



# Learning and capacity building Master class series 2026

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Volunteer  
Ireland  
Obair Dheonach Éireann



INTERNATIONAL  
VOLUNTEER YEAR 2026



In this portfolio, you can find details of our **2026 Volunteer leadership master class series**. This is training that you can access through our scheduled training calendar or that we can deliver in-house for your organisation.

We engage actively with the **International Association for Voluntary Effort (IAVE)**, **Points of Lights** and the **Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)** as well as with our colleagues from national volunteer development agencies to keep you abreast of the best practices in volunteer engagement.



# Tailored bespoke volunteer leadership training

We are specialists in volunteer leadership and engagement. We don't claim to be experts however we are constantly learning, which we feel is important in our field. No other organisation in Ireland has a broader and more extensive experience of volunteer management than Volunteer Ireland.

For further information please visit the training & consultancy pages on [www.volunteer.ie](http://www.volunteer.ie) or contact **Stuart Garland, [stuart@volunteer.ie](mailto:stuart@volunteer.ie)**

If you do not see something that meets your requirements from the list, then please let us know. We are always happy to discuss developing bespoke training to meet your needs.

All training is available as half or full day sessions and can be scaled to fit your needs. This reflects our modular approach to training, enabling us to bring together a combination of sessions along with our considerable experience to deliver training tailored to your specific needs.

# Volunteer leadership master classes series 2026

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## **1. Achieving the best - performance reviewing your volunteers**

Suggesting that an organisation initiates performance reviews of volunteers is often met with resistance. A growing number of Volunteer Managers are countering these perceptions, choosing instead to see performance review as a reflection of the importance of volunteers in an organisation. It is a mutual way to express appreciation, identify problems and needs, and determine the volunteer's future involvement in the organisation.

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## **2. Advancing your volunteer interviewing skills**

Interviewing volunteers is a skill different to that of interviewing staff. You don't want your volunteers to go through a grilling by five interviewers and a polygraph test! However, you do want to find out if they will be a good match for your organisation. In this interactive workshop we will be giving you advanced volunteer interviewing skills.

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## **3. Conducting a health check of your volunteer programme**

The Health Check workshop will help you identify the policies and practices to be put in place to demonstrate good practice within your volunteer programme. Based on Investing in Volunteers (IiV), the national quality standard for volunteer management, the session will introduce you to the IiV standards and accreditation process. It will give you the opportunity to get started on your organisation's IiV self-assessment.

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## **4. Customer service in volunteer programmes, getting it right from the start**

Customer service is probably the last thing you think of when you think of your volunteer programme but you'd be surprised how much an impact good customer service can have on your volunteers. From day one to day-to-day management, there are a lot simple things you can do to make sure the volunteers experience is a good one, never forgetting they are ambassadors for your programme and your organisation.

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## **5. Dealing with difficult behaviour**

In this workshop we look at some of the challenging behaviour that may be present in our volunteer programmes. We will look at why people present difficult behaviour patterns and how we can address them. Through facilitated small group work, scenarios and role-plays we will review ways to address these difficult volunteer behaviours.

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## **6. Demystifying all the policies you need for your volunteer programme**

Sometimes it feels that we surround ourselves with policies and they bear little impact on the day-to-day management of our volunteers. This one-day course will explore exactly what policies you need. You'll be able to explain the rationale for the various policies and explain their function. We'll explore other policies currently in use and review their impact in terms of the quality of their volunteer programmes.

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**7. Developing a positive volunteer culture within your organisation**

We'll define organisational culture and consider how changing your culture impacts upon the volunteering experience. We'll look at real examples of organisations which have developed a volunteer culture and identify practical steps to take to change the culture within your organisation and we'll help you recognise how aspects of culture might impact upon someone's experience of volunteering.

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**8. Developing a volunteer strategy for your organisation**

On this course we will address the purpose and benefits of developing a strategy specifically for volunteering within your organisation. You'll learn what works well and consider the best approach to take. Building on your experience as a leader, we'll talk about how you can influence others and develop a successful volunteering strategy for your organisation. We will give you support and direction to help you develop a volunteering strategy that is relevant to your volunteer involving organisation.

