

# Ethical Standards Policy

*Statement of policy: As a charity, it is important for Volunteer Ireland to make ethical choices that are in line with the principles of the community and voluntary sector in Ireland, and best practice principles of volunteering. Our values, as laid out in our 2018-2022 strategic plan, are: Inclusion, Respect, Integrity and Courage. These values, along with our core belief that volunteer wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do, will guide our choices. This policy allows us to be consistent and transparent in the ethical choices we make.*

## 1. Scope and responsibility

1.1 Scope: All areas of Volunteer Ireland's work are covered by this policy, including our work with public, private and not-for profit organisations. However, it is most relevant to inform who we will work with, I-VOL, our provision of services to manage volunteers for events and festivals, sponsorship, and our work with corporates on employee volunteering.

1.2 Responsibility: The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that the policy in this document is implemented efficiently and effectively. All staff and volunteers (including voluntary board members) are expected to facilitate this process.

## 2. General principles about who we will work with

- 2.1 Volunteer Ireland has a leading role to play in promoting good practice in volunteering across all sectors in Ireland. Therefore, Volunteer Ireland will work with the non-profit, public and private sectors on topics relating to volunteering.
- 2.2 Volunteer Ireland will work with the public and private sector in a variety of ways to improve quality, access and awareness of volunteering, such as delivering a service of volunteer management for events and festivals, working with companies and public bodies on employee volunteering and delivering training and consultancy.
- 2.3 Volunteer Ireland prides itself on its core values and ethical standards and as such will only work with companies and organisations whose business practices respect human dignity, are not in breach of law and uphold Volunteer Ireland' s values.
- 2.4 Whether or not Volunteer Ireland will work with a particular company will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by senior staff of Volunteer Ireland. If there is uncertainty or disagreement about whether or not to work with a particular company, this will be taken to the Board of Directors whose decision will be final.
- 2.5 If senior management have a material debate about whether or not to work with a particular company and make a decision (without taking it to the Board), the Board will be informed of the debate and decision at the next Board meeting.
- 2.6 If a decision is made not to work with a particular company, the reasoning behind this decision will be laid out clearly.

2.7 Volunteer Ireland is a non-political body, and we are not affiliated with any political party.

### **3. I-VOL**

3.1 Volunteer Ireland reserves the right to choose to advertise volunteer roles with the private sector on I-VOL, in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of I-VOL and adhering to any conditions of funding. The Terms and Conditions for I-VOL state: *“We will not advertise volunteer roles on behalf of for-profit organisations/businesses, unless a direct financial, social, environmental or other benefit towards the community or a non-profit organisation can be identified. The final decision to advertise any role will be at the discretion of the I-VOL team, who review volunteer roles before activating them.”* For example, volunteer roles related to events and festivals that are run by for-profit companies could be advertised on I-VOL if they are deemed to bring a financial, social, environmental or other benefit toward the community. We will also consider whether or not the role is a meaningful volunteering role, and does not replace a paid job. We will evaluate whether or not to advertise volunteer roles with the private sector, on a case-by-case basis.

3.2 Volunteer Ireland may also choose to advertise volunteer roles with the public sector on I-VOL; for example volunteering roles with the Health Service Executive (HSE). We will evaluate whether or not to do so on a case-by-case basis. Key factors we will consider are whether or not the role is a meaningful volunteering role, and does not replace a paid job.

### **4. Event volunteers**

4.1 Volunteer Ireland will evaluate critically each opportunity to provide a service of managing volunteers for events and festivals, with the wellbeing of volunteers at the centre of this evaluation.

4.2 Opportunities to provide a service of managing volunteers for events and festivals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

4.2.1 Volunteer role: is the volunteer role valuable and meaningful? The following positive factors can be considered to help inform whether or not the volunteer role is valuable and meaningful, i.e. the answer to (some, but not necessarily all of) these questions should be “yes” :

- Is there a social element to the role?
- Is there a learning element to the role?
- Does the role allow for an opportunity to contribute to a cause?
- Does the role allow for an opportunity to contribute to the local or national community?
- Does the role involve national recognition?
- Does the role ensure that the volunteer is safe?
- Is the role flexible?
- Does the role allow the volunteer to act as an ambassador?
- Does the role give the volunteer an opportunity to engage with the public?

