





# Preface

The second edition of **Managing Volunteers: a good practice guide** has been produced by Comhairle to provide up-dated information on good practice for the wide range of voluntary and statutory agencies in Ireland. Increasingly, it is being recognised that volunteering is a valuable resource and should be managed as effectively as possible.

The materials included in this Guide can be adapted by individual organisations to help them design volunteer management approaches and develop volunteer policies suited to their needs. While these materials will be useful for established organisations wishing to formalise already existing practice, the information can also be used by new groups and statutory bodies becoming involved in volunteer management issues.

Beginning with suggestions on how to design the most appropriate volunteer policy, the Guide works through the various stages of volunteer management, from recruitment to training and support/supervision of volunteers. Some sections will have more relevance than others depending on the nature of the voluntary or statutory organisation. For example, the section on recruitment will be more applicable for service organisations than for self help groups. Organisational matters, e.g. insurance, legal status and management committees have been included as issues also relevant to the effective management of volunteers.

Throughout the Guide's step-by-step approach, sample materials are included which have been provided by established organisations as examples of good practice. Comhairle is grateful for permission granted to reproduce these examples.

Finally, I want to thank the following people for their provision of time, materials and suggestions during the preparation of the second edition of **Managing Volunteers: a good practice guide.**

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Tallaght Volunteer Bureau  
Victim Support  
Volunteer Resource Centre

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**June 2000**

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# Introduction

A survey on volunteering in Ireland, published in 1999<sup>1</sup>, reveals that thirty three per cent of the adult population volunteer, in a range of areas and with time commitments ranging from a couple of hours to over fifty hours each month. A great number of people still find out about volunteering opportunities by word of mouth (e.g. family and friends) while over half of the people who volunteer do so because they are asked. People volunteer for a huge variety of reasons. The list below includes some of the many reasons volunteers have given for becoming involved:

- to share skills
- to get to know a new community
- to help others
- to earn academic credit
- to be with people different to themselves
- to keep busy
- to feel needed
- to explore a career
- for religious reasons
- for fun
- to donate professional skills
- to be part of a team
- to gain access to services for themselves

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<sup>1</sup> Ruddle, H. and Mulvihill, R. (1999) **Reaching Out: Charitable Giving and Volunteering in the Republic of Ireland – 1997/98 Survey**

- because of personal experience
- to be challenged
- to keep skills alive<sup>2</sup>.

Increasingly, the value of volunteering is recognised as an important asset in Irish society: over ninety per cent of people believe that voluntary work encourages people to become actively involved in the community<sup>3</sup> and over seventy per cent believe that the nature of the service offered by volunteers could never be provided by paid professionals<sup>4</sup>. However, even with the growing recognition of the value of volunteering in our society, volunteers are still frequently not fully supported by the organisations they are involved with. **Managing Volunteers: a good practice guide** has been produced as a support for organisations who are committed to providing effective management structures for their volunteers.

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2 Ellis, Susan J. (1996) **The Volunteer Recruitment (and Membership Development) Book**

3 Ruddle, H. and Mulvihill, R. (1999) **Reaching Out: Charitable Giving and Volunteering in the Republic of Ireland – 1997/98 Survey**

4 Ruddle, H. and Mulvihill, R. (1995) **Reaching Out: Charitable Giving and Volunteering in the Republic of Ireland – 1994 Survey.**

# 1 Managing Volunteers

The boards of directors or management committees of organisations involving volunteers often choose to appoint volunteer coordinators (or teams), with appropriate skills and knowledge, to take responsibility for all volunteer matters. If your organisation decides to appoint a volunteer coordinator (whether a paid member of staff or a volunteer) you might look for the following range of skills and experience:

## Skills

- management of volunteer projects
- communication
- delegation (see below)
- production and presentation of reports
- ability to design policies, e.g. volunteer policies or training policies
- ability to plan training programmes
- ability to produce funding proposals.

## Experience

- previous experience in management (volunteer or other)
- recruitment of volunteers
- support and supervision of volunteers
- evaluation of volunteer projects
- working as a volunteer with your organisation or in a related area
- working as part of a team.

## What a volunteer coordinator needs to know

Before a volunteer coordinator can begin to work effectively in your organisation, he/she will need a comprehensive induction which can include the following details:

- the history of your organisation
- the role of your organisation within the voluntary sector
- details of on-going work
- plans for future work
- the financial situation of your organisation
- details of all voluntary and paid roles.

# Delegation

Your organisation chooses to appoint a volunteer coordinator or team to take overall responsibility for volunteer matters. Whoever takes on this role will need support from other members of your organisation and will need to develop a capacity to delegate tasks to ensure that the job gets done and volunteers receive support. Some suggestions to volunteer coordinators for successful delegation include the following:

- select the best not necessarily the most convenient person/s for the job
- define tasks clearly before you assign them
- identify resources/materials available for getting the job done
- offer clear direction for getting the job done
- allow the selected person/s to develop his/her own working method
- develop a reporting plan for all your team
- if somebody leaves the team, ask if they can train in their successor/replacement.

The following sections of this Guide provide information on the main elements of volunteer management and are designed to promote good practice within the voluntary sector.

## **Further reading:**

Basini, S. and Buckley, F, (1999) **The Meaning of Work in the Irish Voluntary Sector**

Donnelly-Cox, G, and Jaffro, G. (1999) **The Voluntary Sector in the Republic of Ireland: into the twenty-first century**

Gaskin, K. and Davis Smith, J. (1995) **A New Civic Europe? A Study of the Extent and Role of Volunteering**

Ruddle, H. and Mulvihill, R. (1999) **Reaching Out: Charitable Giving and Volunteering in the Republic of Ireland – 1997/98 Survey**

Ruddle, H. and Mulvihill, R. (1995) **Reaching Out: Charitable Giving and Volunteering in the Republic of Ireland – 1994 Survey.**

## 2 The Volunteer Policy

When involving volunteers, it is useful to develop a Volunteer Policy which will ensure that volunteering is promoted and managed effectively within your organisation. A volunteer policy will help to:

- clarify roles and responsibilities
- define lines of communication and accountability
- ensure continuity even with personnel changes
- establish values and directions for the running of the organisation
- formalise current practice.

A formal policy will help volunteers to:

- acknowledge their worth and contribution
- develop their role within your organisation
- clarify the volunteer role for the benefit of both volunteers and paid staff

## Developing a volunteer policy

Your volunteer policy can be developed by the volunteer coordinator or by a policy sub-committee. Typical elements of a volunteer policy are covered in the following checklist and can be applied according to the nature of your organisation and the volunteering roles involved:

- how and why your organisation involves volunteers
  - who is defined as a volunteer by your organisation (project volunteers, management committee volunteers etc.)
  - what resources your organisation allocates to volunteer development
  - access to information for volunteers
  - volunteer confidentiality
  - who has the right to speak on behalf of the organisation and to use organisational affiliation
  - relationships between volunteers and client groups
  - relationships between volunteers and paid staff/staff working on employment schemes (Community Employment and Job Initiative etc.)
  - recruitment practice
  - training opportunities
  - working conditions for volunteers
  - support and supervision
  - expenses
  - insurance
  - administrative issues (storing of volunteer information etc.)
- (Courtesy – Volunteer Resource Centre)**

When planning the design of your volunteer policy it is important to concentrate on the matters most relevant to your organisation, including brief explanations of your organisation's approach to specific issues (e.g. volunteer/paid staff guidelines). The policy should be written in the present tense using clear, concise language.

## **Approval and implementation**

Once your volunteer policy has been approved by the management committee/board of the organisation it can be made available to volunteers and paid staff. You might ask them to sign a declaration to indicate that the policy is clearly understood before it is implemented.

The following is a sample volunteer policy which can be adapted to suit the needs of your organisation.

