

Job Title	Head of Advocacy and Engagement
Reporting to	CEO
Direct reports	4
Hours	Full time, 35 hours per week
Contract	Permanent
Salary	€60,300
Location	Based remotely with requirement to work from Volunteer Ireland offices in central Dublin at least 1 day per week.

Head of Advocacy and Engagement

About Volunteer Ireland

Volunteer Ireland is the national organisation that promotes, supports and advocates for volunteering in Ireland. Our vision is an Ireland where volunteering thrives. Volunteer Ireland has identified five strategic goals for 2023–2027. These are to:

- Advocate for volunteering
- Support the Volunteer Centres
- Develop meaningful volunteering
- Raise the profile of volunteering
- Grow and sustain an excellent organisation, consistent with our values

We work with a range of stakeholders to make volunteering accessible, inclusive and of high quality. We build capacity in organisations and companies to create meaningful volunteering experiences. We celebrate volunteering and communicate its impact to Government and the wider public. We advocate for volunteering so that its value is recognised. We support the network of Volunteer Centres and work closely with them to ensure volunteering thrives at local and national level.

For more information about Volunteer Ireland, including staffing and governance, please see www.volunteer.ie.

Purpose of the role

The Head of Advocacy and Engagement works closely with the CEO and is responsible for the strategic leadership of external matters at Volunteer Ireland. The focus of the position is on advocacy, oversight of communications, and engagement with key stakeholders such as the Volunteer Centres and corporate partners. The post-holder has responsibility for managing a team and being part of setting a supportive and inclusive culture in line with Volunteer Ireland's values. As a senior leader in a small organisation, they will be required to delegate and oversee the work of team members, as well as deliver key elements of their areas of responsibility. They will be required to work independently and pro-actively to contribute to strategic and operational matters across the organisation.

Main responsibilities

1. Advocacy

- Lead on VI's public affairs campaigns to engage elected officials, drive changes to policies that affect volunteering, and increase awareness of the value of volunteering and the volunteering infrastructure in Ireland.
- Take a leading role in meeting and building relationships with the Department for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, other Government Departments, key Government stakeholders and decision-makers.
- Take a leading role in the delivery of the Government's National Volunteering Strategy (NVS), overseeing specific projects, submitting funding proposals and reports, and deputising for the CEO.
- Oversee delivery of research projects, ensuring that all research is strategic and includes a plan to implement the findings.

2. Stakeholder engagement

- Act as the primary point of contact for the network of affiliated Volunteer Centres and engage with the Volunteer Centres to ensure we have a positive, open and constructive relationship.
- Represent VI on external stakeholder groups e.g.: We Act, Charity Trustees Week.
- Engage and build relationships with key stakeholders in the sector.

3. Communications

- Oversee the implementation of VI's communications, ensuring that Volunteer Ireland's communications activities are strategic and in line with delivery of the organisation's overall strategic plan.
- Lead and support the communications team in the delivery of VI's day-to-day communications outputs, offering leadership and guidance.

4. Strategic leadership

- Take a leading role in identifying and securing strategic corporate partnerships.
- Lead and support an agile team, ensuring their work is in line with VI's strategic plan.
- Support the team's professional development and wellbeing.
- Attend and take an active role in VI's board meetings.
- Act as a sounding board and advisor to the CEO on strategic matters.
- Drive and implement new ideas to deliver VI's advocacy and communications goals.

5. Contribute to the culture of Volunteer Ireland

- Attend virtual and in-person staff meetings as well as regular meetings of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Participate in periodic staff away-days, events, trainings, and volunteer opportunities.
- Collaborate with VI staff on cross-organisational topics and discussions.
- Engage with and support office-based volunteers, delivering best practice in volunteer management.

Person specification

The ideal candidate will have a background in advocacy or public affairs, together with some experience in communications and stakeholder engagement. The post-holder will be a strategic thinker who is willing and able to deliver on operational matters as part of a small and ambitious team. They will be expected to take a leading role in Volunteer Ireland, work independently and collaboratively, and drive our mission. They will be good at building relationships externally, managing partnerships and bringing internal and external stakeholders on board. They will be skilled at managing a varied and dynamic team and have the ability to influence with empathy and assertiveness.

Essential experience and competencies

- At least 10 years' experience in public affairs and/or advocacy, or a total of 10 years' combined experience across public affairs, advocacy and communications.
- Understanding of the Irish political landscape and ability to identify key levers and actors.
- Excellent written communications skills; with specific expertise in writing for a variety of audiences, in plain English and to a high standard.
- Proven ability to produce high-quality written work to tight deadlines.
- Experience of delivering successful communications across traditional and new media.
- Experience and excellent skills in building relationships and managing partners with competing needs.
- Experience in leading, motivating and supporting a team of staff working in diverse areas.
- Capacity to work independently and on own initiative, while also integrating effectively into a small high-performance staff team.
- Ability and willingness to challenge and think outside the box.
- Strategic thinking, creativity and ability to identify and seize opportunities.

- Flexibility, determination and a positive attitude.
- Excellent organisational and administrative skills, including attention to detail and strong computer literacy.

Desirable experience and competencies

- Commercial acumen, with experience of identifying and securing strategic corporate partnerships.
- Experience in public speaking with the ability to tailor topics to a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Experience in, or knowledge of the community and voluntary sector in Ireland.
- Experience in facilitation or delivering consultations/workshops.

Benefits

- 25 days annual leave (two to be kept for Christmas to New Year when office closes) with an extra day added per year of service up to a max of 28 days annual leave.
- Four days paid leave per annum to volunteer.
- Remote working, with requirement to work from the office 1 day per week.
- Four weeks “work from anywhere” policy, i.e. ability to work from anywhere in the world.
- Access to employee pension scheme on completion of probation, matched by the organisation up to 5%.
- Training and development budget, ring fenced for each employee.
- Cycle to work scheme.
- Employee Assistance Plan.

Our commitment to diversity

We value diversity and aspire to reflect this in our workforce. We welcome applications from people from all sections of the community, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or belief. This role requires applicants to have the right to work in Ireland and requires the post holder to reside in Ireland.