



volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Luimneach

LIMERICK

## **Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy for Working with Volunteer-Involving Organisations**

**12<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

### **Introduction**

Limerick Volunteer Centre is a free matching service to encourage more people to become involved in volunteering across our city and county. Our role is to provide information and advice to people interested in volunteering and to organisations looking for volunteers. We work with Voluntary and Community Organisations to gather information about their volunteering needs, and in the process offer support and advice on good practice in volunteer management. Limerick Volunteer Centre is a member of Volunteer Ireland and the national network of Volunteer Centres. Further information and downloadable resources can be found on our web site: [www.volunteerlimerick.ie](http://www.volunteerlimerick.ie)

This document must be read in conjunction with the:--

- Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy for Working with Volunteers.
- Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy for dealing with complaints.
- Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy on Non-registration or Non-placement of Volunteers and Non-registration of or Non-placement of Volunteers with Organisations
- Limerick Volunteer Centre Equal Opportunities Policy

### **1: Definitions**

#### **1.1: Not-for-profit organisation**

For the purpose of this document a “not-for-profit organisation” will be defined as:-

1: Any organisation the objective of which is to act for the public benefit

2: Any organisation the objective of which is not to return any profits to its owners but to actively contribute to the development of the community through the provision of service

3: Any organisation which actively involves volunteers in the provision of its services or intends to involve volunteers in the provisions of its services.

Such organisations may include registered charities, companies limited by guarantee, organisations, schools, associations and community groups and may be established for the purpose of providing:-

- Support, information and training,
- Sports and recreation facilities,
- Social services including services to people with disabilities, or the social excluded,
- Arts, culture and heritage, among others.

## **1.2: Organisation**

For the purpose of this document the word “organisation” means a not-for-profit organisation as defined above.

## **2: General principles**

The purpose of this document is to give guidance to the steering committee, management, staff, organisations and volunteers on the type and range of not-for-profit organisations that Limerick Volunteer Centre will work with to place volunteers and provide services and outlines the procedures in place for working with organisations from the not-for-profit sector.

### **2.1 Responsibility**

Limerick Volunteer Centre management and staff are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented efficiently and effectively.

### **2.2 Measures**

This document lists the procedures that must be taken in order to fulfil the above policy. The measures outlined in this document must be adhered to at all times. If they are breached the appropriate complaints, grievance or disciplinary procedures will be used to resolve the problem and to make improvements. Any organisation(s) that chooses to take such an action will not be penalised by Limerick Volunteer Centre or treated less favourably as a result.

## **3: Not-for-profit organisations**

Limerick Volunteer Centre will provide services to and place volunteers with any organisations that comply with the definition above, with the exception of those organisations that may be excluded under the terms of the Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy on Non-registration or Non-placement of Volunteers and Non-registration of or Non-placement of Volunteers with Organisations.

### **3.1: Services provided to organisations**

Services provided to organisations include:-

- Registration with Limerick Volunteer Centre.
- Registration of volunteering opportunities with Limerick Volunteer Centre.
- Introduction of volunteers to the organisation in order to be placed in a volunteering opportunity.
- The provision of information concerning best practice in volunteer management.
- Support in developing policies concerning best practice in volunteer management.
- Training in Volunteer Management.
- Garda Vetting to organisations which cannot access Garda Vetting through a parent body or organisation.
- Information and support on a range of other issues which may affect the ability of the organisation to involve volunteers.

### **3.2: Procedures for registering organisations**

Organisations may register with Limerick Volunteer Centre in a number of ways including:

- Online through the Limerick Volunteer Centre website.  
[www.volunteerlimerick.ie](http://www.volunteerlimerick.ie)
- By phone.
- By post.
- In person.

When organisations register online, or by post, Limerick Volunteer Centre will strive to ensure that the organisation will be:

- Assigned a unique number in the Salesforce database.
- Receive a follow-up call within 2/3 working days to acknowledge the registration and to gather any further information necessary.
- Given the background to Limerick Volunteer Centre and told how we work with organisations including information on complaints etc.
- Given a copy of 'A step by step guide to managing volunteers'.
- It is recommended that they view the 'guide to using our service on our website' or are given a copy of this document.
- If it is considered practical and necessary, a member of Limerick Volunteer Centre staff will visit the newly registered organisation where it is convenient to do so.

When organisations register either by phone or in person, the organisation will be given the background to Limerick Volunteer Centre and told how we work with organisations, assigned a unique number in the Salesforce database, all necessary and ancillary information will be gathered and if applicable, a date for a visit arranged.

### **4: Procedures for registering an opportunity**

Volunteering opportunities can be registered on-line, by phone, by post, on a volunteering opportunity form or in person. It is essential in all cases that the volunteering opportunities form is fully completed. It is also necessary to ensure that the person registering the

opportunity has the permission from their organisation to do so. Limerick Volunteer Centre recognises that further information may be required in order to give a volunteer a true and accurate picture of the nature of the opportunity. Each opportunity is also given a unique identification number. This information may include, but is not limited to, information on:

- 1: Task description
- 2: Skills needed
- 3: Dates and times
4. Geographical area for opportunity
- 5: Training given or required
- 6: Training dates for the post
- 7: Age requirement for opportunity
- 8: Procedures around Garda Vetting
- 9: Reporting structures
- 10: Date of de-activation of the opportunity.
- 11: Contact person for this opportunity and best times to contact.

Limerick Volunteer Centre will strive to ensure that all information in relation to an opportunity is accurate before it is made active and available to volunteers.