## VOLUNTEER POLICY

- all volunteers offering their services to **the organisation** will have their offers dealt with promptly and be given a warm welcome, which reflects the value we give to volunteers
- throughout **the organisation** it is recognised that volunteers play a very important role and their efforts contribute highly to the overall success of the organisation
- the involvement of volunteers within **the organisation** will be encouraged and supported whenever possible
- the role of volunteers will be clearly defined. In every situation where a volunteer is to be involved, an agreed statement of tasks should be drawn up and volunteers should be adequately prepared for the tasks which they will be undertaking
- volunteering will never be seen as a substitution for paid employment. The work of volunteers will be that of a supportive, complementary nature alongside paid staff. It is important that the roles of all volunteers be clearly defined and agreed by both staff and volunteers. For this reason a written agreement of assigned tasks should be considered so that there is no confusion between the roles of volunteers and paid staff
- having a clearly defined and agreed role for a volunteer helps the volunteer to understand what is expected of him/her. As far as possible specific activities should be identified for which a volunteer can take responsibility
- training will be given to all volunteers and will be reviewed and updated regularly
- there will be ongoing reviews with volunteers and if necessary discontinuation of the volunteer's service will be outlined.

**(Adapted from Volunteer Policy – Barnardo's)**

# 3 Recruitment

As an organisation involving volunteers you probably have an on-going need to find the right people. Many people who have never worked as volunteers in the past would consider doing so if they were asked, so it is up to you to promote volunteering opportunities available within your organisation. Development of a recruitment plan will be helpful to ensure that you find the most suitable volunteers.

Your volunteer coordinator or board/management committee can appoint an individual or team responsible for recruitment who will see the process through the stages outlined in this section. With appropriate training existing volunteers can fill these roles.

The basic elements of a recruitment plan include:

## Role Descriptions

Based on the needs of your organisation, you should draw up a description of volunteer roles and tasks, called a Role Description. This will include:

## The context of the work:

- is this a special job
- will the volunteer work as part of a team?

## The time commitment:

- how many hours per day, week, month ...
- whether or not this includes travelling time
- if there will be a strict schedule
- if flexible time can be used
- if this a long term requirement.

## Information on costs/ training/qualifications/support:

- payment of out-of-pocket expenses
- any training opportunities
- requirement of particular qualifications/skills
- support/supervision provided.

## Equal opportunities

To avoid exclusion, you should consider whether or not your Role Description offers equal opportunities for all potential volunteers. For example, are the following groups excluded by your requirements?

- older/younger volunteers
- volunteers with disabilities
- long term unemployed
- women/men
- members of minority groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, Travellers).

If your Role Description discourages any of these groups from volunteering you should consider the following questions:

- are all your requirements vital or do they just reflect how things have been done in the past
- must all volunteers be highly literate
- have you considered issues for volunteers with particular needs (e.g. accessible premises, sign language facilities)
- would payment of expenses encourage unemployed volunteers
- should you provide, or assist with, crèche facilities?

# Application Forms

The information you need from an Application Form will vary according to the type of volunteer role. If you keep application information on computer file you must ensure that you are in compliance with the Data Protection Act (1988). From mid 2000 the Act will be expanded to include personal information held on paper files. **For further information contact The Data Commissioner, Block 4, Irish Life Centre, Dublin 1. (01-8748544).**

Files held by statutory agencies and related bodies (including volunteer records e.g. application forms) are covered by Freedom of Information legislation. **For further information contact Office of the Information Commissioner, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2. (01-6785222).**

## Range of information required:

- name and address of volunteer
- reasons for volunteering
- relevant experience/names of referees
- availability
- future plans.

In some situations, involving literacy issues for example, it is helpful to assist potential volunteers while they fill in application forms.

Sample **Application Forms** are included at the end of this section.

# Promotion of Volunteering

It is important to plan your promotional techniques carefully so that you reach the kinds of volunteers you are looking for. Resources are often an issue so it is a good idea to keep an eye out for any opportunities for free advertising.

## Ways to reach potential volunteers:

- through personal contact
- by distributing flyers/newsletters/mail shots to schools, colleges, libraries, hospitals, Citizens Information Centres (CICs) etc.
- through display of promotional posters in appropriate public places
- by giving talks in schools, particularly to transition year students, to women's groups, active retirement associations etc.
- through membership of organisations. e.g. the Church, libraries, community groups
- through information days and exhibitions, e.g. in shopping centres, libraries or on the road
- through registration with volunteer bureaux
- via local and national media coverage (see below)
- via the Internet (see below).

## Using the media

If possible, you should try to open lines of communications with local radio stations and editors of local newspapers. As a part of a recruitment drive you might submit features on a specific event to both promote the image of your organisation and to advertise the specific volunteering opportunities.

## Points to consider when writing for newspapers or preparing a radio piece:

- start off with something memorable, a 'hook', to catch the attention of the editor or producer
- provide key information based on the five Ws: Who? What? Where? When? Why?
- keep your piece short and interesting and make sure that the recruitment message doesn't get lost in the middle
- have a clear understanding of who has the authority to write or speak for your organisation.

## Using the Internet

With internet access you can use your e-mail or web page to advertise for new volunteers. Even if you do not have your own web page you can access listings for not-for-profit

organisations which include information on volunteer opportunities.

## Shortlisting

Any organisation taking on new volunteers needs to have a clear understanding of what skills, knowledge and attitudes they require in potential workers. If you can include some shortlisting criteria in your recruitment plan to help you to identify peoples' skills and motives you will be able to select the most suitable volunteers for interviewing.

## Matching

The sample forms, Voluntary Opportunity Profile and Voluntary Organisation Profile included at the end of this section can be used to clarify individual attitudes towards the volunteer role and to match volunteers to the most suitable roles in your organisation.

## Interviews

An interview is of benefit to both your organisation and the potential volunteer. It can take the form of a relaxed meeting or a structured interview depending on your needs. Whichever

form you choose make sure that you give and receive clear information.

## What you need to know:

- the skills and experience of your potential volunteer
- motives for volunteering (this information should match the application form details)
- the volunteer's expectations
- suitability for the volunteering role.

## What you need to convey:

- necessary information about your organisation
- details of the volunteering role
- available support and training opportunities
- details of supervision
- when you will contact the interviewee again.

It is helpful for assessment purposes to have more than one member of your organisation present when interviewing for volunteering roles. Ideally, if your organisation employs paid staff in addition to the involvement of volunteers, somebody should be appointed who will take part in all staff selection to reduce any risk of role conflict.

A sample **Interview Form** is included at the end of this section.

## References

Checking references is a useful balance to personal assessment. You can ask for job skills references relating to paid or voluntary work and/or character references supplied by a responsible member of the community (e.g. doctor, teacher, social worker). If writing to referees you should enclose some information (e.g. promotional flyer) on your organisation so that the referee will know what sort of reference information you require. Referees should be over 18 years of age and should not be close relatives of the volunteer.

### Types of reference:

- telephone contact with referees
- request for letters of reference
- standard reference form with specific questions.

Sample **Reference Forms** are included at the end of this section.

## Screening

A health status check is necessary, if, for example, the volunteer role includes the lifting of clients. In certain other

cases, additional screening might be required. Examples of roles for further screening include:

- home visiting
- work with children
- work with frail elderly
- work with people with disabilities
- handling money.

## The basic rules of screening include:

- a guarantee of confidentiality
- informing the volunteer if you are requesting a Garda check
- ensuring that the volunteer signs a consent form. If the Garda agree to run a check on a volunteer you must obtain his/her written consent beforehand.

## Garda screening information

Official Garda screening can take from 3 to 6 months and technically applies to paid staff only. Volunteer screening can be obtained by the volunteer as follows under Section 4 of the Data Protection Act (1988).

## What the volunteer must do:

- request a copy of personal data under the Data Protection Act
- supply the following:
  - name (and previous names, if any)
  - date of birth
  - address (and previous addresses, if any)
  - cheque or postal order for £5.00 made payable to the account of the Dept. of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

## What your organisation must do:

- reimburse the £5.00 search fee

### **For further information on Garda screening contact:**

**Assistant Commissioner  
'C' Branch (Security)  
Garda Siochana,  
Phoenix Park  
Dublin 8  
Tel: (01) 6771156**

## Refusing volunteers

In order to protect your organisation and the welfare of any client group in your care, you should put a formal refusal procedure in place.

