

National Volunteer Management Conference

Presenters Guide

Tuesday 27 April 2027
Glór, The Causeway Link, Ennis,
County Clare, V95 VHP0

Volunteer Ireland
Obair Dheonach Éireann

County Clare
At the heart of
European Volunteering
2027

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Guidelines for masterclass and plenary presenters

The **National Volunteer Management Conference** takes place on Tuesday 27 April 2027 in Glór, Ennis, County Clare. These our guidelines designed to help you make your session inclusive for attendees with additional support needs.

Creating an inclusive and accessible conference for all



At Volunteer Ireland, we are committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming and safe conference environment where everyone feels respected, supported and able to participate fully. We recognise that people may have hidden disabilities or additional support needs that are not immediately visible, and we encourage all presenters to familiarise themselves with the accessibility supports available at our conference, including the **JAM Card, Hidden Disabilities Sunflower badge, Accessibility Hub** and our designated **Safe Space**.

We ask presenters to be mindful of the different needs of participants and to take an inclusive approach to their sessions. This includes allowing people additional time when needed, using clear and accessible language, being considerate of sensory needs, and respecting anyone who may need to step out of a session or take a break. Our Safe Space provides an opportunity for participants to take time away from the conference environment when needed. Please take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with these initiatives and consider how you can help create a positive, supportive experience for everyone attending.

Useful resources

- JAM Card – Learn how the JAM Card helps people communicate that they may need a little extra time, patience or understanding.
- Hidden Disabilities Sunflower – Find out about the Sunflower symbol, which discreetly indicates that a person may have a non-visible disability and may need additional support or understanding.

Thank you for helping us make our conference as inclusive, accessible and welcoming as possible.

Contact & registration

Stuart Garland will be your main point of contact for the conference. Contact details: Email stuart@volunteer.ie Mobile telephone / Text / WhatsApp (+ 353 87) 696 4020

Timing for masterclasses

Each masterclass is allotted a 1-hour slot, including a brief introduction and a Q&A session. We ask that all masterclasses finish promptly at the allocated time. We will not allow overrun. You can choose between two formats: **45-minute presentation + 15-minute Q&A** (recommended); or **1-hour presentation including questions throughout**.

Regardless of format, please allow time for questions during your session. If you use interactive tools, let us know in advance. If you need guidance on interactive methods or room layout (e.g. for group work), we're happy to advise.

All speakers must check in at the registration desk upon arrival, at least 60 minutes before your session, to collect your conference ID and confirm attendance with the Conference Coordinator.

Support

We will assign a **Support Volunteer** to your masterclass. The volunteer will welcome attendees, track attendance, assist you during the session, and hand out any materials if needed. They will also cue you with timecards when your session has 10, 5, 1, and 0 minutes remaining.

Masterclass Materials

Audience Profile: Representatives from large and small community & voluntary organisations, responsible for managing volunteers and developing programmes (recruitment, training, supervision, retention, recognition, etc.). Some attendees may manage corporate / employee volunteering.

Content: Your masterclass should provide in-depth knowledge on your topic. Use practical examples and case studies to illustrate your points. All content must be original and not previously presented at an Irish conference. Please ensure you own any material you present. Learners should come away with at least three takeaway actionable points that they can implement in their organisations.

Handouts

We aim to reduce paper use. Handouts and other resources will be available for download after the conference to all attendees. These resources must be sent to Volunteer Ireland no later than **Thursday 15 April 2027** so that they can be uploaded to the web site and correctly linked.

Slide presentations

- **Branding:** Use the conference slide provided for your first slide. You can insert the conference logo
- **Submission:** Send your slides by **Thursday 15 April 2027** to stuart@volunteer.ie. If larger than 5MB, use WeTransfer or similar.
- **Back-up:** Bring a copy on USB as a back-up.
- **Using your computer:** With the exception of those presenting in the main plenary room all other presenters are welcome to use their own laptops, the connection in all rooms is HDMI).