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**9. Do my volunteers need training?**

On this course we will help you to identify training needs and show you how to complete a Training Needs Analysis of your current volunteers. Upon completion of the course, you will be able to decide what training may be required and what courses will best suit the needs of your volunteers. Many volunteer retention problems originate in poor orientation and training of volunteers to perform the tasks assigned. This session will focus on training beyond orientation and induction.

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**10. Encouraging staff to work effectively with volunteers**

The relationship between paid staff and volunteers can sometimes be a difficult one. Are volunteers aware of the true role of staff? Are your staff aware of why the organisation really involves volunteers? In this workshop we look at good practice to ensure we have the buy in of both groups to our volunteer programme and how we can address problems when they arise.

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**11. Engaging young people in your volunteer programme**

This one-day course investigates the main questions that organisations face when involving young volunteers or plan to do so. We will break down the barriers and help you engage and inspire young volunteers to make a difference with your organisation. Are young volunteers any different from adults? In what ways are they different? What are the main concerns about young people getting involved? We will help you to explore the best methods of engaging younger volunteers in your organisation.

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**12. Ensuring diversity in your volunteer programme**

Just how representative is your volunteer programme of today's society and cultures? Volunteer involving organisations are now collecting data and monitoring their volunteer programmes for a variety of reasons including; planning, reporting, income generation, equality and diversity, and meeting quality standards such as Investing in Volunteers. In this workshop we will look at gathering, storing and utilising the data to make your volunteer programme the best it can be.

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**13. Exit Interviews as a tool in a volunteer management**

Exit interviews are an extremely useful tool in volunteer management. In this workshop we'll look at how the correct usage of exit interviews will allow you to fully develop your volunteer programme within the volunteer management cycle to reach its full potential in terms of engaging volunteers.

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**14. Firing a volunteer – can we really talk about it?**

Sometimes a taboo subject, but at some stage in every volunteer manager's life you will have fire or retire a volunteer. In this workshop we look at what we can do when the relationship between Volunteer and volunteer manager reaches a level where this is the only option left. We also look at all the procedures and policies to have in place beforehand.

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**15. Managing volunteers at events and festivals**

Volunteers play a key role in making events a success. They can fulfil a range of roles such as managing your social media, welcoming your guests, finding sponsors or capturing video footage of your event allowing you to promote the work you do. This course has been designed to support you to develop the skills and knowledge to effectively recruit, manage and make the most of event volunteering. We will share our own experience of managing event volunteers – from small events to national festivals.

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**16. Managing difficult situations**

Although never a favourite responsibility of volunteer managers, occasionally difficult situations arise that need to be addressed rapidly and effectively. Often the cause of performance disappointments can be directly linked to poor communication, insufficient recognition and other management issues. Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to appreciate why it is critical to deal with performance gaps in a timely and effective manner and be able to confront and explore appropriate solutions for volunteer performance problems.

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**17. Managing risk in your volunteer programme**

Risk management should be integrated into every aspect of a volunteer programme. Although much of the analysis and policy development takes place at the board level of the organisation, the overall effectiveness is only as good as the staff and volunteers who carry it out.

Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to: explain risk management and appreciate its importance regarding volunteers, discuss policies and procedures related to risk management, identify and evaluate potential risks in volunteer involvement, address and diminish risk with preventive strategies and techniques such as volunteer role design, screening and training.

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**18. Managing volunteers with additional support needs**

Not only does everyone have the right to volunteer, everyone has something valuable to contribute. This course explores the benefits and risks of involving volunteers with additional support needs and how best to manage their integration with current volunteers and staff. At the end of the course, you will be able identify those with additional support needs; determine what additional supports may be required for their inclusion and decide as an organisation whether you will involve volunteers with additional support needs and what policies should be put in place.

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**19. Measuring & evaluating the impact of your volunteer programme**

Measuring the impact of volunteering activities is increasingly important as the demand for organisations to evidence impact and outcomes becomes greater.

The Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (VIAT) provides information and customisable tools which organisations of all sizes can use to measure the impact of volunteering and therefore evidence what is being achieved. This course will guide people through the toolkit handbook. Exercises and group discussion will be used to guide participants through the different stages of conducting an impact assessment and to start planning their own assessment.