### How to say 'no' to a volunteer:

- decide on a method of refusal: e.g. write a letter, request a face-to face interview or make a telephone call
- stress that you are following your organisation's official policy
- explain why you are obliged to refuse the application
- if you think the volunteer is not ready yet, say so
- offer suggestions on building experience/skills
- if appropriate, offer alternative volunteering roles within your organisation.

## Contracts/Agreement Forms

It is reasonable to expect a firm commitment for a given period particularly if you are providing training and support for volunteer work. You might decide to adopt a less formal term than 'contract', such as Involvement Form or Volunteer Agreement, or write a personalised letter of appointment.

## Terms of volunteer involvement should include:

- name, address and telephone number of the volunteer
- description of the volunteer role
- time commitment
- starting date
- training requirements and opportunities
- name of volunteer's supervisor
- reference to volunteer rights and responsibilities (see below)
- a confidentiality clause (see below)
- details of probationary period (see below).

A sample **Volunteer Involvement Form** is included at the end of this section.

## **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

When new volunteers join your organisation you can provide them with a clear description of their rights and responsibilities as volunteers. Details will vary according to the nature of the organisation. Some elements of a typical roles and responsibilities document are listed below:

A volunteer has the Right to:

- receive information about the organisation's purpose, work and values and its policy on volunteers
- a clearly written description of the work he/she will undertake and of assigned tasks within the organisation
- privacy and confidentiality
- be seen as a valued part of the organisation through inclusion at training sessions, meeting, social functions, etc.
- receive appropriate training
- know who to turn to with problems and difficulties
- be appreciated and have his/her work valued by the organisation
- make mistakes and learn from them
- express his/her view, opinions, on a subject
- be listened to and taken seriously by other members of staff
- receive regular and constructive feedback on performance
- work in a safe environment
- be covered by insurance
- have choices and be able to negotiate on those choices
- be able to say no
- carry out voluntary work without being exploited
- be reimbursed for any agreed travel expenses
- be consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect work
- be free from discrimination on grounds of gender, age, marital status, race, sexual orientation, religion and disability

A Volunteer has the Responsibility to:

- be reliable
- carry out work to the best of his/her ability and do so in a way that corresponds to the aims and values of the organisation
- attend the place of work at the times agreed
- notify the appropriate person if he/she is unable to attend for some reason or is running late
- agree to the organisation's volunteer policy
- respect confidentiality
- respect the rights of users and other workers within the organisation
- be honest if there are problems
- attend training sessions, support meetings if these are agreed as part of the volunteering role
- give feedback, communicating relevant and important information to an appropriate staff member
- be committed to the work but also to recognise that there are personal and external limitations on time commitment
- acknowledge decisions made by others
- ask for help or support when needed.

**(Adapted from Rights and Responsibilities – Barnardo's)**

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the right and the responsibility of every volunteer involved with your organisation. The volunteer has a right to privacy and confidentiality in relation to personal matters and must, in turn, respect the confidentiality of his/her volunteer role. To ensure that confidentiality will be respected by both your organisation and your volunteers, you can include an appropriate clause in the volunteer contract, as seen in the samples (Volunteer Involvement Form/Volunteer Agreement) provided at the end of this section.

## Probationary period

The probationary period can vary depending on the volunteering role involved and the type and length of training provided. A standard three to six month probationary period is used in many organisations but can be longer for volunteers who are providing a service for a limited number of hours each week. During this time the volunteer has the opportunity to begin to work effectively and any problems can be identified and resolved.

The probationary period can end with a final interview between the volunteer and his/her supervisor and/or an interview involving the original interviewing personnel. A final interview might include the following:

- a discussion of the volunteer's suitability to the current role
- reassignment to a different role, if necessary

- extension of the probationary period
- feedback from the volunteer on how supportive the probationary period has been
- termination of the volunteer's contract if he/she has been found unsuited to the volunteering role.

Existing volunteers could be asked to fill in a **Membership Form** (or equivalent) to bring them in line with new volunteers signing contracts or agreement forms. A sample is included at the end of this section.

**All sample documents included in this section can be adapted to suit the needs of your organisation.**

## **Further reading:**

Clarke, J. (1996) **Managing Better: the Staff Recruitment Process**

Ellis, Susan J. (1996) **The Volunteer Recruitment and Membership Development Book**

Graff, L.L. (1999) **Beyond Police Checks: The Definitive Volunteer & Employee Screening Guidebook.**

McCurley, S. and Lynch, R. (1998) **Essential Volunteer Management (2nd ed.)**

National Centre for Volunteering. (1999) **The Recruitment Guide**

Smith, D.R. (1994) **Working with Volunteers: Recruitment and Selection**

Darvill, G. (1990) **The Impact of Contracts on Volunteers**

PARENTLINE  
Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups  
North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7  
Tel: 872 7014 E-mail: parentline@tinet.ie

## APPLICATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_ Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Summary of Previous Voluntary/Community/Work Experience

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you in full/part time employment (outside the home)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn of Parentline? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to be a volunteer with Parentline? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think you would be suitable to work with Parentline? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When would you be available? (weekdays only)

Please tick the appropriate time.

- 10.00a.m. to 1.00p.m.
- 1.00p.m. to 4.00p.m.
- 4.00p.m. to 7.00p.m.
- 7.30p.m. to 9.30p.m.

The basic commitment to Parentline on successful completion of the Parentline Training is:

- One 3 hour duty per week
- Attendance at Support Meetings the last Monday of the month
- Six hours ongoing training per year
- Fundraising support
- A two year commitment to Parentline

If successful are you prepared to give the above commitment to Parentline? \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two referees (people who know you well, for example, a family friend, doctor, employer, etc.):

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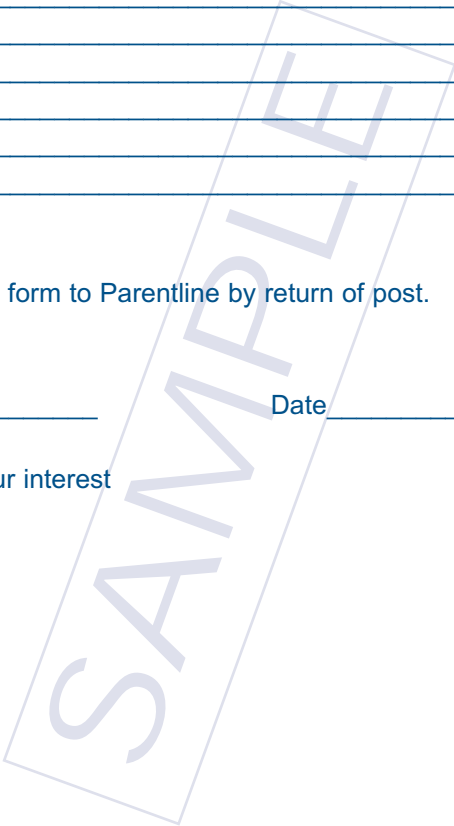
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Please return this form to Parentline by return of post.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest



GALWAY COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR MENTALLY  
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN LTD.

**VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have any experience doing any kind of volunteer work? If yes,  
please give details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you have any experience working with children or adults with a  
mental handicap/learning disability? If yes, please give details:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are your reasons for becoming involved in Mental Handicap  
Services?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What skills, experience, hobbies or interests do you have which you feel might be useful to you as a voluntary worker?

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5. Do you prefer to work:
- in a group or individually
  - with children or adults

6. Are you available on a regular basis?  
Please indicate the time/s you would be available?

All Day	A.M.	P.M.
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Any other relevant information

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Please state the names and addresses of two people who we can approach for a reference:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You. This information will be kept confidential to us and will not be disclosed to any person without your permission.

Please return this form to:

Ann Donohue, Volunteer Coordinator,  
G.C.A.M.H.C.,  
The Halls, Quay Street,  
Galway.

# VOLUNTARY OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

Organisation title \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Title of opportunity (**a relevant snappy title to attract attention**)  
\_\_\_\_\_

## About the opportunity

Objectives (What is the end result) \_\_\_\_\_

Activities & tasks \_\_\_\_\_

Start & End date (if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum & Max no of volunteers \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

No of hours required per volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ (per week)

Min period of commitment \_\_\_\_\_

Level of commitment required for assignment

One-off     Ongoing

## Contact information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no \_\_\_\_\_ Fax no. \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

## Administration

### Insurance cover

Are volunteers covered by insurance for:

Personal accident on premises  Yes  No

Personal accident outside premises  Yes  No

If volunteer drivers use their own transport,  Yes

No

do you check if their insurance covers injury to passengers.

