



# volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Luimneach

LIMERICK

## **Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy on Non-registration or Non-placement of Volunteers and Non-registration of or Non-placement of Volunteers with Organisations**

**13<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 dealing with Volunteers.
- Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy for Working with Volunteer-Involving Organisations
- Limerick Volunteer Centre Policy for dealing with complaints.
- Limerick Volunteer Centre Equal Opportunities Policy

### **1: Purpose of Policy**

The purpose of this document is to give guidance to the board, management and staff of Limerick Volunteer Centre on those circumstances in which a person(s) or organisation(s) may, after an initial interview, be deemed unsuitable to further access the services of Limerick Volunteer Centre in order to comply with the policies mentioned above. It is not the purpose of this document to discriminate in any way against any person(s) or organisation(s).

#### **1.1: Responsibility**

Limerick Volunteer Centre board, management 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 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 person or organisation that chooses to take such an action will not be penalised by the organisation 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, and 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, sexes. 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, organisations, 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.

## **2.6: Volunteering opportunities**

These are volunteering vacancies created by a not-for-profit organisation 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.

## **3: Volunteers**

### **3.1 Potential Volunteers**

(i): Any person:

- who by their actions or words when being interviewed as a potential volunteer behaves in a manner that is inappropriate, prejudicial or offensive
- who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs

(ii): Any person that has registered with Limerick Volunteer Centre and been placed with a Group and that subsequently within the context of their volunteering role:

- behaves in a manner that is inappropriate, prejudicial or offensive is under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Will be made a ‘contact’ on Salesforce and this behaviour will be documented sensitively on their form.

(iii): Inappropriate, prejudicial or offensive behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Inappropriate language, i.e., language that is overtly sexual, insulting, provocative, derogatory, abusive, racist, or slanderous.
- threats including physical, emotional or verbal assaults.

## **4: Organisations**

Any organisation may be excluded from registering or will be made ‘a contact’ with Limerick Volunteer Centre on the following grounds:

- The organisation actively promotes inequality for reasons including but not limited to age, colour, criminal record, economic status, ethnic origin, marital status, mental or physical health, nationality, political beliefs, race, religious beliefs, sex, sexual

- orientation or any combination of these.
- The organisation uses volunteers inappropriately, e.g., to replace paid staff or for their own personal use for example looking after a family member.
  - The organisation actively promotes anti-social behaviour towards governments, people, animals or property
  - The organisation actively engages in unlawful behaviours or deeds.
  - The organisation does not come within the definition of a not-for-profit organisation as set out above.
  - The organisation does not submit a charity number or permission from those in authority relating to their freedom to fundraise.

## **5: Methodology for exclusion of person**

### **5.1 Volunteers registering for the first time**

#### **Step 1.**

If an individual acts during an interview with Limerick Volunteer Centre staff (whether by phone, email or in person) in an inappropriate, prejudicial or offensive manner or is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, this person must be verbally warned that this behaviour may preclude Limerick Volunteer Centre from acting on their behalf to secure a volunteering role.

#### **Step 2.**

If the behaviour is not modified after the verbal warning is issued, the member of the steering committee, management or staff must reiterate their verbal warning and failing an effort to comply on behalf of the potential interviewee must excuse themselves from the situation.

#### **Step 3.**

The management of Limerick Volunteer Centre must be informed immediately of the situation and the reasons the steering committee or staff member excused his/herself must be explained in detail. A written incident report must be prepared.

#### **Step 4.**

Based on information obtained in step 3 above, it is the responsibility of the Coordinator to pursue the situation, by:

Contacting the person to:

(i): Ascertain, if possible, the cause(s) of the inappropriate, prejudicial or offensive behaviour.

(ii): Ascertain, if possible, if this was a once off incident.

(iii): Explain the policy(s) of the volunteer centre to the potential volunteer.

(iv): If appropriate, offer the potential volunteer another opportunity to interview.

#### **Step 5.**

If the manager during this contact with the potential volunteer or at a subsequent interview is also subjected to behaviour that is inappropriate, prejudicial or offensive, or finds that the person is still under the influence of alcohol or drugs, then the manager must explain the policy of Limerick Volunteer Centre to the potential volunteer and clearly explain why the person cannot be registered as a volunteer. It is important that this conversation is

based on the policy of Limerick Volunteer Centre only and that the potential person is offered the right of reply.

In cases where the opportunity to explain Limerick Volunteer Centre's policy to the potential volunteer does not occur, then a written explanation of the reasons why the person is not being registered must be sent.

#### **Step 6.**

A record must be kept of all conversations, emails, letters and telephone calls.

### **6: Registered and placed volunteers**

The purpose of Limerick Volunteer Centre is to match potential volunteers with suitable organisations. In this regard we do not carry out a formal screening process, nor do we interview in detail potential volunteers. Organisations are made fully aware by Limerick Volunteer Centre that it is their responsibility to determine the suitability of any volunteer who contacts them. If an issue does arise with a volunteer during their time with an organisation, it is a matter for the organisation itself to take appropriate action. It is incumbent on an organisation to notify Limerick Volunteer Centre of an issue with a volunteer referred by us as this could impact on their registration with Limerick Volunteer Centre and any other opportunities that volunteer may apply for in future.

### **7: Methodology for the exclusion of organisations from registering**

#### **7.1: Steps**

##### **Step 1.**

If an organisation contacts Limerick Volunteer Centre (whether by phone, fax, email or in person) to register and this organisation is known and recognised to promote inequality, hatred, prejudice, unlawful or anti-social behaviour than it must be explained to them that Limerick Volunteer Centre's policies exclude them from registering.

In circumstances where this explanation is given verbally, a follow-up letter to the organisation must be sent explaining Limerick Volunteer Centre's policies in this regard.

##### **Step 2.**

If the organisation persists in trying to register, or if they are not satisfied with the explanation for exclusion offered by the member of staff, it is the responsibility of the manager to pursue the situation, by contacting the organisation to explain the policy of Limerick Volunteer Centre to the organisation.

##### **Step 3.**

A record must be kept of all conversations/ telephone call/ emails/letters relating to the matter. It must be stressed that an organisation can only be excluded under the circumstances outlined above.

#### **7.2: Non placement of volunteers with an organisation that has registered.**

## **Steps**

### **Step 1.**

If it comes to the attention of Limerick Volunteer Centre that an organisation is using volunteers inappropriately, then this situation must be investigated. The inappropriate use of volunteers may include:

- Using volunteers in place of paid workers or for personal use i.e caring or assisting for a family member.
- Placing volunteers in physical/ emotional danger
- Requiring volunteers to perform tasks for which they have not been trained
- Placing volunteers in at-risk situations.

Investigation may include telephone conversations; visits to the organisation, interviews with other Limerick Volunteer Centre placed volunteers. It must be stressed that any investigation must be handled sensitively and that every opportunity must be given to the organisation to explain how the information concerning their actions may have arisen.

### **Step 2.**

On concluding the investigation and based on its conclusions, Limerick Volunteer Centre must either:

- Offer support, training and information to the organisation in order to help them understand how to work with volunteers. This should be on-going and an individual programme must be drawn up with the organisation to address the issues.
- De-register the organisation on the grounds that they do not currently comply, nor do they intend to comply with good practice in volunteering. Limerick Volunteer Centre may in their discretion retain the organisation on our database as a general contact only.

## **8: Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **8.1: Success of policy**

Limerick Volunteer Centre monitors, reviews and evaluates the success of its Policy on Non-registration or Non-placement of Volunteers and Non-registration of or Non-placement of Volunteers with 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.

### **8.2: Feedback**

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.

### **8.3: Review**

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