

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER CENTRES NETWORK

Annual Report 2025

A year in the life of our 29
local volunteer centres.



**Volunteer
Centres**

Ionad d'Obairí Dheonacha

volunteer.ie

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339,661

hours of volunteering were recorded across the network in 2025.

A note from the CEO of Volunteer Ireland

Volunteer Ireland is proud to support the network of Volunteer Centres, which continued to deliver impactful work throughout 2025. This year, Volunteer Centres strengthened the foundations of volunteering across the country. They supported organisations, empowered volunteers and championed inclusive, high-quality volunteer experiences.

Through collaboration, innovation and shared purpose, the Volunteer Centres expanded their reach, deepened partnerships and continued to advocate for the vital role volunteering plays in building strong, more vibrant communities. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of staff, volunteers and partners.

Looking ahead, the Volunteer Centres carry forward the momentum of 2025 with confidence and optimism, united by a vision of an Ireland where volunteering thrives. Thank you for being part of this journey.



**“An Ireland where
volunteering thrives”**

Our vision

Nina Arwitz

CEO, Volunteer Ireland

Local centres, one network

Volunteer Centres work in every county in Ireland. We connect people to local volunteering, support volunteer-involving organisations, deliver training and Garda vetting, and champion good practice – coordinated nationally by Volunteer Ireland.

29

Volunteer
Centres

26

Counties
covered

3,012

Affiliates Garda
vetted

6,797

Community
Volunteers on call



Cork Volunteer Centre



Waterford Volunteer Centre



Louth Volunteer Centre

COUNTIES COVERED

Carlow · Cavan · Clare · Cork · Donegal · Dublin · Galway · Kerry · Kildare · Kilkenney · Laois ·
Leitrim · Limerick · Longford · Louth · Mayo · Meath · Monaghan · Offaly · Roscommon · Sligo ·
· Tipperary · Waterford · Westmeath · Wexford · Wicklow

Find your local centre

Every Volunteer Centre is a local, independent organisation with its own team, its own partners and its own front door. Whether you want to give time or find volunteers, start with the centre nearest you.

Carlow

volunteercarlow.ie

Dublin City

volunteerdublincity.ie

Galway

volunteergalway.ie

Laois

volunteerlaois.ie

Longford

volunteerlongford.ie

Meath

volunteermeath.ie

Roscommon

volunteerroscommon.ie

Tipperary

volunteertipperary.ie

Wicklow

volunteerwicklow.ie

Donegal

volunteerdonegal.ie

Clare

volunteerclare.ie

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown

volunteerdlr.ie

Kildare

volunteerkildare.ie

Leitrim

volunteerleitrim.ie

Louth

volunteerlouth.ie

Monaghan

volunteermonaghan.ie

Sligo

volunteersligo.ie

Waterford

volunteerwaterford.ie

Cavan

volunteercavan.ie

Kerry

volunteerkerry.ie

Cork

volunteercork.ie

Fingal

volunteerfingal.ie

Kilkenny

volunteerkilkenny.ie

Limerick

volunteerlimerick.ie

Mayo

volunteermayo.ie

Offaly

volunteeroffaly.ie

South Dublin

volunteersouthdublin.ie

Wexford

volunteerwexford.ie

Waterford

volunteerwaterford.ie

ONE NATIONAL DATABASE

Every role advertised by every centre appears on I-VOL, the national volunteering database managed by Volunteer Ireland. Search by county, cause or availability at volunteer.ie.



A full list of Volunteer Centres is available [here](#).

2025 at a glance

339,661

hours of volunteer recorded in 2025

4,522

active volunteering roles

851

New organisations registered

2,343

Organisations supported

19,733

New volunteers registered in 2025

3,592

New volunteering roles created

164

Nationalities registered to volunteer

6,902

Volunteers began volunteering!

Behind every number is a person who gave their time.