### Volunteer expenses

Are travel expense paid  Yes  No

Are meal expenses paid  Yes  No

### Other information

Interviews  Formal  Informal

Are references required

Is a police check carried out

Does the opportunity offer preparation/training

If there is a trial period, how long is it \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION PROFILE

Organisation title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No \_\_\_\_\_

## FURTHER INFORMATION

No. of employees  None  1 - 10  10 - 100  Over 100

No. of volunteers  None  1 - 10  10 - 100  Over 100

## SECTOR **Community Group**

- Umbrella Organisation
- Campaigning Organisation

## Registered

- Service Provider
- Other

## AREA OF ACTIVITY (TICK THE MAIN FOCUS OF YOUR ORGANISATION)

- Advice/counselling
- Alcohol/Drugs
- Animals
- Arts
- Befriending/Advocacy
- Charity Shops
- Children
- Community business
- Community
- Crime
- Disability/Learning difficulty
- Education/Training
- Employment/Unemployment
- Environment
- Family/Parenting
- Gender

# INTERVIEW FORM

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## REVIEW OF ENROLMENT FORM

Clarify information on Volunteer Enrolment Form. Correct information supplied on the form and place other comments below

### NON-DIRECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. What attracted you to our organisation? Is there any aspect of our work that most motivates you to volunteer here?

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2. What would you like to get out of volunteering here? What would make you feel like you've been successful?

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3. What have you enjoyed most about your previous volunteer work? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What have you previously enjoyed about your paid job?

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5. How would you like to be supervised? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Would you rather work on your own, with a group, or with a partner?  
Why?

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7. What skills do you feel you have to contribute?

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8. What can I tell you about our organisation?

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**MATCH WITH VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

Discuss potential volunteer positions and check match of interests, qualifications, and availability

Position

Comments

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**From Essential Volunteer Management,  
McCurley/Lynch p. 174**

# SIMON COMMUNITY REFERENCE FORM

Reference request form for \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How would you describe his/her personality - what are his/her main strengths and weaknesses? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Full-time work in Simon is very demanding both physically and emotionally. How well do you think s/he would be able to deal with this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Full-time work involves living and working closely with people. How does s/he relate to others and how well does s/he work in a team? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. While there are a number of supports in place for volunteers, there are times when they may have to work without constant supervision and have to make decisions and take initiative in their work. Do you think that s/he would be able to do this? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Full-time volunteers have responsibility for the day to day run of the houses and for the welfare of residents within. Do you feel that s/he would be able to cope with this responsibility? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. From what you have read about full-time volunteer work in the enclosed leaflet do you feel that s/he is suitable for this type of work? (Please give reasons).

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8. Does the applicant have any problems with illegal drugs or alcohol? \_\_\_

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9. Any other comments

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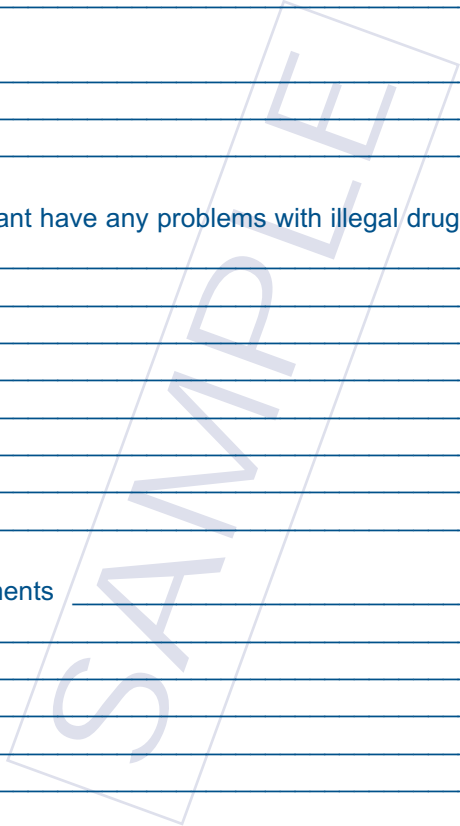
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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## REFERENCE FORM

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Re: \_\_\_\_\_ (Volunteer Name)

The person above has given your name as referee re: undertaking voluntary work with \_\_\_\_\_. I would be grateful if you would assist by signing the form below. I have also enclosed an information leaflet about our organisation and a stamped addressed envelope for your benefit. All information supplied will be held in strictest confidence.

The reason for contacting you is to ascertain the volunteer's suitability. This allows us to protect both volunteer and the client(s) they may be working with. These groups can include children, young people, disabled people, those with special needs and older people. Respect for confidentiality is also a major aspect of the volunteers role.

Our recruitment procedure also includes an interview with the volunteer, therefore I would be grateful if you would return the form as soon as you can.

Yours sincerely \_\_\_\_\_

I feel the above named is suitable/unsuitable to be a volunteer with \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

pto ➔



GALWAY COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR  
MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN LTD.

**VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Activities in which the volunteer will be involved

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Centre \_\_\_\_\_ Times \_\_\_\_\_

Commencing \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to maintain confidentiality in relation to all aspects of the Association Services especially concerning the personal details/circumstances of the clients, their families and staff.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Volunteer)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

This agreement is intended to indicate the seriousness with which we treat our volunteers. The intention of the agreement is to assure you both of our deep appreciation of your services and to indicate our commitment to do the very best we can to make your volunteer experience here a productive and rewarding one.

### **The Organisation**

We, \_\_\_\_\_ (the organisation), agree to accept the services of \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer) beginning \_\_\_\_\_ and we commit to the following:

1. To provide adequate information, training, and assistance for the volunteer to be able to meet the responsibilities of their volunteer job.
2. To ensure satisfactory supervisory support to the volunteer and to provide feedback on performance.
3. To respect the skills, dignity and individual needs of the volunteer, and to do our best to adjust to these individual requirements.
4. To be receptive to any comments from the volunteer regarding ways in which we might mutually better accomplish our respective tasks.
5. To treat the volunteer as an equal partner with the organisation's staff, jointly responsible for completion of the organisation's goals and the fulfilment of its mission.

## **The Volunteer**

1. Agrees to serve as a volunteer and commits to the following:
2. To perform my volunteer duties to the best of my ability.
3. To adhere to the organisation's rules and procedures, including record-keeping requirements and confidentiality of organisation and client information.

To meet time and duty commitments, except in exceptional circumstances, or to provide adequate notice so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Agreed to:

Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either of the parties, but will expire automatically on \_\_\_\_\_ unless renewed by both parties.

**(From Essential Volunteer Management  
McCurley/Lynch p. 176)**

**SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL  
MEMBERSHIP FORM 1997**

**Conference Details**

Name of Area Council \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Conference \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Conference \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Work \_\_\_\_\_  
Timing of Conference Work \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERS DETAILS**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone nos. \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_ mobile

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ (male/female) Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Special interests \_\_\_\_\_

Length of service \_\_\_\_\_ years

Role in Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Pres./Sec./Treas./Member. \_\_\_\_\_

Present status of member \_\_\_\_\_ active/inactive.

Training Needs \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# 4 Training

Through training activities designed to equip your volunteers with essential skills, knowledge and attitudes, your organisation can ensure that the highest possible level of service is provided. Training is essential both when volunteers first join your organisation, and on an on-going basis, if assigned tasks are to be carried out effectively.

## The training strategy

The missions, objectives and strategies of your organisation should shape the development of your training policies and implementation plans. A **training policy** will guide your organisation's training activities and clarify who is responsible for training, e.g. a training officer, volunteer coordinator or training team. It will also identify what resources are available for training. A **training plan** explains what will be done in order to implement the policy in a practical way.

## The training policy

The training policy can contain statements about the following:

- your organisation's mission and a summary of your strategic plan

- your organisation's recognition of the importance of training as a means of achieving goals
- recognition of training to facilitate the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes. This can include formal as well as informal learning opportunities
- the values underpinning training which can include:
  - the promotion of development of your organisation and its volunteers
  - volunteer involvement in the identification, design and delivery of training
  - overcoming barriers which might prevent access to training
  - implementation of training in a supportive atmosphere
- periodic review of policy and evaluation of programmes.

