



# volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Luimneach

LIMERICK

## **Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy for dealing with Formal Complaints**

**13<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

### **Introduction**

Limerick Volunteer Centre is an independent and 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 Volunteer-Involving Organisations
- Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy for Working with Volunteers
- 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: Purpose of Policy**

We recognise that we may make mistakes from time to time, and that people may feel that the service they have received from us, or tried to receive from us, is unsatisfactory. We encourage feedback, both positive and negative, on all aspects of our policy and operations, so that we can maintain and improve standards on an ongoing basis. If an individual or organisation chooses to make a formal complaint, we will deal with this as quickly and fairly as possible and put

things right where appropriate.

The purpose of this document is to set out for all parties concerned the Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy for dealing with Formal Complaints. It cannot be used as an alternative or additional complaints mechanism to the Limerick Volunteer Centre grievance and disciplinary procedures, which deal with the relationship between the Limerick Volunteer Centre staff and management.

### **1.1: Responsibility**

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

### **1.2: Measures**

This document lists the procedures that must be taken in order to fulfill 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 person or organisation that chooses to take such an action will not be penalised or treated less favourably as a result.

## **2: Definitions**

### **2.1: Volunteering**

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person's own free will, without payment, except for the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses.

Our understanding of volunteering is that:

- 1: Volunteering is always a matter of choice and is done of the volunteers own free will and without coercion.
- 2: Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community.
- 3: Volunteering benefits both the community and the volunteer and gives people a sense of ownership of their local community.
- 4: Voluntary work is unpaid.
- 5: Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.

## **2.2: Volunteers**

Volunteers are people of all ages, religions, ethnic groups, abilities, races, and sex. Volunteers come from all walks of life and each volunteer has a unique set of skills and abilities.

## **2.3: 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, schools, associations and community groups and may be established for the purpose of providing:-

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

## **2.4: Organisation**

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

## **2.5: Volunteering opportunities**

These are volunteering vacancies created by a not-for-profit organisations which define the volunteering role, including the tasks involved, the skills and qualities required, the time commitment in terms of hours and duration, the screening requirements and the training, support and supervision available to the volunteer.

## **1: Procedures**

### **1.1: Eligibility**

Anyone using or trying to use Limerick Volunteer Centre's services can make a complaint. This includes potential, current and past volunteers, voluntary organisations, statutory bodies, etc. However, Limerick Volunteer Centre does not respond to anonymous or abusive complaints.

### **1.2: Treatment of complaints**

Complaints are taken seriously. Each complaint is treated equally, sensitively and in confidence. All complaints are handled with an open mind and investigated without prejudice. Complaints are dealt with promptly in an attempt to resolve them as quickly as possible. All complainants will receive a written explanation of the Limerick Volunteer Centre response to their criticism.

### **2.2: Feedback on our service**

From time to time service users may wish to give us constructive feedback on our service. They can do this by contacting the Coordinator [paul@volunteerlimerick.ie](mailto:paul@volunteerlimerick.ie) or through our website [www.volunteerlimerick.ie](http://www.volunteerlimerick.ie)

## **2: Complaints process**

### **2.1: First step**

Complaints should be in writing, addressed to the Limerick Volunteer Centre Coordinator. The Coordinator will respond to the complaint within five working days of receipt. If it requires further investigation, the complainant will be made aware of this. It is hoped that most complaints will be resolved at this stage.

### **2.2: Second step**

If the complainant is unhappy with the reply they have received (or if the original complaint relates to the Limerick Volunteer Centre Coordinator), they can appeal in writing to the chair of the Limerick Volunteer Centre Steering Committee within five working days. The chair of the Steering Committee will let the complainant know in writing, within five working days of receiving this letter, that the complaint is being investigated further and that it will be presented to the next meeting of the Steering Committee. This Committee's decision is final.

### **3: Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### **3.1: Success of policy**

Limerick Volunteer Centre monitors, reviews and evaluates the success of its Policy for dealing with Formal Complaints 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.

#### **3.2: Feedback on policy**

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

#### **3.3: Review of document**

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