Community Volunteers 2025

Community Volunteers is the network's flexible, event-based volunteering programme. Volunteers sign up for the shifts that suit them – festivals, clean-ups, sporting events, civic occasions. Community volunteers are also available to help and support responses to local and national emergencies as evidenced with the response to COVID, the Ukraine Crisis and recent flooding events

CAMPAIGNS

469

events carried out during 2025

SHIFTS

7,451

Individual shifts volunteers could sign up to

HOURS

29,008

Hours logged by Community Volunteers

VOLUNTEERS

1,579

Different volunteers who took part in events

6,797

Community Volunteers on call

The number of Community Volunteers who can be called upon in the event of a national or local emergency.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



A home built by 1,000 hands

South Dublin Community Volunteers supported the Big Build in Tallaght, joining more than 1,000 volunteers in a major community effort that delivered a new accessible home for a local family.



Supporting Local Festivals

Fingal Community Volunteers supported the Howth Maritime & Seafood Festival, helping to create a welcoming experience for visitors.



Thirty events in one county

Louth Community Volunteers had its most active year to date, delivering 30 events – festivals, sporting occasions, environmental and civic initiatives. Now in its fourth year, the August Walking Trails partnership with Louth County Council sends volunteers along the Cooley walkways to check routes and report damaged signage.



A new model: episodic volunteering

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown piloted a defined episodic approach with the Harbour Playwrights programme – volunteers supporting six sessions over four months for people with memory concerns, delivered by Memory Harbour (HSE) in partnership with the dlr Arts Office.

**Community
Volunteers**

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



Volunteer Connections

As part of National Volunteering Week 2025, Fingal Volunteer Centre hosted the Malahide Volunteer Expo, connecting local organisations with people interested in volunteering.



A world-class welcome

At the Amgen Irish Open at The K Club, Community Volunteers welcomed and supported over 600 volunteers, distributing uniforms and accreditation for a global sporting event.

“We were hugely supported by the volunteers. Everyone was welcomed at the door of dlr Lexicon by volunteers who supported way-finding, social connections, writing and the all-important refreshments.”

CATHERINE, SENIOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST, THE MEMORY HARBOUR

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



Safe volunteering, county by county

Garda vetting is one of the most practical services Volunteer Centres provide. Many community groups are too small to run vetting themselves, so they affiliate with their local Volunteer Centre – and we process vetting on their behalf, quickly, correctly, and at an affordable cost to the VIO.

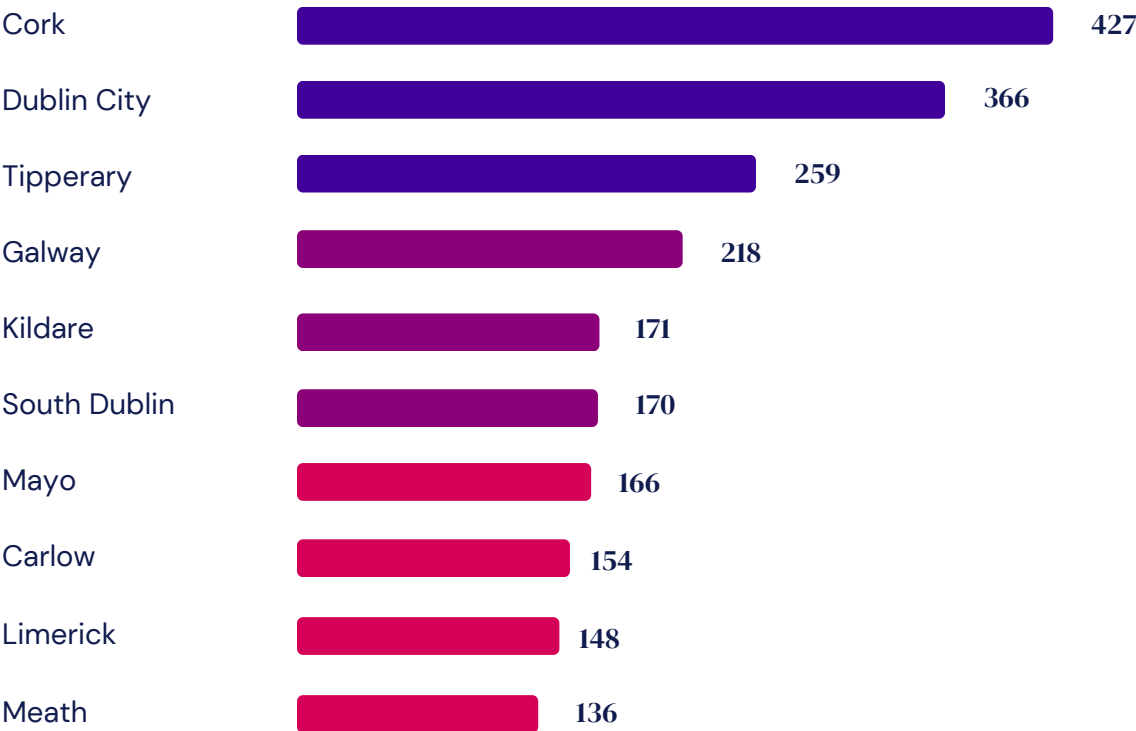
During 2025, the network supported 3,012 affiliated organisations across 25 Volunteer Centres, from national charities to residents' associations, sports clubs, festivals, befriending schemes and youth groups. Behind that number sit thousands of individual applications processed, checked, and returned so that volunteers could start safely and organisations could keep their services running.