## Training needs

Training needs can be analysed on three levels: organisational, role description and volunteer support. Some ways of identifying these needs are included below:

- list the skills or areas of expertise needed by your organisation, e.g. new technology, new legislation, etc.
- consider your organisation's strategy, identify new activities or changes and the skills/knowledge needed for them, e.g. organisational development/change
- identify areas of weakness in the organisation e.g. large numbers of new volunteers in a certain area
- examine volunteer role descriptions

- list the skills that volunteers already have
- ask volunteers what training they need to fulfil their role well
- identify personal development needs of volunteers
- involve volunteers in agreeing strategy and objectives for your organisation and the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to meet these.

## A training plan

Once you have identified the training needs of your organisation and volunteers you can devise a general training plan using the following guidelines:

- priority/objective
- task: what has to be done
- how the task will be achieved/process
- timescale: start dates, duration, finishing date
- costs.

These guidelines can help you to clarify that the requirements of both your volunteers and the organisation are being met. A training plan can cover the following elements:

- identification of an individual or team with overall responsibility for volunteer training
- provision of induction and on-going training
- provision of in-house training

- identification of outside training opportunities, e.g. conferences, seminars, etc.
- timetable of events for specific period (six months to one year) to link with volunteers' availability
- distribution of training information to all relevant people within your organisation
- keeping records of all training provided which will be a useful reference point for both your organisation and your volunteers
- identification of available accreditation for training (e.g. distance learning opportunities in educational institutions)
- requests for reports from volunteers on all training events attended, outlining content and relevance to their volunteering role
- regular (annual) evaluation of volunteer training.

## Evaluation of training

Evaluation of volunteer training is a vital element in your overall plan and will help you to identify the kinds of training needed to develop your organisation. When planning your training it is useful to apply the why, what, how, who and when questions to evaluation.

# Induction training

All new volunteers should receive induction training to introduce them to the purpose, ethos and structure of your organisation and clarify the volunteer role they are to fill.

## Methods of induction:

- provision of a standard induction pack including background information and a description of the day-to-day activities of your organisation
- presentations/lectures
- use of written material to back up oral information
- ‘on the job’ apprenticeship with supervision
- ‘shadowing’ an experienced worker
- a combination of these over an extended period.

## Induction information can include:

- an outline of your organisation’s aims and activities
- brief history and future plans of your organisation
- funding sources
- services provided
- outline of other organisations working in similar areas
- policies and procedures used by your organisation
- importance of volunteer confidentiality

- introduction to supervision and support for volunteers
- a tour of the premises
- introduction to colleagues
- description of volunteer requirements and benefits
- introduction to facilities and equipment
- what to do if something goes wrong.

## On-going training

Further training opportunities can take a variety of formats. For example, in-house training might be suitable when tasks are specific to your organisation, while training with outside agencies can provide more general skills. The trainers might be people from within your organisation or might be speakers invited in from outside agencies to provide courses or give talks. Some of the most frequently used methods of training include:

- practical demonstrations
- action learning/learning by doing
- training sessions (which can last a couple of hours or up to a number of weeks)
- workshops, seminars and discussion groups
- open or distance learning
- mentoring
- lectures and conferences
- visits to other organisations
- invitations for other organisations to visit you
- courses leading to a qualification/accreditation.

Volunteers should always be encouraged to identify training courses, seminars and conferences which will help them to develop the skills required for their volunteer role.

## Training costs

Depending on resources, your organisation might be in a position to fund all volunteer training, e.g. paying for outside courses or guest speakers. It is recommended that at least 3% of an organisation's budget should be allocated to training. If you are working with very limited resources, you might consider operating a barter facility with other organisations. For example, you might offer training in listening skills in return for basic first aid training. You could also join with other organisations and invite outside speakers to provide lectures or practical demonstrations which would be attended by a number of groups.

## Funding

Whoever has responsibility for training in your organisation can keep a file of all information about training grants from newspaper advertisements, brochures, guides, press cuttings, etc. For example, some funding may become available from time to time for the publication of materials. Your organisation could apply for such a grant to fund the production of induction packs, or promotional material to use when recruiting volunteers. At the time of publication of this Guide a funding

database is being prepared by Comhairle and CAFE (Creative Activity for Everyone). A selection of funding agencies is included under Funding Agencies.

Before making any applications for funding you need to have a clear understanding of the following:

- why funding is needed
- what your project is (e.g. training or publications)
- what results you expect
- who will benefit
- what your organisation's track record is.

## Accounting

If you succeed in obtaining funding you will need to keep good account of the money and let funders know how it was spent. You may need audited accounts of your organisation for large training grants.

# Comhairle Training and Development Service

Comhairle currently provides a range of training and support services to the voluntary sector, including a small training grant fund. A training consultancy service is also available, and a range of training materials and resources as follows:

- Distance Learning Pack Training Manual for information givers
- Comhairle Training Programme
- Interview skills video in the context of information provision services: **How can we help you?**

## Further reading:

Bentley, T. (1994) **Facilitation: providing opportunities for learning**

Community Education Training Unit (1993) **Training and How to Enjoy it: a community groups training pack**

Community Education Training Unit (1992) **Training and How not to Panic: a practical guide to training skills**

Squirrell, G. (1998) **Becoming an Effective Trainer**



# 5 Support and Supervision

## Support

Support, whether it is structured or informal, should be available to everybody in your organisation: volunteers, managers of volunteers and paid staff. Unsupported volunteers often don't stay with the organisation, so it is important to ensure that all your volunteers receive the support and recognition they deserve. The advantages of a good support system are:

- volunteers feel appreciated
- volunteers are encouraged to use their skills to the maximum levels
- it keeps your organisation aware of your volunteers' interests and concerns
- it helps to develop teamwork.

The following list suggests a range of approaches to supporting your volunteers, some of which are dealt with in earlier sections of this Guide:

- develop a volunteer policy
- match your volunteers' skills to the needs of the organisation
- provide a clear role description to all volunteers

- provide a good induction programme for new volunteers
- provide on-going training
- provide adequate supervision (see below)
- give your volunteers a voice within the organisation
- pay out-of-pocket expenses (see below)
- allow volunteers the opportunity to debrief, particularly if they work in stressful situations (e.g. by setting up a support group)
- clarify the specific roles of paid staff and volunteers within your organisation
- set up a volunteers' comments box and consider any comments seriously
- do not impose new policies or procedures on volunteers without their prior input
- maintain regular contact with your volunteers even if they work away from the centre
- consider providing crèche facilities
- if possible, provide parking facilities
- set up a volunteer notice board
- hold social events, e.g. occasional lunches or dinners
- provide free tea/coffee facilities
- make sure that all volunteers have equal access to support.

**(Courtesy – Volunteer Resource Centre)**

## Who is responsible for support?

As part of your organisation's support structure, each volunteer needs to have a clearly identified person to whom they can turn if he/she has a problem or question. A volunteer coordinator, or the individual responsible for training might take on the roles of support and supervision (see below). An alternative might be to provide training in support skills for experienced volunteers including listening, leadership and counselling skills. Supporting others can be very draining, so whoever is responsible for support in your organisation, needs to have access to their own support to avoid burn out.

## Peer support

Your organisation could decide to encourage volunteers to support each other thus creating a less formal support system. You might try to promote some informal structure to support volunteer meetings, e.g. by providing a private room for volunteers, suggesting a regular time for meetings and encouraging a rule of confidentiality. With this facility in place, volunteers will feel free to discuss their roles and experiences and talk freely about any difficulties they might encounter with the volunteering role.

# Supervision

Forms of supervision vary according to the nature of the volunteering role. For example, a volunteer who provides some direct service to client groups needs individual supervision to give him/her support while allowing your organisation to evaluate his/her performance.

Roles requiring individual supervision include:

- work with children
- work with the frail elderly
- work with people with disabilities
- home visiting
- counselling
- work on telephone helplines.