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**20. Motivating volunteers - Matching organisational needs with volunteers' ability and motivation**

Much research has been done on what motivates volunteers to volunteer, and guess what, there isn't one answer. Volunteers have very different motivations and over time these motivations can change. In this workshop we'll look at the methods we can use to motivate volunteers during their time with our organisations.

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**21. New trends in volunteering – how can you adapt your programme?**

Episodic volunteering, mobile volunteers, virtual volunteers, cyber volunteers, are these all just buzzwords or are they new ways in which we engage volunteers? 55% of people surveyed recently wish to engage in episodic based volunteering so what can we as organisations do to engage with these volunteers? We'll discuss the trends around the world in volunteering and see how they apply to volunteering in Ireland.

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**22. Orientating and training your volunteers**

One of the key aspects of orientating and training your volunteers is knowing the key messages you want to tell them. In this course we will look at planning and developing for training to ensure that your volunteers are getting all the messaging they need with over burdening them with excess information. We will look at what make a successful training plan and how you can implement one in your organisation.

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**23. Recruiting volunteers – Getting it right from day one**

Sometimes we rush headfirst into recruiting new volunteers. This can be a major pitfall if we take in the wrong volunteer. Sometimes it might be months or years before we realise that our volunteer is not a good fit or that they are constantly challenging the volunteer programme in its objectives. In this workshop we look at getting our marketing and recruitment strategy right from day one.

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**24. Recognition Ideas to create a volunteer family – from short term to long term volunteer**

Recognising your volunteers' contribution is an essential part of the volunteer management cycle and it doesn't just take place on one day of the year. It's an ongoing exercise. In this workshop we'll look at 101 (and more!) ways you can recognise the contribution of volunteers to your organisation. We'll be sharing concrete examples of what works in other volunteer involving organisations just like yours.

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**25. Running a volunteer-led event–the basics of event management**

It can be a challenge to manage volunteers but when it comes to event management, it's a whole new ball game. On this course we'll introduce you to the basics of event management planning to help you get the best from your volunteers to ensure that you have a successful and safe event.

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**26. Successfully delegating tasks to your volunteers**

Leaders in volunteer involving organisations are faced with a dilemma: they need and want to produce results that are often well beyond their individual capacities and time availability. They need to share work through delegating to volunteers. Delegation is basically the accomplishment of the organisation's mission and goals through the efforts of others. It is the volunteer manager's most important and basic tool. Delegation is a complicated process that requires hard work and involves unavoidable risks. In this course we will explore the value of delegation.

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**28. Ten steps to effectively screen your volunteers**

Screening doesn't begin and end with Garda Vetting. Screening continues through your engagement of the volunteer. This session will explore the various methods of screening volunteers. You will gain an understanding of what screening is and identify which screening tools best suit specific volunteer roles in your organisation.

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**29. Volunteers and the law**

Do employment law and HR principles apply to volunteers? Should you be concerned about Equality Legislation? What are the potential legal pitfalls you should be aware of when involving volunteers? Solicitor Verena Tarpey will help shed some light on these and other legal issues involving volunteers to ensure that your volunteer programme is operating in line with good practice and the relevant legislation.

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**30. Volunteer interviewing skills**

Interviewing candidates for volunteer roles is imperative to ensure you are selecting the most qualified person. A key outcome of conducting an interview is the mutual acquaintance of the volunteer applicant and the prospective volunteer supervisor. Without this significant screening step, many misplaced or inappropriate volunteers begin to volunteer with the organisation. In this session we'll look at how to manage the interview process and give you the skills required for effective interviewing.

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**31. Volunteer performance Issues**

It is important to determine if there are inadequacies in your volunteer programme that are impacting the number of volunteers displaying performance problems. In this workshop we will look at link between common performance problems and the various volunteer programme elements which can have an effect on these performance issues.

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**32. Volunteer support and supervision**

Volunteers who are well supported from the start are happy volunteers and happy volunteers are more likely to make a difference. Support and supervision is a key element of the volunteer management cycle, and when good procedures are in place volunteer retention is higher. This full day workshop is useful for any organisation that is interested in improving methods that help to retain volunteers and encourage good performance.

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