AFFILIATES VETTED

3,012

organisations affiliated to a Volunteer Centre for Garda vetting in 2025 – across 25 Volunteer Centres, every centre in the network offering the service.

AFFILIATES BY VOLUNTEER CENTRE – TOP TEN



Vetting that unlocks new services

Leitrim Volunteer Centre carried out Garda vetting for more than 50 volunteer Befrienders, helping Age Friendly Homes establish a befriending scheme for older people in nursing homes.

In Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, 64 volunteers from five different Meals on Wheels groups were vetted, supporting the provision of meals across the county.



The year in moments

Anniversaries, awards, first-ever events, a European title, and a great deal of tea. A snapshot of 2025 across the network.



Carlow · 20 years



Cork · 25 years



Clare · European title



Monaghan · Awards



Offaly · Killeigh



Laois · Ógra Live Well



Sligo · 5 December



Waterford · New premises



Leitrim · Ballinamore Camino

Twenty-nine centres. One shared purpose.

The year in moments

Anniversaries, awards, first-ever events, a European title, and a great deal of tea. A snapshot of 2025 across the network.



Kildare · Volunteer Awards 2025



Kilkenny · One Million Stars in Brussels



Louth · Louth Volunteer Leader Awards 2025



Wexford · Wexford Volunteer Awards



Fingal · Volunteer Appreciation Evening



South Dublin · AMGEN Irish Open



Galway · Galway Streets Ambassador programmes

Twenty-nine centres. One shared purpose.

Saying thanks, out loud

Recognition is central to what Volunteer Centres do. Awards ceremonies, anniversaries and appreciation events ran in centres right across the network in 2025 – the examples on these pages are a few of many.



Twenty years in Carlow

Carlow's Annual Volunteer Recognition Event marked the Centre's 20th anniversary, with over 180 volunteers and organisation representatives at the Seven Oaks Hotel. In two decades, more than 3,000 volunteers have registered with the Centre and taken up nearly 5,000 roles – over 120,000 hours given.

“We connect people across cultures, generations, and backgrounds – creating opportunities to participate, to share, and to belong.”



Monaghan – 18 years of awards

Around 250 nominees and guests filled the Íontas Theatre. Linda Moore went on to be named Ireland's Volunteer of the Year, with Gerry Atkinson winning the national Safety & Emergency Services category.



Cork's unsung heroes

Cork Volunteer Centre marked its 25th anniversary and hosted the Cork Volunteer Awards at The Everyman Theatre, alongside a Volunteer Expo at City Hall that welcomed over 500 prospective volunteers.

“The evening was a powerful tribute to the compassion, commitment and quiet dedication of volunteers who make an extraordinary difference every day.”



Louth – Volunteer Leader Awards

Record nominations at Bellingham Castle, and a new Trustee of the Year category recognising board members for the first time.



Fingal – a first-year first

A new recognition award honoured Brian McWeeney of R.I.F.E. Fingal, alongside four shortlisted volunteers chosen from many nominations.

A small village and a room full of pride

Offaly Volunteer Centre chose Killeigh Community Centre – a facility brought to life by a voluntary committee in a village of under 200 people – as the setting for its second Volunteer Recognition Awards in December.

Volunteers from across the county filled the room. Each group and individual received a memento of the occasion: presentation boxes, badges, and certificates marking hours given and friendships made.