Supervision is the right of every volunteer as part of the on-going support structure provided by your organisation. Even at its most fundamental, effective supervision will enable your organisation to provide any information the volunteer needs in order to fulfil his/her role, while allowing you to monitor volunteer performance. With good communication in place, volunteers can work effectively and problems can be quickly identified and corrective action taken.

## Who is responsible for supervision?

Every volunteer needs to have a clearly identified supervisor so he/she will know who to go to with questions or problems. If your organisation has a volunteer coordinator, or an individual responsible for training and support, he/she might take on the role of supervisor. Alternatively, another more experienced volunteer could, with adequate training, be appointed to supervise the work of a new member of the team. Whatever form of supervision you use, a clause should be included in your volunteer policy so the procedure remains the same for all volunteers. This clause might include the following:

- why your organisation provides supervision
- guidelines on confidentiality between supervisor and volunteer
- procedures in cases of conflict
- skills and training necessary for supervisors (see below)
- overall supervision procedures within your organisation, stating who has ultimate responsibility, e.g. volunteer coordinator or management committee.

## Supervisors: skills and training

The supervisor needs to have a clear understanding of the aims and activities of your organisation as well as of the volunteer role under supervision. He/she should be a good communicator, a good planner and evaluator and be able to provide constructive feedback both to the volunteer and to the volunteer coordinator or management committee.

# Volunteer evaluation

A volunteer evaluation procedure can be developed involving reports from supervisors and feedback from your volunteers. This will help to ensure that your organisation and your volunteers are working in harmony and to a common goal. Evaluation should be a positive experience for both the organisation and the volunteer. Once it is accepted as part of your standard procedure, questionnaires can be circulated among volunteers every 6 or 12 months without causing upset. The supervisor can then arrange a meeting with his/her volunteer to discuss issues based on the questionnaire and on the supervisor's own observations. In this way, volunteers are encouraged to play an active role in their own on-going evaluation. On completion of successful evaluation you will find that both you and your volunteers feel that ideas for development of volunteering within your organisation have been identified.

## An evaluation questionnaire can include the following:

- name of the volunteer
- title of the volunteer role
- the period being reassessed
- what the volunteer role objectives have been over the past 6/12 months
- to what extent objectives have been achieved

- reasons why objectives might not have been achieved
- how the volunteer's performance might be improved
- whether or not the role description accurately describes the work being carried out
- how the organisation might help to improve the volunteer's work
- what further training the volunteer is interested in
- what ideas the volunteer has for improving or developing his/her work, or that of the organisation.

## What if things don't work out?

Depending on the findings of your evaluation, some corrective action might be needed, eg. further training for your volunteer, reassignment to a different role, or support from your organisation if a volunteer needs to make the decision to leave. In extreme cases, dismissal of a volunteer might be necessary. For the protection of your organisation, all dismissals should be discussed with the volunteer, put in writing and the volunteer should be given the opportunity to appeal your decision.

### Problems leading to dismissal include:

- breaches of confidentiality
- abuse of clients and/or fellow workers
- dishonesty or unreliability.

## Alternatives to dismissal include:

- offering the volunteer the opportunity to appeal
- offering a transfer to a less stressful area
- providing additional training
- helping the volunteer to make the decision to leave.

## Exit interviews

When a volunteer leaves your organisation because his/her work is completed, or for some other reason, you can organise an informal exit interview. The volunteer's supervisor is the most appropriate person to hold this interview and, unless leaving is due to completion of a project, he/she should try to ascertain why the volunteer is going. This interview also allows the supervisor to gain feedback on the volunteering experience and receive suggestions for improvements to your system.

# Volunteer references

It is useful if your organisation has a clear policy in place covering the provision of references for volunteers who are leaving. Volunteer references can include the following information:

- name and nature of your organisation
- volunteer's name and role
- duration of volunteer's commitment
- standard of his/her work
- overall attitude (towards team work, training, supervision etc.)

## Further reading:

Clarke, J. (1997) **Managing Better: Staff Support and Supervision**

Conway, L. (1994) **Working with Volunteers: Support**

Hawkins, P. and Shohet, R. (1989) **Supervision in the Helping Professions: An Individual, Group and Organisational Approach**, Open University Press



# 6 Expenses for Volunteers

It is useful to develop a standard policy on payment of out-of-pocket expenses so that volunteers are not excluded on the basis of low income. Information on current rates and procedures for claiming expenses can be circulated among all volunteers in your organisation.

## What can be considered as out-of-pocket expenses?

- travel undertaken as part of the volunteering role
- telephone and postage costs
- specialist protective clothing or other essential equipment
- car insurance
- subsistence (refreshments needed while volunteering).

## How to pay expenses

Expenses should be paid regularly on the basis of an Expenses Claim Form and accompanying receipts. If you find that some volunteers are reluctant to accept costs you can suggest that they claim the amount due to them and donate it back into the organisation or to a charity of their choice.

A sample **Expenses Claim Form** is included at the end of this section and can be adapted to suit the needs of your organisation.

## **Volunteering when unemployed**

People who are registered as unemployed can become involved in certain forms of voluntary work without losing their Unemployment Assistance, Unemployment Benefit or any other entitlements, provided certain criteria are met.

**For further information on volunteering and social welfare payments, contact your Social Welfare local office or Citizens Information Centre.**

### **Further reading:**

Blacksell, S./Phillips, D.R. (1994) **Paid to Volunteer.**

# VOLUNTEER EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

This form is to be used to record those expenses you incur while volunteering for us for which you are to be reimbursed. The type of expenses for which we provide reimbursement are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Type of expenditure \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

These represent an accurate account of my expenses

Name of volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer signature \_\_\_\_\_

Cash payment received \_\_\_\_\_

Approved for reimbursement \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Payment issued

For office use only



# 7 Insurance for Volunteers

The insurance requirement for volunteers involved with your organisation is, to some extent, dependent on the nature of the volunteer role and should be reviewed as work areas are developed.

## What should be insured?

- people
- venues for events (e.g. fundraising events, talks etc.)
- work/tasks
- travel to meetings
- cars, minibuses etc.

## Forms of Insurance

- **Public Liability** insurance will protect both the organisation and your volunteer should a client make a claim due to injury or damage to property
- **Personal Accident** insurance provides a benefit to volunteers in the event of injury. This will not affect any legal rights which they have and neither does it require any proof of negligence

- if the work is of a professional nature (medical, legal, financial) for which the volunteer has specific qualifications, insurance can be arranged through the volunteer's professional association or through **Professional Indemnity** insurance
- if the work involves the provision of information to clients professional indemnity may be required to cover legal liability.
- **Car Insurance** is arranged in the name of the volunteer owner/driver of the car and is his/her own responsibility. Your organisation can reimburse the volunteer for additional insurance expenses incurred in order to carry out the voluntary role. Details of insurance cover should always be checked with insurers before using a vehicle for voluntary activities.

## **Further reading:**

Comhairle/Church & General: **Group Insurance Scheme for Voluntary Social Service Organisations**  
(information pack)

# 8 Legal Structures

There are different legal structures to suit different kinds of organisation.

## Constitution:

A written **Constitution** is the simplest form of legal structure. It sets out the objectives and rules of an organisation and will be sufficient if you are a support group and have responsibility only to the volunteers involved.

A typical constitution includes the following:

- name and aims of your organisation
- membership
- structure of your management committee
- management of finances
- methods for changing the constitution
- guidelines for meetings and voting procedures
- guidelines for disciplinary procedures.

## Company Limited by Guarantee:

An organisation with a sizable budget and a wide range of activities can opt for the status of a **Company Limited by Guarantee**. The requirements for a company limited by guarantee include the following:

- a Memorandum of Agreement and Articles of Association must be drawn up and lodged in the Companies Office
- records of minutes and membership must be kept for inspection by the Companies Office
- every member has equal voting power
- there is no limit on the number of members
- board of directors is elected by the members annually
- liability of members is restricted to £1.00
- annual accounts must be submitted to the Companies Office

Changes in company law could effect your organisation so it is advisable to check with a legal advisor from time to time.

