



volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Longfort

LONGFORD

## How we work with volunteers

A guide to the supports we provide to volunteers in Longford

### volunteers



Longford Volunteer Centre acts as a broker between individuals who wish to volunteer and those organisations that involve volunteers. We exist to promote positive inclusive well managed volunteering within the county of Longford.

**Longford Volunteer Centre is part of a network of 22 volunteer centres a member of Volunteer Ireland. Further information on the network can be found at [www.volunteer.ie](http://www.volunteer.ie). More information on volunteering and volunteering opportunities can**

**be found on our web site: [www.volunteerlongford.ie](http://www.volunteerlongford.ie).**

### Who Will We Work With?

Longford Volunteer Centre provides a free placement service to anyone resident in County Longford wishing to find out more about the volunteering opportunities available.

Accessing our service puts you under no obligation to choose a volunteering vacancy and your details can be removed whenever you wish.

### What Services Do We Provide?

#### Access to a Database of Volunteering Opportunities

Longford Volunteer Centre has a growing database – I-VOL of over 120 organisations throughout Longford who are seeking volunteers to get involved in their work. Our database provides you with information on the organisation and their opportunities. These opportunities can be ongoing (daily, weekly or monthly) or ‘once-off’ (community events for example). For some of the once-off events, we will send out a text to everyone asking if they can help. We only expect you to contact us if you are interested. If you don’t want to receive these once-off texts please let us know and we can opt you out.

You do not have to register with us to look at the available opportunities but if you wish to register your interest in a vacancy you will need to be registered. You can do this directly via our website [www.volunteerlongford.ie](http://www.volunteerlongford.ie) or fill in a registration form (available from the office).

#### Information & Support on the Vacancies in the Database and on Volunteering in General

Longford Volunteer Centre can provide advice and guidance, or access to information, on a range of issues related to the opportunities on our database and volunteering in general. We can answer questions you might have and we have booklets or other information that might also help you choose a volunteering opportunity. We can also provide you with information on what to do if you are in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Allowance and you wish to volunteer. Resources are also available online, at our website [www.volunteerlongford.ie](http://www.volunteerlongford.ie).

There you will also find links to other web sites that might be useful to you.

### How We Provide Our Service

#### Electronically

Because our database is electronic and held online, we do a lot of our communication via our website and email. We keep our website updated regularly and we circulate other information via email.

We send regular updates of new vacancies to all our active volunteers and we can also answer queries or seek information for you via email. **If at any time you wish to be removed from our mailing list please let us know.**

## Telephone

Longford Volunteer Centre staff will be in touch with you by phone after you register to offer you an appointment to meet with a member of staff. We also use telephone calls to follow-up with volunteers to see how they are getting on in their volunteering role or to see if we can provide any additional supports.

We also encourage volunteers to call us if you have any questions or comments. If we are not available to take your call we will get back to you as quickly as possible.

## Face - to – Face

Longford Volunteer Centre has its main office in 6 Earl Street, Longford. We can also arrange to meet you in a more convenient location if you are unable to come into the office.

A face-to-face meeting will include the following:

- **Registration online**, if applicable. (Remember that you can say “Pass” for any question you do not wish to answer. The details on the form are for our records and to help us get to know you better.
- **Discussion** of your interests, skills, time commitment etc. We may chat about what volunteering you have done before, or what skills you might like to gain from your volunteering.
- **Browsing** the volunteer opportunity folder, discussing different roles, further exploring interests, etc as you know best what you are interested in. If you are not sure what areas you are interested in we can talk through some options with you.
- **Deciding** on one or more opportunities that you are interested in.

## Paper

Some volunteers do not have access to the internet or may not want to use email, so we keep those volunteers up-to-date by using phone and posting out regular updates. Let us know if you would prefer us to use this method.

## The Placement Process

“Placement” is what we call the process whereby you find a volunteering role. It works like this: You, the volunteer registers on our database. You can do this in a number of ways. Most people prefer to complete the form themselves online on our website [www.volunteelongford.ie](http://www.volunteelongford.ie). If you click on the “register to volunteer” button this will

direct you to our registration form. Once you have filled in all the relevant fields click the “register” button and your registration is complete. If you register online you will receive an automatic e-mail informing you that we will be in touch with you.

