to undertake any physical activity for any individual, group or school you might be mentoring. However, on site, there will be hazards associated with outdoor activities. It is important that you are aware of your surroundings, others working near you and of any potential dangers.

Key Safety points to remember:

- Seek to remain safe AT ALL TIMES and do not undertake any task which you think might cause harm to yourself or others.
- DO NOT undertake any task which is beyond your physical abilities.

*(continued)*

Key Safety points to remember, continued:

- DO NOT LIFT items too heavy for your physical abilities and follow lifting guidelines.
- If you are asked to undertake an activity which you believe to be dangerous, or not suitable for your abilities, you should not participate in the activity. Report any such incidents to your supervisor
- Paths on sites might be uneven and muddy, they can present trip and slip hazards. MAKE SURE you have suitable footwear and BE AWARE of where you are working. Take extra care if you are carrying anything, don't have a good line of sight, or are using tools whilst working on uneven ground.
- Grow Shetland does not require you to use powered machinery, however, it is likely you will use hand tools, knives, scissors and other equipment which require safe handling at all times. If you are unsure how to use a tool do not use it, or seek appropriate guidance before doing so.
- Soil and compost present a risk of infection. Goggles and gloves should be worn to protect eyes and hands. MAKE SURE cuts and abrasions are cleaned and covered before working with soil or compost.
- Soil, dust, pollen and other airborne substances can present a risk to breathing. Dust masks should be worn if required. Inform your supervisor if you have asthma or other breathing problems which are potentially triggered by on-site hazards. MAKE SURE you have inhalers with you and use them when required.
- Inform your supervisor if you have any allergies. If you carry an Epi-pen let your supervisor know and if necessary, the person(s) you are working with if appropriate. Be responsible and DO NOT TAKE RISKS which might increase exposure to allergens during your work as a Grower Mentor.
- DO NOT approach, or touch, animals on sites you visit. Work with animals is not required for your role as a Grower Mentor. Handling pets or other animals you might come across in the course of your work is undertaken at your own risk.

***Please bring to the attention of your supervisor any situation which you believe to be at risk of causing harm to you in your role as soon as is feasible.***

#### First aid kit:

It is advisable to equip yourself with a simple first aid kit to take on site visits, in case of accident.

#### Reporting accidents.

Please report all accidents to your supervisor as soon as possible. Record the date, time, place, circumstances and outcome of the incident. Your supervisor will keep a record of this in an accident book located at the Transition Turriefield office.

#### Lone working.

As your role will often be a site visit undertaken alone, we advise that you let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be home. In most instances Grower Mentors will work with individual growers, groups and schools in their immediate community area. You may well know the person/place you are visiting; however, it is good practice to assess any risk before a visit takes place. If you have a concern, no matter how small, discuss it with your supervisor before making the visit.

Once on-site assess the area for risks as outlined in the Health and Safety section above. Do not undertake any task alone where you have assessed it to need more than one person. Should you have concerns for your safety, for any reason, whilst on a visit remove yourself from the activity and leave the site as soon as it is practical and safe to do so. Bring any issues arising during your visit to your supervisor's attention as quickly as possible after the event.

It is good practice to carry a useable mobile phone with you on visits, although the remoteness of some rural areas makes reception difficult at times.

#### Insurance.

Transition Turrieffield holds employer's and public liability insurance which covers Grower Mentors aged 16+ usual activities in communities across Shetland. The current insurance certificate is displayed in the packing shed and can be made available for viewing online on request.

Transition Turrieffield insurance does not cover travel to and from sites you are visiting. You are advised that you should contact your vehicle insurers to inform them of the use of your vehicle for travel for volunteering activities.

## Further information.

This document has set out the essential information for Grower Mentor involvement with Transition Turrieffield. If you would like clarification on any points; have further questions about volunteering or our work, get in touch with us, by email at: [info@turrieffieldveg.co.uk](mailto:info@turrieffieldveg.co.uk), or call 9am-6pm Monday-Friday on: 01595 870272 or by Facebook Messenger: [www.facebook.com/turrieffield](https://www.facebook.com/turrieffield)

## Comments or Grievance.

We welcome feedback about your experience to help us improve our volunteer involvement. Please contact us by email at: [info@turrieffieldveg.co.uk](mailto:info@turrieffieldveg.co.uk) or call 9am-6pm Monday-Friday on: 01595870272.

If you would like to register a grievance relating to your volunteering, concerns should, in the first instance, be submitted in writing to the Transition Turrieffield staff. Please email: 'Volunteering Grievance' to [info@turrieffieldveg.co.uk](mailto:info@turrieffieldveg.co.uk).

Should your Grievance concern members of staff, you should submit information in writing to the Board of Directors. The appropriate email address will be made available on request, by emailing 'Volunteering Grievance, Board email address request' to: [info@turrieffieldveg.co.uk](mailto:info@turrieffieldveg.co.uk). A response to your concern will be provided, in writing, within 10 days of receipt.

A copy of the Grievance Procedure is available on request.



## Organic Principles.

Both Transition Turriefield and the Grow Shetland project use and promote organic principles. We do this because we believe it is important to work with the environment in a way that enhances the natural world and benefits the ecosystem. We want to add more in than we take out and make sure we have a small as possible carbon footprint. There are no quick fixes with chemicals to feed plants or to get rid of weeds or pests and diseases.

Information about an organic approach can seem complex and stringent, making it feel daunting and hard work. Understanding the basic principles helps make it more straightforward. To explain simply here we use the organic principles set out by Garden Organic:

1. **Build and maintain soil health**—healthy organic soil is full of life, which in turn supports healthy plant growth. It also has good structure, for plant roots to penetrate and take up nutrients.
2. **Encourage biodiversity**—Different life-forms such as plants, insects, birds and mammals all have a role and purpose in creating a resilient and healthy growing system
3. **Use resources responsibly**—the organic grower uses resources sustainably, with minimum damage to the planet.
4. **Avoid using harmful chemicals**—toxic chemicals used to kill weeds, diseases and pests should be avoided as they seriously damage the health of you growing area, and all the life-forms within and beyond it.
5. **A healthy growing area**—keeping your growing area in good health is at the heart of organic growing. A diverse growing system, good hygiene, and close observation will all prevent problems.

Your induction training will include a section on organic growing and will look at the principles in more detail. You will also be able to ask questions or ask for clarification. More information on organic growing can be found at: <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/growing-advice>

This document has been created to be suitable for use with text to speech software.

If you require the document in a large print, or other format, please contact [info@turriefieldveg.co.uk](mailto:info@turriefieldveg.co.uk) , or telephone 01595 870272, 9am-6pm, Monday to Friday.

*Please retain this document for future reference.*

*Transition Turriefield CIC is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland, number SC391625.  
Registered address: Turriefield, Sandness, Shetland ZE2 9PL*