“The story of Killeigh is emblematic of everything volunteering stands for.”



“In a space built by volunteers, filled with volunteers, and buzzing with shared purpose, the very essence of our work was made visible.”

KILDARE · LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



Still knitting at ninety–seven

Valentina left Ukraine in 2022 and joined Kildare's Twiddle Muff Project, handcrafting over 50 muffs for people with dementia. She was celebrated with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Volunteer Awards 2025.

Her story embodies the impact of kindness, resilience and community.

International Volunteer Day

Most Volunteer Centres marked International Volunteer Day in their own way – receptions, awards, open days, street concerts and coffee mornings. Two examples from 2025.



Sligo: a full house

Sligo's celebration at the Sligo Southern Hotel brought together volunteers, community organisations and local businesses, with a keynote from Cathaoirleach and Board Member Donal Gilroy and the debut of "Hands of Sligo", an original song written and produced by volunteer John Kaypeace.



Waterford: a new front door

Waterford opened new premises at 21 O'Connell Street in the city's Cultural Quarter – launched on International Volunteer Day with an Open Doors Gathering and a festive street concert alongside Winterval. The Centre is open, welcoming and fully accessible, and its central location has transformed local visibility.

“The event marked an important moment in the calendar, an opportunity to formally recognise, thank and celebrate the volunteers and organisations whose dedication strengthens communities.”

The next generation

1,500

students at Ógra Live Well, Laois

742

students at the County Louth Volunteering Conference

50

stands from 10 schools at the Laois expo



Volunteering and wellbeing, Laois

Ógra Live Well, a community and voluntary expo for post-primary students, drew close to 1,500 students from 10 schools to 50 stands representing the range of not-for-profit organisations in Co. Laois. Clinical psychologist Dr Eddie Murphy spoke about volunteering and mental health – and about how his own volunteering shaped his life and career.

Civic engagement, Louth

742 Transition Year and LCA students attended the County Louth Schools Volunteering Conference across two mornings at the Fairways Hotel – up from 632 in 2024, and the Centre's most successful conference to date. Plenary sessions and workshops ran alongside a Volunteer Fair, giving organisations with roles for young people a chance to recruit on the day.



Irish volunteering, European partners



Clare: European Volunteering Capital 2027

County Clare was awarded European Volunteering Capital 2027 – the culmination of a collaborative effort by volunteers, community organisations, public bodies and local leaders. The title creates a platform for the years ahead.

“This title will help inspire new volunteering initiatives, encourage greater participation, and strengthen links with European networks that promote active citizenship and community engagement.”



Kilkenny and Waterford in Brussels

Paula from Kilkenny Volunteer Centre and Vicky from Waterford Volunteer Centre flew the flag for the network at the One Million Stars Ireland exhibition in the European Parliament. The project, established by Amber Women's Refuge in Kilkenny, invites people to weave ribbon stars in solidarity with victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.

“To see something that began around kitchen tables in Kilkenny grow all across the country and be represented on a European stage was incredibly special.”

GOOD GOVERNANCE AWARDS

Three Volunteer Centres – Kilkenny, Louth and Wexford – were shortlisted as finalists, with Kilkenny named overall winner. Recognition of the standards of leadership, transparency, and accountability across the network.



Relationships that keep growing

Tipperary Volunteer Centre points to ten years of relationship-building as its proudest achievement – trust that turns into referrals, support and development for the organisations it partners with.

The Community Photos Project is a case in point. Experienced photographers taught photography skills to volunteers drawn from marginalised groups, then used their own contacts to get them access to events. The group photographed cycling legend Sean Kelly, musician Allie Sherlock, Indian singer and actress Rimi Tomy, and Emily Sisson, the fastest female marathoner in North America.

“These connections are paramount when it comes to volunteer referrals and place us in a position of trust regarding support and development of the volunteer-involving organisations we partner with.”



Rimi Tomy, Tipperary Indian Festival



Emily Sisson, Clonmel 4 Miler



Allie Sherlock with Mia McCarthy, Clonmel Busking Festival
All photos Tipperary Volunteer Centre



Leitrim – new alliances

New collaborations with Leitrim County Council, the Sligo/Leitrim Community Policing Unit, the Public Participation Network, the Age Friendly Alliance and the Community Integration Forum.