Authorisation for publication

All masterclass slides will be published on the Volunteer Ireland website after the conference. If you **do not** want your slides published, notify us before the conference; otherwise, we will assume permission is granted.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Q:** I will use PowerPoint or Cava – do I need to bring a laptop?
  A: Yes, please bring your laptop. A computer will be provided for those speaking in the main auditorium

- **Q:** I sent my presentation in advance – should I bring another copy?
  A: Yes, please bring a copy on USB. We pre-load slides but each presenter needs a backup.

- **Q:** I need to update my slides after sending them – can I re-submit?
  A: Yes. Send your updated slides by 10am the day before the conference, and bring the revised file on-site. Let the Conference Coordinator know you have an updated version to upload.

Presentation guidelines

Use of video / internet / graphs

- **Videos:** If you include video, embed it in your slides and ensure it has **closed captions**. (All videos shown in sessions should be captioned).
- **Internet:** Avoid relying on live internet during your talk; download any web content (videos, websites) in advance.
- **Graphs/Charts:** Simplify detailed graphs for projection. Always explain the key message of each chart or graphic, not just describing its appearance. For example, say *"This chart shows that volunteers with support needs spend 30% more time in training"* rather than *"Chart with blue and red bars."*.

Slide presentation recommendations

Slide layout:

- Use at most one main idea per slide. Break complex information into multiple slides if needed.
- Limit text: keep to 6 to 8 words per line and no more than 6 lines per slide.
- Use bullet points for key components and avoid large blocks of text.
- Use the 'text build' feature (animations that reveal one point at a time) to prevent audience members reading ahead.

Fonts:

- Use **large fonts**: at least 40-pt for titles, 32-pt for subheadings/bullets, and **no smaller than 24-pt** for body text. (Bigger is better for visibility.)
- Use clean, **sans-serif fonts** (e.g. Arial, Calibri) for readability.
- Bold fonts can help readability; avoid thin or decorative fonts.

Color and contrast:

- Use high contrast colors: dark text on a light background (white or off-white) or light text on dark background. This aids visibility for people with visual impairments.
- Avoid low-contrast combos (e.g. red/green, purple/blue, orange/green). Use tools like W3C's Colour Contrast Checker to verify contrast.
- Avoid busy or gradient backgrounds that make text hard to read.

Visuals:

- **Verbal description:** In your talk, briefly describe each image or chart as you display it (e.g. "On the slide is a photo of our volunteer team…", or "This bar chart illustrates…"). This ensures visually impaired attendees or those viewing printed transcripts can follow.
- **Graphs/Charts:** Present each table or graph on its own slide, and narrate the key findings.

General Style:

- Avoid **all-caps** text (hard to read). Use sentence case.
- Use italics sparingly (e.g. for brief quotes); avoid underlining (use colour or bold instead) except for hyperlinks.
- Keep animations minimal. Avoid flashing/flickering elements (can trigger epilepsy and distract some viewers).

Final Slide:

- Include your contact details (email, website, social media) and any resources/links for follow-up.

Try to avoid:

- **Complex, crowded slides:** No more than 6 bullet points or 6–8 words per line.
- **Distracting elements:** Avoid unnecessary animations, sounds (bells, effects), or cutesy clip-art (light bulbs, stick figures). These can distract or confuse.
- **Flashing/Moving content:** Fast transitions or flashing GIFs can disorient people with photosensitive conditions or neurodivergence.
- **Colour-only cues:** Don't rely on colour alone to distinguish items (since colour-blind attendees might miss it).
- **Thin fonts or light-gray text:** Use bold, high-contrast text.
- **Small or remote text:** Text at the bottom of slides can be hard to see from the back (especially if sitting low or far).