#### **4.1: Working with an organisation to design volunteering roles**

In some cases, particularly when an organisation is newly registered or an organisation is expanding its range of available volunteering opportunities, Limerick Volunteer Centre will be available to the organisation to aid them in developing their volunteering roles. Information and support must be offered to the organisation at all times during this process. This information may include:

- Editing a volunteering opportunity and title with the organisation in order to better reflect its true nature.
- Clarifying the opportunity in terms of the structure of the organisation
- Providing support information, such as a volunteering application form etc.
- Providing training to the organisation, either through a training course or on a case-by-case basis.

In all cases, Limerick Volunteer Centre will help the organisation to design roles that provide equal opportunities, are diverse and appeal to a broad range of people with varying skills and are accessible.

#### **4.2: Working with an organisation to place volunteers**

Once an opportunity has been activated on the Salesforce database, it becomes available to view on the Limerick Volunteer Centre website and is included on the Limerick Volunteer Centre hard-copy list of volunteering opportunities which is given to all potential volunteers and is available for viewing at the Limerick Volunteer Centre office.

#### **4.3: Inappropriate Placement**

Where Limerick Volunteer Centre is informed by either the organisation and or the

individual volunteer that an inappropriate placement has taken place, Limerick Volunteer Centre will:

- work with the organisation to ascertain the reasons why the placement was deemed inappropriate
- in co-ordination with the organisation, work with the volunteer to ascertain their reasons for considering the placement inappropriate
- offer one to one support to the organisation in designing current and future volunteering roles

#### **4.4: Refusing to activate an opportunity**

Limerick Volunteer Centre reserves the right to refuse to activate an opportunity if there is likelihood to suggest that the opportunity is being advertised as a replacement for a paid job, unless the funding for such a job has become unavailable.

It is the policy of Limerick Volunteer Centre to discuss this situation with the organisation in order to clarify any worries the steering committee, management and staff may have about this issue. For further information on reasons why Limerick Volunteer Centre may refuse to accept a volunteering opportunity, please see the Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy on Non-registration or Non-placement of Volunteers and Non-registration of or Non-placement of Volunteers with Organisations.

#### **5: Contact with registered organisations**

It is the policy of Limerick Volunteer Centre to make regular contact with all registered organisations. As stated in paragraph 4.2 above, regular contact will occur when a potential volunteer is applying for a volunteering opportunity and throughout the duration of the volunteering placement.

In addition to the contact mentioned above, Limerick Volunteer Centre will also-

- Alert them to any upcoming training courses.
- Alert them to any new services, improvements in services offered by Limerick Volunteer Centre.
- Use the Limerick Volunteer Centre website to supply information that may be of interest.
- If the Placement Officer is unable to contact an organisation after a reasonable number of calls within a certain period of time, the opportunities will be deactivated until the organisation returns the calls. Unanswered calls by an organisation are a strong reflection of how volunteers maybe treated by the same organisation.

Limerick Volunteer Centre operates a regular “cleansing” of its Salesforce database in respect of organisations to ensure that all information we have in respect of an organisation is as accurate as possible. Please view Limerick Volunteer Centre’s ‘Salesforce Data Cleansing’ procedure.

## **6: Volunteer Management Training**

Limerick Volunteer Centre runs a four module Volunteer Management Training Programme. Each module takes about 4 hours and is generally run over two days or once a week over four weeks and a feeder module to this course. Please see the training pages on our web site for further information on the content of these modules. Notification of each volunteer management training will be sent to groups located within the Local Development Company (LDC) area where the training is being held.

## **7: Garda Vetting**

Limerick Volunteer Centre provides a Garda Vetting service to voluntary organisations that do not have access to their own Authorised Signatory. An Authorised Signatory is someone who has been trained by An Garda Síochána in the correct administration of Garda Vetting. Because not all small organisations are able to access this Garda training, we may act as an Authorised Signatory. A Garda Vetting pack will be sent to organisations. Some documentation must be signed by the organisation requiring this service and returned to Limerick Volunteer Centre. All Garda Vetting files are kept in a filing cabinet in the Managers office and are under lock and key.

## **8: Acceptance of These Conditions**

Having sent you this document, we will assume that you agree to abide by its conditions, unless we hear otherwise from you. If you fail to meet the conditions of this document we will explain to you where we feel the conditions are not being met. Support and training can be made available at this stage to assist the organisation to better meet these requirements. If you continue to fail to meet the conditions Limerick Volunteer Centre reserves the right to discontinue our service to you.

### **8.1: Appealing This Decision**

Should you disagree with the Manager's decision to suspend our service to you, please write to the Chairperson of the Steering Committee of Limerick Volunteer Centre. Your appeal will be considered by the Steering Committee, or a sub-committee of Limerick Volunteer Centre.

## **9: Recording of Information**

In addition to the information you provide on registration, our database allows us to record notes on the contact we have with you. This will generally include the date of the conversation, who it was with, and any important information discussed. We will also record if you have completed any of our volunteer management training modules, or have requested to do them. You are free to request a copy of any information we hold on you or your organisation. Please ask us or request to see our Data Protection Policy and procedure for further information.

## **10: Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **10.1: Success of policy**

Limerick Volunteer Centre monitors, reviews and evaluates the success of its policy and procedures on working with non-for-profit organisations on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements. It also monitors its other policies to ensure that they do not operate against this policy.

### **10.2: Feedback**

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It should be given to Limerick Volunteer Centre Coordinator, or any member of the Steering Committee.

### **10.3: Review**

This document is reviewed by the management and steering committee on an annual basis, or more frequently if circumstances change.