4.2.2 Replacing paid roles: the volunteer role should not replace a paid position at an event (e.g. provision of security at an event). This can be difficult to determine and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The following criteria can help us determine if the volunteer role replaces a paid role:

- The volunteer role description should not be identical to the role description of a paid role at the event.

- The volunteer role should not fill a statutory or regulatory purpose that is required for the event to go ahead (e.g. junction management for large-scale events).
- In the case of for profit events, the event should be able to go ahead without volunteers; volunteers should only complement and add value (e.g. by bringing local experience)

4.2.3 We will not work with events that place a volunteer in an uncomfortable situation (e.g. being asked to approach the public without having legitimacy or status).

4.2.4 Timing: will we have enough time in the lead-up to the event, to deliver a high quality service and ensure the wellbeing of volunteers?

4.2.5 Profile: the profile of the event may affect expectations such as the numbers of volunteers we can engage, which will be taken into consideration for each project.

4.3 When discussing potential partnerships or contracts to deliver management of volunteers for events and festivals, Volunteer Ireland will be honest and up front about what we can deliver and the wellbeing of volunteers being our primary objective.

4.4 Volunteer Ireland will say “no” to potential contracts to deliver volunteer management for events and festivals, if we are not confident about the timing, profile, avoidance of job replacement, and most importantly the wellbeing of volunteers.

## **5. Sponsorship**

- 5.1 Volunteer Ireland will actively seek and accept sponsorship from corporates, for example for major events such as National Volunteering Week, the annual volunteer managers' conference and the Volunteer Ireland Awards.
- 5.2 Volunteer Ireland will carefully evaluate a potential sponsor before accepting the sponsorship. This will include considerations such as potential reputational damage to VI of being associated with the company.
- 5.3 In delivering a partnership with a sponsor, Volunteer Ireland will carefully consider what rights to hand over to the sponsor, and protect the integrity of Volunteer Ireland and the wellbeing of volunteers at all times.
- 5.4 Volunteer Ireland will consider giving title sponsorship to a sponsor, in exceptional circumstances and where the risks and benefits have been carefully considered. Full consideration of all terms of the sponsorship will be considered as part of the decision-making process.

## **6. Corporate employee volunteering**

- 6.1 Volunteer Ireland will work with corporates on employee volunteering, for example through provision of one-off "inspiration days" , workshops and consulting.
- 6.2 Volunteer Ireland recognises that corporates may be at different stages of development in terms of employee volunteering. We will work with companies that are very progressive and advanced in terms of employee volunteering, but also with those that are just starting to think about it and need a lot of support.

- 6.3 In all our engagement with corporates, Volunteer Ireland will aim to make a sustainable change, build capacity and empower companies and organisations to engage directly with one another rather than relying on Volunteer Ireland indefinitely.
- 6.4 In our engagement with corporates on employee volunteering, we will put the wellbeing of the volunteer first (rather than, e.g. corporate priorities).

## **7. Miscellaneous**

- 7.1 Volunteer Ireland will consider the ethical implications of any investment of funds.
- 7.2 When fundraising and applying for grants, Volunteer Ireland will not “chase the money” but will only fundraise for projects that are in line with our strategic plan.
- 7.3 Volunteer Ireland will choose to accept a contract based mainly on income generation, only if the following conditions are met: it does not affect our charitable status; it is in line with our charitable objects; it is not contradictory to our core principles; and it does not bring serious negative consequences such as significant reputational damage to the organisation.

## **8. Monitoring and evaluation of this policy**

### **8.1 Success of policy**

Volunteer Ireland monitors, reviews and evaluates the success of its Ethical Policy on a regular basis and seeks to make on-going improvements. It also studies its

other policies and procedures to ensure that they are not in contradiction to this policy.

## **8.2 Feedback**

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It must be given to the Chief Executive Officer who will ensure that it is considered by the board.

## **8.3 Review**

The Board will review this document every three years.

*September 2018*