Accessibility and inclusive practice

We want all attendees, including those with disabilities, sensory or cognitive differences, and other additional support needs – to fully participate. Here are some inclusive practices to follow:

- **Slide accessibility:** As noted above, use large, high-contrast fonts and simple layouts. Use an accessible colour scheme consistently (e.g. dark text on light background) and check contrast. Avoid colour combinations that are hard to read for colour-blind people. Each slide should have a clear title and concise bullet points.
- **Video captioning:** Ensure all videos have **closed captions or subtitles**. If using your own video, embed captions. If you show an online video, please have it open beforehand and check that captions are turned on. Captions benefit not only deaf participants, but also those with limited language proficiency or learning differences.
- **Verbal explanations:** Don't rely on pointing or saying "as shown here." When you present a slide, clearly describe it verbally. For instance: "On this slide you see…," or "These results indicate…". This helps those who can't see the screen or are listening to a transcript.
- **Use of microphone:** Always use the provided microphone. Speak directly into it (don't cover your mouth) at a moderate pace and volume. Project your voice so that everyone – including those at the back or hard-of-hearing, can hear comfortably. If a sign-language interpreter is present, position yourself and the interpreter where both are visible to attendees. Avoid speaking from a dark or poorly lit area, to help lip-readers.
- **Pace and clarity:** Speak clearly and not too fast. Enunciate keywords. Pause between ideas and allow a few seconds after each point or question. Consider that some audience members may process information more slowly (including those with processing delays or those using real-time captioning). For example, after asking a question, **pause 10 seconds** to let everyone think or respond.
- **Repeat and paraphrase:** Always repeat audience questions or comments before answering. This ensures that people at the back or with hearing impairments hear them. When paraphrasing questions, try to keep the original intent.

- **Q&A inclusivity:** During discussion, invite responses in multiple ways: spoken, written (chat or notes), or from support staff. Encourage one person to speak at a time and to say their name. This is especially helpful for blind/visually-impaired attendees (so they know who is speaking). Also, be patient if someone needs extra time to formulate an answer or question.
- **Language and content:** Use clear, simple language and explain any acronyms or jargon. This helps non-native English speakers and those with learning differences. Avoid idioms or cultural references that might not be universally understood. Ensure all attendees can follow the talk without presuming prior specialist knowledge. If you are referencing volunteering in another country it is always good to have that context in terms of the position in Ireland.
- **Questions and interaction:** When soliciting audience input, consider multiple communication modes. Some participants may be more comfortable writing a question or using hand-raising rather than speaking. Provide prompts or multiple-choice questions on slides if helpful.
- **Seating and physical needs:** If you need particular equipment or setup, let us know in advance. We can accommodate wheelchairs, seating for fatigue, and any audio-visual aids. Our venue is fully wheelchair-accessible and we have quiet spaces for anyone who needs a break from noise. (See the event information email for full accessibility details.)
- **Learning environment:** Keep in mind sensory and cognitive accessibility. For example, avoid flashing slides or distracting animations. Use clean, uncluttered visuals. Speak calmly and at a steady pace. If possible, include short breaks in your session or breathing pauses (we have also built in a lunch break and short networking break) to help attendees who may become overwhelmed.

By following these practices, you help create a welcoming session for everyone – including attendees who are blind or have low vision, deaf or hard of hearing, have mobility limitations, neurodiverse conditions, or other support needs. Remember: many accessible presentation techniques (like captions and clear language) benefit all audience members, not just those with disabilities.

Additional resources

- **Conference-provided template:** Use our slide template and run Microsoft PowerPoint's Accessibility Checker before submitting.

Thank you for helping make the National Volunteer Management Conference more inclusive for all participants. We appreciate your cooperation in creating an accessible and engaging learning environment.

References

AUCD | Presenter Guidelines

https://www.aucd.org/conference-presenter-guidelines

Inclusive Presenter Guidelines - American Association For Applied Linguistics

https://www.aaal.org/inclusive-presenter-guidelines

Creating Accessible and Inclusive Meetings or Events | Office of Disability Services

https://ods.rutgers.edu/resources/creating-accessible-events

oco.ie

https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2024/04/OCO_BeyondLimits_Accessible-event-guide.pdf

idrpp.usu.edu

https://idrpp.usu.edu/projects/ioti/files/creating-culturally-and-liguistically-appropriate-training-content.pdf

Ten simple rules to host an inclusive conference - PMC

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9302732/

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V1 November 2026