Louth – 263 media mentions

Up from 83 in 2023 – a 217% increase – including 19 radio interviews and 148 newspaper features, driven by a volunteer Advocacy Administrator role created within existing resources.



Wexford – closer to home

A satellite office in Gorey every Monday brought the same service to a new location, alongside a joint Training Links board-training programme with Waterford.

Volunteering and wellbeing

Giving time is good for the people who receive it – and for the people who give it. Across the network in 2025, volunteering was a route to routine, purpose, company, and confidence.



Laois: Rehab and Recovery

A year of collaboration with the Rehab and Recovery mental health team – a summer barbecue, cultural night, tree planting, Christmas card making, and a Christmas market. Clients took part in every event. For some, it was a first chance to talk with people outside their own community, and they took it.



Leitrim: a nature mural

Childhood Days asked Leitrim Volunteer Centre for help creating a nature mural. Artist Cormac O'Leary led the project with 12 volunteers from several countries. Passers-by stopped to admire the work in progress – and many were invited to pick up a brush.

“Community Clean-Ups are an opportunity for people to come together, make a visible difference in their local area, and feel part of their community.”

CORK VOLUNTEER CENTRE

Everyone gets a warm welcome



Monaghan: flowers, lace and a world choir

Migrant volunteering projects in Carrickmacross delivered 110 placements with Carrickmacross Tidy Towns – weekly flower displays all summer, a new biodiversity meadow, and spring bulbs planted on bitterly cold November days. Volunteers were key to the group's gold medal. A further 32 placements supported Inniskeen Tidy Towns' festivals, and the Carrickmacross World Choir, formed in October, performed at community events including the Chamber of Commerce Christmas Market. Lace-making, sewing, intercultural storytelling, and a community clean-up day followed.



Cork: clean-ups that build connections

Cork focused on connecting volunteers with opportunities in towns across North, West and East Cork, particularly areas with larger refugee and migrant communities. Promoting Clean-Up Days both to residents and to people living in accommodation centres created spaces for communities to meet and collaborate.



Waterford – stars against violence

A group of Ukrainian women joined One Million Stars Ireland, weaving thousands of stars. Their volunteering built bridges and showed how community art can unite people.



Wexford – barriers, named and tackled

An Integration Through Volunteering conference brought speakers, community groups, volunteer managers and volunteers together to identify and resolve barriers faced by migrant and refugee communities.



Sligo – a painting project

What began as a painting project brought Sligo's new communities and local volunteers together to refresh the centre – building connection, inclusion and belonging.

In their own words



“Before volunteering, I sometimes felt like an outsider. Now I feel that I belong and that I am part of Kilkenny, not just living here.”

KEMI · KILKENNY VOLUNTEER CENTRE

Kemi came to Ireland as an asylum seeker. Through Kilkenny Volunteer Centre, she volunteered with the Team Hope Project, One Million Stars, Kilkenny Access Group and Butler Gallery – gaining Irish work experience, confidence and, most of all, routine and purpose.

“Volunteering has given me a space that I didn't have before to meet new people in my new society.”

AHMED · DÚN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN

Ahmed lives in Ballyogan. With transport support from the Centre, he volunteered twice in a single week – impossible on his own. “The other volunteers I've met have always been very kind, welcoming, and lovely to engage with. Volunteering has helped me feel like I belong.”



My first experience was in a small village in County Clare with Tulla TidyTowns. I got to know all the locals and made new friends. It was the best day of my life here in Ireland because I was new and didn't speak English, so communicating with them was easy.

Then I moved to Cork. My first experience was on Christmas, helped them serve coffee and tea and met prominent figures here in Cork. There was a big celebration. Now I am with Toghra community garden.

Ahmed S.

Small acts, meaningful change



Karen · Tipperary

"I'm Karen, a wheelchair user and volunteer at Tipperary Volunteer Centre. The friendly atmosphere has boosted my confidence, helped me communicate better, and made my dream of working in an office come true. I love volunteering."

Shefali · South Dublin

Shefali supports older learners with practical digital skills through Age Action – smartphones, messaging, settings, online safety. "What I appreciate most about this role is the one-to-one human connection. It's fulfilling to see someone become more independent and less anxious about technology."