# Charitable Status

In Ireland, Charitable Status means that an organisation is recognised as charitable by the Revenue Commissioners for tax purposes. It is not an alternative to legal status and relates only to fund raising and tax issues. Your organisation should be aware that tax exemptions are available in respect of income and/or property and are the responsibility of the Revenue Commissioners.

## Further reading:

Clarke, J. (1996) **Managing Better: Becoming a Limited Company**

Cousins, M. (1994) **Guide to Legal Structures for Voluntary and Community Organisations**



# 9 Management Committees

A management committee or a board of directors in a company limited by guarantee is a group of individuals responsible for the decisions made and actions undertaken by their organisation. This committee can operate in a number of organisational formats, for example, where the organisation's staff is made up entirely up volunteers, where a paid staff work under the management of a volunteer committee, or where there is a combination of these two. The role of a management committee includes the following:

- having a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the organisation
- ensuring that plans are implemented and carried out within a targeted period
- organising clear structures of accountability
- ensuring that everyone on the committee is aware of others' roles
- keeping proper records of committee meetings and of finances
- ensuring that training needs are identified and satisfied
- delegation of tasks to personnel.

# Management Committee skills

Working on a management committee is a significant form of volunteering and, as with all volunteering, it is important to match specific skills to particular roles. Necessary skills include:

- communication skills
- accountability
- planning and administration
- promotion techniques for your organisation
- networking with other groups/organisations
- negotiating with outside agencies such as funding bodies.

Every management committee needs to have a chair, treasurer, secretary and committee members.

## Chair

The **Chair** is the main spokesperson and facilitator on the committee. It is important to distinguish between the Chair of a meeting and the Chair of an organisation or management committee. The Chair of a meeting is somebody appointed to take responsibility for the running of a particular meeting. The responsibilities of the Chair of an organisation or management committee include:

- planning and running of meetings (or delegation as necessary)

- ensuring that all necessary information is made available to committee members
- ensuring that adequate records of meetings are kept
- ensuring that plans decided on during meetings are implemented
- representing the organisation at outside meetings
- being available to communicate with staff
- ensuring that the organisation operates according to the agreed strategy/policy.

## Treasurer

The **Treasurer** of a management committee is responsible for the financial matters of the organisation and takes charge of the following:

- drawing up an annual budget
- administration of the organisation's accounts
- monitoring income and expenditure against the organisation's budget
- keeping the committee informed of the financial situation of the organisation
- developing budgets for new developments
- working with the auditor
- presenting the accounts at the organisation's AGM
- representing the organisation in funding applications.

## Secretary

The **Secretary** on a management committee should be available to attend all meetings and is responsible for the following:

- organisation of meetings, e.g. time and place etc.
- production of agendas and other necessary materials
- taking of minutes
- writing up and circulation of minutes
- management committee correspondence.

## Committee members

**Committee members** must be committed to the values and policies of the organisation and should agree to attend all meetings for as long as they sit on the committee. Their responsibilities in relation to meetings include:

- being familiar with the agenda and all relevant materials before meetings
- being able to present reports at meetings from time to time
- participating in discussions and decision making.

## Hints when setting up a management committee:

- make a list of management committee tasks for the year
- group tasks under headings (research, fundraising, etc.)
- identify what skills are necessary for each area
- calculate the amount of time committee members will have to put in
- consider who is prepared to take on particular roles/tasks on the committee
- decide if the work can be shared
- plan a training programme for committee members.

## Induction and additional training

Induction and additional training are very important for your management committee to enable it to operate effectively. All new management committee members will need a thorough induction to enable them to take an active place on the committee from the beginning. Typical induction for management committee members includes:

- a brief history of your organisation
- information on the aims and activities of your organisation
- information on the policies and procedures in place
- introduction to other members of the management committee
- a tour of the premises
- introduction to all staff working in your organisation.

Additional training can also be offered as part of an ongoing support system for your management committee members. Workshops or seminars with chairpersons or treasurers from different organisations can be useful for problem solving and the sharing of successful management strategies. Other examples of management committee training include:

- planning and development
- legal status issues
- management committee roles (see above).

## **Further reading:**

Adirondack, S. (1992) **Just about Managing? Effective management for voluntary organisations and community groups.**

Campbell, K.N. and Ellis, S. (1995) **The I don't Have Enough Time Guide to Volunteer Management**

Clarke J. (1993) **Managing Together: a guide to working effectively as a committee**

Hedley, R. and Rochester, C. (1994) **Volunteers on Management Committees: Managing Volunteers**

Holloway, C. and Otto, S. (1988) **Getting organised - a handbook for non-statutory organisations**

# 10 Resource Agencies/ Funding Agencies

## Resource agencies

**Area Development Management [ADM]**, Holbrook House, Holles Street, Dublin 2. Tel: [01] 6613611. Fax: 6610411.

Supports local economic and social development. Responsible for the management of the EU Global grant. It allocates funds to local partnership companies and provides technical expertise and support for local development. A list of local partnership companies is available.

**CAFE** [Creative Activity for Everyone], 143 Townsend Street, Dublin 2. Tel: [01] 6770330. Fax: (01) 6713268.

E-mail: [cafe@connect.ie](mailto:cafe@connect.ie)

Provides information service for the community arts sector, skills sharing, workshops, training and seminars. Also provides information to the voluntary sector on funding opportunities.

**Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups**, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7. Tel: [01] 8725550.

Fax: (01) 8735737. E-mail: [carmichaelcentre@tinet.ie](mailto:carmichaelcentre@tinet.ie)

Provides accommodation and services to small voluntary organisations.

**Citizens Information Centres** [CICs) Locally based with more than 85 branches around the country. For contact addresses see Telephone Directory. Provide information to people and organisations on rights and entitlements. Resourced and supported by Comhairle.

**Combat Poverty Agency**, Bridgewater Centre, Conyngham Rd., Islandbridge, Dublin 8. Tel: [01] 6706746. Fax: (01) 6706760. E-mail: info@cpa.ie

Acts as a national resource agency supporting and encouraging community development activity. Publishes research into aspects of poverty and community development and has a library specialising in these and other social issues which is open to the public.

**Comhairle**, 7th Floor, Hume House, Dublin 4. Tel: [01] 6059000. Fax: (01) 6059099. E-mail: comhairle@comhairle.ie  
In June 2000 the National Social Service Board merged with the disability information and support functions of the National Rehabilitation Board to form Comhairle. Comhairle mainstreams information services for all citizens, including people with disabilities. It aims to inform and empower individuals and communities by ensuring they are aware of their rights and entitlements and of the social services that exist to support this. Provides training courses, a citizens information database on rights and entitlements and support to Citizens Information Centres and to other organisations which give information to the public. Other resources for voluntary organisations include a voluntary sector database and a library available to the public by appointment.

**National Women's Council of Ireland** (formerly the Council for the Status of Women), 16-20 Cumberland Street South, Dublin 2. Tel: [01] 66152686611791. Fax: (01) 6760860. E-mail: [admin@nwci.ie](mailto:admin@nwci.ie)

National representative body for 144 women's organisations throughout Ireland. Provides information and support to women and their organisations.

**National Youth Council of Ireland**, 3 Montague St., Dublin 2. Tel: [01] 4784122. Fax: (01) 4783974. E-mail: [info@nyci.ie](mailto:info@nyci.ie)

Coordinating body for voluntary youth organisations. Provides general information service and international contacts.

**Tallaght Volunteer Bureau**, 1 Main Street, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Tel: (01) 4628558. Fax: (01) 4510142. E-mail: [tvb@tinet.ie](mailto:tvb@tinet.ie)

Involved at local level in developing the image and scope of volunteering. Strives to provide a high quality service of support, promotion, information and training to improve the quality of volunteer involvement in the community.

**Volunteer Resource Centre**, Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7. Tel: (01) 8722622. Fax: (01) 8735737. E-mail: [vrc@tinet.ie](mailto:vrc@tinet.ie)  
Set up to promote, support and facilitate volunteering. Groups wishing to set up a new volunteer centre, organisations who want to formalise their existing service, or those wishing to design and implement a specific volunteer project, can contact the Volunteer Resource Centre for support, guidance, sample materials, details of registered volunteers, etc.

