



# The Community Service Volunteer Programme

## General Information

Focus Ireland operates a graduate recruitment programme, known internally as "The CSV Programme". This programme offers opportunities to college graduates to develop their skills & expertise in the area of social & community work. It is particularly suited to graduates of Social Science courses who are interested in gaining experience prior to returning to complete their masters in Social Science. The programme has been in operation for over 15 years. The programme runs from September to August each year with recruitment beginning early in the first quarter of that year. We accept 12 people on our programme each year.

The Graduates are required to work 39 hours per week and are paid a living allowance of just over €12,500. They can also apply for other benefits such as rent allowance which are allocated on a means tested basis.

While students are on the programme they have full access to Focus Ireland's training programme, supervision, employee assistance programme and have the same policy entitlements as regular full time employees. There are many seminars and work groups organised throughout the year that include visits and talks from both internal and external experts. There are also Mock Master Interviews organised and carried out; Graduates are coached on how to best prepare for the real thing!

Focus Ireland's Community Service Volunteer (CSV) Programme is a unique and innovative model of practice in which volunteers with expertise in the area of social and community work are enabled to contribute their skills in a structured, supervised and supported way to provide a range of quality services. CSVs work on a full time basis for a period of a year for the benefit of disadvantaged and marginalised people including people out of home.

The CSV Programme differs from other models of volunteering both within Focus Ireland and the participating external agencies in the wider community, due to the extent of the commitment, involvement and responsibility that CSVs have, which exceeds that of an ordinary volunteer.

The CSVs gain meaningful experience through their participation in the programme and learn a range of new skills through on the job training. The Programme has an emphasis on Best Practice, Personal Development and Self-Care in recognition of the challenges posed for the CSV's in their work. Supervision, support and on-going training play a major role in the learning process of community service volunteering.



## **The Projects**

The Drop In & Advice Centre, (The Coffee Shop), Temple Bar, Dublin 2

The Coffee Shop is part of Focus Ireland's Open Access Service and provides nutritious, inexpensive food in a welcoming environment to its customers, who are made up of marginalised groups and people who are experiencing homelessness. The CSVs working in the coffee shop are part of the team who provide supportive contact to customers. Apart from making initial contact, the CSVs role involves getting to know the customers, assessing and responding to customer needs, making referrals to the crisis team, family services and/or adult programmes and maintaining a supportive role with Coffee Shop customers.

Open Access Case Management, Temple Bar, Dublin 2

This forms part of Open Access, providing a range of services for those who find themselves homeless and/or in crisis. Services include giving advice and information on housing and social welfare issues. CSVs who work as a part of this team participate in assessments, referrals, caseloads, key-working, 1:1 counselling, give advice and information. In addition they act as advocates for customers in relation to housing, social welfare and health matters.

Off the Streets, Dublin 7

Off The Streets provides emergency and short-term residential accommodation for 16-18 year olds. CSVs working in this project assist in the assessment, admission and move-on of homeless young people. This is done through support work, key-working, liaison with external agencies such as the probation services, schools, social workers etc and through the empowerment of the young people themselves.

Open Access, Family Service, Temple Bar, Dublin 2

The Open Access Family Service is a service that aims to support families who are homeless on a personalised pathway to settlement through assessment, referral, case management and tracking. The CSV works as part of the team who facilitate this process with particular emphasis on the developmental and emotional needs of the children of the homeless families that are identified.

Aylward Green Childcare Centre, Finglas, Dublin 11

Aylward Green provides emergency accommodation for families who are homeless. The project comprises of 11 long-term and 13 emergency units. The needs of individual families are assessed on an ongoing basis and a care plan designed to meet the individual needs of family members.

The Children's Centre in Aylward Green consists of a breakfast Club, a nursery service, and an Assessment and Key Working Service for young people. The Breakfast Club runs each weekday morning & offers a nutritious breakfast to children before they go to school. The Nursery service caters for children from 4 months to school going ages and runs from Monday to Friday. The Nursery service provides both care and education to children living in Aylward Green. The stafflink with parents on a regular basis to carry out care plans. There is an onsite PHN Clinic on a monthly basis, staff in the nursery support this service.



The Assessment and Key Working Service for young people caters for children ranging from 5 to 18 years. On arrival to Aylward Green each family is assigned a Link Worker who will carry out needs assessments on each child in the family. These assessments will then inform staff if particular children would benefit from key-working or 1:1 work. The young person will then be assigned a key-worker, based on their needs, who will work closely with them supporting and acting as an advocate on their behalf.

#### Readiness for Training, Education & Employment, Georges Hill, Dublin 7

The Readiness for Training, Education & Employment Programme is a day drop-in centre for over 16's, which provides access to education, employment and training. Courses on offer include computers, literacy, childcare and preparation for work as well as various other courses, such as photography and kayaking, which are run throughout the year. The Readiness for Training, Education & Employment Programme also helps students' access work experience and training, and students can also drop-in to search for accommodation, read the papers, job-search and have a chat. The small size of the programme allows for a lot of in-depth 1:1 work. This position would suit somebody who has an interest in education and training. Good computer skills would also be an advantage.

#### Chéad Chéim -Aftercare Support Services (Residential), NCR, Dublin 8

Funded by the Health Service Executive, Chéad Chéim provides semi-independent, residential accommodation for young people leaving state care, both foster care and residential – formerly know as the Young Women's Project. The accommodation is both medium support, and low-support and the target group if care-leavers from 18 to 21 years of age.

The key components of this residential programme are:

- High quality, self-contained accommodation.
- A dedicated key worker.
- Support and encouragement to young people to remain in education, training or employment.
- Support with practical living skills, including budgeting skills, paying rent, personal care, creating a home and becoming part of a community.
- Guidance, advice and support in preparing each young person for moving on to independent living.

#### Waterford

This project comprises 57 units of accommodation close to Waterford city. The development consists of thirty-three one-bedroom bungalows for single people, six of which have been adapted for use by people with limited mobility. The project also offers eight long-term units of family accommodation. There are six transitional units for families and five transitional units for single people. A childcare centre facility is available to residents of the project.



### Limerick

This project provides support and housing management services to ten long-term units of family accommodation, as part of a total service profile comprising 80 units of accommodation in Limerick city, county and environs, and County Clare. A range of services are provided encompassing long and short-term housing and tenancy sustainment services. There are ten supported housing units for single people, attached to a broad-based lifeskills and vocational group work program. Focus Ireland Limerick liaises with local services to provide a multi-agency approach giving the most effective support for its clients.

### Cork

Cork services comprise three distinct packages of support for people who are out of home or at risk of such. The Tenancy Support and Settlement Service works with a maximum of 25 households, a mix of families and singles, to ensure they can settle into their new accommodation and communities and sustain it, through early intervention and working with people through any crisis situations that may occur.

The Household Management and Support Service provide on-going support to eleven households in Cork County, six of which are families.

The In-Reach Services' goal is to work with offenders in Cork Prison to plan for their release and ensure a seamless transition from Prison to accommodation and services in the community.

Cork services work closely with a number of statutory and voluntary agencies in the city and county among those are various social work departments, local authorities, housing and hostel providers, professionals working in mental health, addictions and disability sector, to ensure a fluid and effective service.

Everyone has a right to a place they can call home.

