



volunteer ireland

obair dheonach éireann

Ethical Policy and Procedures

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1. Policy

Policy Statement

Volunteer Ireland (VI) is committed to making 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.

Purpose

To provide a framework of acceptable practice to ensure that the values, principles, and standards of the organisation are being met

Scope

All areas of VI's work is 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.

Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) 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 Information

2.1 Who We Work With

- VI has a leading role to play in promoting good practice in volunteering across all sectors in Ireland. Therefore, VI will work with the non-profit, public, and private sectors on topics relating to volunteering.
- VI 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.
- VI prides itself on its core values and ethical standards and will only work with organisations whose business practices respect human dignity, are not in breach of law and uphold VI's values.
- Whether or not VI will work with a particular company will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by senior staff of VI. If there is uncertainty or disagreement about whether to work with a particular company, this will be taken to the Board of Directors whose decision will be final.
- If senior management have a material debate about whether 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.
- If a decision is made not to work with a particular company, the reasoning behind this decision will be laid out clearly.

2.2 Affiliation

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

2.3 Investing of Funds

- VI will consider the ethical implications of any investment of funds.

2.4 Fundraising & Applying for Grants

- When fundraising and applying for grants, VI will not “chase the money” but will only fundraise for projects that are in line with our strategic plan.

2.5 Accepting a Contract

- VI 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.

2.6 Advertising Roles on I-VOL

- VI 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 (<https://www.i-vol.ie/terms-and-conditions-for-organisations/>) and adhering to any conditions of funding.
- 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 the role is a meaningful volunteering role and does not replace a paid job.
- We will evaluate whether to advertise volunteer roles with the private sector, on a case-by-case basis.
- We 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 to do so on a case-by-case basis
 - We will consider whether the role is a meaningful volunteering role and does not replace a paid job.

2.7 Sponsorship

- VI 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 VI Awards.
- We 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.
- In delivering a partnership with a sponsor, VI will:
 - Carefully consider what rights to hand over to the sponsor
 - Protect the integrity of VI and the wellbeing of volunteers
- VI 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.

2.8 Corporate Employee Volunteering

- We will work with corporates on employee volunteering, for example through the provision of one-off projects, workshops and consulting.
- We recognise 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.
- In all our engagement with corporates, we will aim to make a sustainable change, build capacity, and empower companies and organisations to engage directly with one another rather than relying on VI indefinitely.
- In our engagement with corporates on employee volunteering, we will put the wellbeing of the volunteer first (e.g., rather than corporate priorities).

3. Procedures

3.1 Event Volunteers

Purpose

To ensure that event volunteer roles are valuable and meaningful

Responsibility

Training & Programmes Manager (TPM)

Procedure

1. Critically evaluate each opportunity to provide a service of managing volunteers for events and festivals, with the wellbeing of volunteers at the centre of this evaluation. The following criteria applies:
 - 1.1 Volunteer Role: Is the volunteer role valuable and meaningful? The following positive factors can be considered to help inform whether 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?
 - 1.2 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 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)
1.3	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).
1.4	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?
1.5	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.
1.6	When discussing potential partnerships or contracts to deliver management of volunteers for events and festivals, we will be honest and up front about what we can deliver and the wellbeing of volunteers being our primary objective.
1.7	We 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.

Records

Record of Meetings, Contract

4. Monitoring and Review

- The policy will be monitored by the CEO and any issues will be raised at regularly scheduled staff meetings and actioned as required.
- The policy will be reviewed by the CEO & Governance Sub-Committee every three years, or sooner if required.
- The policy will be presented to the Board for final review and ratification.

Records

Record of Meetings, Document Control Matrix