## Funding agencies

**Combat Poverty Agency**, Bridgewater Centre, Conyngham Rd., Islandbridge, Dublin 8. Tel: [01] 6706746. Fax: (01) 6706760. E-mail: [info@cpa.ie](mailto:info@cpa.ie)

See also under Resource Agencies. Grant schemes are available in the following areas, Public Awareness grants; Research grants; Evaluation grants.

**County Enterprise Boards**, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 65a, Adelaide Road, Dublin 4. Tel: (01) 6765861. Fax: (01) 6769049.

A major new initiative, which commenced in late 1993 to develop small and micro-enterprises [less than 10 jobs] and to stimulate economic activity at local level, primarily through the provision of financial and technical support. Information on schemes available from each Board.

**Local Authorities.** For contact details see county councils, borough corporations, corporations, or corporations of county boroughs.

The Department of the Environment, and Local Authorities support community centres, playgrounds, social housing projects, heritage and environmental projects, housing, resettlement and outreach services for people who are homeless.

**Dept. of Health and Children**, Hawkins House, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6354356. Fax: (01) 6354372. E-mail: [queries@health.irlgov.ie](mailto:queries@health.irlgov.ie)

The Department has overall control of the services provided by the health authorities, including the Health Boards, Health

Promotion Unit, National Social Work Qualifications Board, Women's Health Council and National Council for Ageing and Older People. A number of voluntary organisations previously funded directly by the Department are to be funded in future by the Health Boards.

**Dept. of Social, Community and Family Affairs,**

Floor, 2, Áras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store Street, Dublin 1. Tel: (01) 8748444. Fax: (01) 7043868.

Grant schemes concentrate on a range of supports for local self-help groups, community development welfare rights and information work, and on the provision of seed money to assist community based pilot initiatives.

**Dept. of An Taoiseach,** Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6624888. Fax: (01) 6789791.

The Department has administered occasional grant schemes in the past including once-off grants to voluntary groups.

**Ireland Funds,** Oscar Wilde House, 1 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 6627878. Fax: (01) 6627879. E-mail: ifdublin@iol.ie

Schemes target resources at programmes designed to help combat unemployment, inner city disadvantage and rural depopulation. Also support leadership and self-help projects.



# 11 Further Reading

## **Volunteering - general**

Basini, S. and Buckley, F. (1999) **The Meaning of Work in the Irish Voluntary Sector.** Association of Voluntary Action Research in Ireland – University of Ulster

Donnelly-Cox, G, and Jaffro, G. (1999) **The Voluntary Sector in the Republic of Ireland: into the twenty-first century.** Association of Voluntary Action Research in Ireland – University of Ulster

Gaskin, K. and Smith, J.D. (1995) **A New Civic Europe: a study of the extent and role of volunteering** – Volunteer Centre UK

N.I. Volunteer Development Agency (1995) **Volunteering in Northern Ireland**

Ruddle, H. and Mulvihill, R. (1999) **Reaching out: Charitable Giving and Volunteering in the Republic of Ireland 1997/98 Survey** National College of Ireland

Ruddle, H. and Mulvihill, R. (1995) **Reaching out: Charitable Giving and Volunteering in the Republic of Ireland – 1994 Survey** – National College of Industrial Relations

## **Contracts**

Darvill, G. (1990) **The Impact of Contracts on Volunteers:** Volunteer Centre UK

Hedley, R. and Smith, J.D. (1994) **Volunteers and the Contract Culture:** Volunteer Centre UK

## Expenses

Blacksell, S. and Phillips, D.R. (1994) **Paid to Volunteer:** Volunteer Centre UK.

## Funding

Cafe **The Irish Funding Handbook** (4th ed.,for publication June 2000).

Frazer, H., (1995/6) "Applying to charitable trusts: how to be successful", in Brown, P./Casson, D. **A Guide to the Major Trusts** Vol. 1 pp27-30, Directory of Social Change

Harvey, B. (1995) **A Guide to the National Lottery for Voluntary and Community Organisations.** National College of Industrial Relations.

Interact, (1996) **Grants and Loans. 1996/1997.** Dublin E.U. Commission, (computer disk) available free from EPIC, 18 Dawson St., Dublin 2.

IRELAND: Department of Foreign Affairs, Mitchell, G. (1996) **European Funding in Ireland: your guide.** Dept. of Foreign Affairs

McArdle, M.(1993) **Funding for your organisation: a complete guide to the sources of funding in Ireland and the E.C.** Dundalk Employment Partnership

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (1996) **Grants from Europe: how to get money and influence policy.** 8th.ed. London: NCVO

## **Insurance**

Comhairle/Church & General. **Group Insurance Scheme for Voluntary Social Service Organisations.** Comhairle

## **Legal Structures**

Clarke, J. (1996) **Managing Better: Becoming a Limited Company.** Combat Poverty Agency

Cousins, M. (1994) **A Guide to legal structures for voluntary and community organisations** Combat Poverty Agency

## **Management of Volunteers**

Adirondack, S. (1992) **Just about Managing?: effective management for voluntary organisations and community groups** London Voluntary Services Council

Campbell, K.N.and Ellis, S.J. (1995) **The (Help) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management:** Energize Inc.

Clarke, J. (1993) **Managing Together: a guide to working effectively as a committee** Combat Poverty Agency

Hedley, R. and Rochester, C. (1994) **Volunteers on Management Committees.** Volunteer Centre UK

Holloway, C. and Otto, S. (1988) **Getting organised - a handbook for non-statutory organisations.** NCVO

McCurley, S. and Lynch, R. (1994), **Essential Volunteer Management.** Directory of Social Change

Pinder, C. (1995) **Community Start Up: how to start a community group and keep it going** National Extension College/Community Matters

Thornley, C. (1995) **Working with Volunteers: Personal Issues.** Volunteer Centre UK

Volunteer Centre UK, (1992) **Managing Volunteers: A handbook for volunteer organisers**

## **Recruitment**

Clarke, J. (1996) **Managing Better: The Staff Recruitment Process.** Combat Poverty Agency

Ellis, S.J. (1996) **The Volunteer Recruitment (and Membership Development) Handbook.** Energize Inc.

Graff, L.L. (1999) **Beyond Police Checks: The Definitive Volunteer & Employee Screening Guidebook..** Graff And Associates

McCurley, S. and Lynch, R. (1998) **Essential Volunteer Management** (2nd edition). Directory of Social Change

National Centre for Volunteering, (1999) **The Recruitment Guide.**

Smith, D. R. (1994) **Working with Volunteers: Recruitment and Selection.** Volunteer Centre UK

## **Support**

Clarke, J. (1997) **Managing Better: Staff Support and Supervision.** Combat Poverty Agency

Conway, L. (1994) **Working with Volunteers: Support.**  
Volunteer Centre UK

Hawkins, P. and Shoheit, R. (1989) **Supervision in the Helping Professions: an Individual Group and Organisational Approach,** Open University Press

## **Training**

Bentley, T. (1994) **Facilitation: providing opportunities for learning** McGraw-Hill

Community Education Training Unit (1993) **Training and How to Enjoy it: a community groups training pack.** CETU

Community Education Training Unit (1992) **Training and How not to Panic: a practical guide to training skills.** CETU

Conway, L. (1994) **Working with Volunteers: Training.**  
Volunteer Centre UK

Danow, (S) and Bailey (C) (1988) **Developing Skills with People** Wiley

Squirrell, G. (1998) **Becoming an Effective Trainer: a manual to promote professional practice for new and experienced trainers and educators in non-traditional learning environments** Russell House

## **Volunteer bureaux**

Keeshan, F. (1999) **Volunteering in Clondalkin. A Report on the Profile and Experience of Volunteering in Community and Youth Work in Clondalkin and a Consideration of the Support Needs of Volunteers**  
Clondalkin Partnership

Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency, (1997)  
**Volunteer Bureaux Initiative: Volunteer systems suitable for use within volunteer bureaux.**

Points of Light, (1998) **Should we start a Volunteer Centre? IAVE World Volunteer Conference – August 1999 – Alberta, Canada**

Volunteer Bureaux Northern Ireland, (1999) **Paving the way to Community Participation: Volunteer Bureaux Northern Ireland – Strategic Plan 2000-2003.**