Adeneye · South Dublin

Every Saturday morning at Corkagh parkrun, Adeneye scanned barcodes at the finish line. "One runner who had just achieved a personal best stopped to say how much the volunteers meant to the event. Moments like that made the experience rewarding – it showed how even small roles contribute to making the whole event run successfully."

Kasia · Leitrim

After GRASP's annual bag pack day in Bundoran, Director of Services Mary Mc Ternan wrote to thank Leitrim Volunteer Centre: "Kasia encouraged many Transition Year students to come and volunteer on the day. We admired her dedication... Because of her efforts, the event was a huge success."

MONAGHAN · VOLUNTEERS OF 2025

Linda Moore

The backbone of Cú Chulainn Blood Bikes – 24/7 hospital calls, fundraising, recruitment, and life-saving deliveries. Named Ireland's Volunteer of the Year 2025.

Aigbe Sandra Liberty

Arrived in Carrickmacross in 2024 and volunteers with Tidy Towns, the Down Syndrome Centre and Fáilte Isteach. She sings with the World Choir and leads a sewing group.

Gerry Atkinson

39 years with Civil Defence and Community First Responders, as a GAA first aider, and visiting nursing homes with his husky Bella.

Amy Hannon

Gives up to three nights a week to Monaghan Special Olympics Sports Club and Monaghan Arch Club – always with kindness and a genuine interest in every individual.



“Volunteering for me means being an important part of a new community, showing who I am, and sharing my best skills.”

A VOLUNTEER WITH LEITRIM'S UKRAINIAN GROUP

Where our support comes from

Thank you to our funders

The work of Volunteer Centres is made possible through funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, together with the valued support of local authorities, partner agencies, and local sponsors.



**An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta**
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht



Value returned

29,008 Community Volunteer hours logged, 3,012 organisations Garda vetted, 851 training and information sessions delivered – support that small community groups could not otherwise access.

Partners on the ground

Local authorities, Local Development Companies, the HSE, Public Participation Networks, Age Friendly Alliances, Education and Training Boards, An Garda Síochána, schools and local businesses.

Working Together for Stronger Communities



Looking ahead to 2026

01 Grow Community Volunteers

Build on 469 campaigns and 29,008 hours by extending the episodic model to more time-bound, specialist projects – and keeping 6,797 volunteers ready to answer a call.

02 Strengthen safe volunteering

Continue Garda vetting for the 3,012 affiliated organisations that rely on it, alongside governance, safeguarding and volunteer-management training.

03 Widen the welcome

Keep making volunteering accessible – to young people, to migrant and refugee communities, to people with disabilities and to anyone who has never volunteered before. And carry Clare's European Volunteering Capital 2027 momentum across the network.

Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Ireland

Volunteer Centres are local, independent organisations working in every county in Ireland. We connect people to volunteering, support volunteer-involving organisations with recruitment, training, governance and Garda vetting, and promote volunteering as something open to everyone.

Volunteer Ireland is the national organisation that promotes, supports, and advocates for volunteering in Ireland. They support the network of Volunteer Centres and work closely with us to ensure volunteering thrives at the local and national levels.

Get involved

Find a volunteer role near you, or ask your local Volunteer Centre about recruiting volunteers, training your team, or affiliating for Garda vetting.

volunteer.ie



Wexford Volunteer Centre team

THANKS TO EVERY VOLUNTEER CENTRE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT

Carlow · Clare · Cork · Dublin City · Dún Laoghaire Rathdown · Fingal · Galway · Kildare · Kilkenny · Laois · Leitrim · Limerick · Longford · Louth · Mayo · Meath · Monaghan · Offaly · Sligo · South Dublin · Tipperary · Waterford · Wexford · Wicklow

A special thanks to Maryna Kolupaieva (South Dublin) for her work on compiling and designing this report and to Cara Marsh from Volunteer Ireland for her support.

Go raibh maith agaibh

– thank you for giving your time.

Volunteer Centres

Ionaid d'Obair Dheonach na hÉireann

Annual Report 2025



**Volunteer
Centres**

Ionad d'Obairí Dheonacha