Others give us a call and we complete the registration over the phone. Some fill in our paper volunteer registration form and post or drop it into us, while others arrange to come in and see us and we do it with them.

Whatever way you choose to register we ask you to try and give us as much information as possible as this will help us help you better.

## Registering Interest in an Opportunity

This is where you see one or more opportunities on the database that you are interested in. It is important that you read through the role description and are sure you want to pursue this.

To let us know that you are interested in a volunteer opportunity, you need to “**Register**” your interest in them. At this stage you are still not committing to a role, you are just showing an interest, but we ask you to **limit this to just three opportunities** at a time. You can go back and look at more if they don’t work out.

## Contacting the Organisation

Once you have applied for a volunteering opportunity staff in the Volunteer Centre will pass on your details to the relevant organisation. You should hear from the organisation in a timely manner. If it is a case that you do not hear from the organisation let us know and we can follow up on your behalf.

Please note that if you choose a volunteering opportunity with an organisation who has published their direct contact details, this means the responsibility is on you as the volunteer to contact the organisation directly.

Each voluntary organisation has its own recruitment process, and you will need to follow that process to apply to be a volunteer with them. Our database should detail what that process is – it may just be an informal chat, you may need to fill in an application form, and for some you will need to undergo Garda Vetting. We can answer any questions you have.

## Follow-Up

We regularly contact volunteers to keep track of your progress and to offer further assistance if this is needed. When we contact you we will be

checking to see if you have started volunteering, or have decided not to do so, or if the organisation(s) have been in touch with you. If they have not and you want, we can follow up with those organisations on your behalf.

### **Regular Updates & Contact**

We regularly send out a list of the new volunteering vacancies that have come in and the 'once off' opportunities that are available. We also post these on our Facebook page and on Twitter.

We also send out a bi-monthly newsletter to our volunteers containing recent volunteering opportunities. From time to time we may contact you in relation to volunteering opportunities that we feel might be of interest to you based on the information you have given us.

### **De-Registering**

If at any stage you wish to be removed from our database please let us know and we can de-activate your file.

## **What Do We Expect From You?**

### **That You Keep Us Updated**

Please let us know how you are getting on, both during and after the placement process. This enables us to help you better, it can help us identify problems and it also lets us know how successful or otherwise the service is.

We will also seek feedback on our service once a year, so please help us out if you have a few minutes to spare and complete the questionnaire we circulate at that time. Your feedback will help us provide you with a better service.

If you have any photos, or feedback on how you're doing we would love to see them. We can add them to our web site and/or Annual Report.

### **That You Keep Your Organisation Updated**

We know how busy our lives can become at times, but it is important that the organisations you have approached are kept up to date. If you are unable to follow up with a role for a few weeks, or decide after speaking to the organisation that you are no longer interested, please let them know, or let us know and we can pass the information on.

### **Recording of Information**

In addition to the information you provide on registration, our database allows us to record notes on the contact we have with you. This will generally include the date of the conversation and any important information discussed. We will also record the opportunities you are interested in, when you have started volunteering and the estimated number of hours you will be volunteering.

You are free to request a copy of any information we hold on you. Please ask us, or request to see our Data Protection policy and procedure for further information.

### **Refusal of Service**

Under certain circumstances Longford Volunteer Centre may refuse to accept a registration, or refuse to place volunteers with an organisation. This may be due to inappropriate or unsafe behaviour, for example. For a full explanation contact the Co-ordinator.

### **Appealing This Decision**

Should you disagree with the Co-ordinator's decision to suspend our service to you, please write to the Chair of Longford Volunteer Centre steering group, at the address below, outlining your reasons. Your appeal will be considered by the steering group.

### **Compliments and Complaints**

Longford Volunteer Centre welcomes all feedback, both positive and negative as it allows us to deliver a better service to the community. Any comments should be addressed to the Co-ordinator at 6 Earl Street, Longford.

### **Opening times**

Longford Volunteer Centre is open daily 9am to 5 pm (lunch 1-2).

Our contact details are as follows:

Longford Volunteer Centre  
6 Earl Street  
Longford  
087-2915367/087-7594770  
e: [info@volunteerlongford.ie](mailto:info@volunteerlongford.ie)  
w: [www.volunteerlongford.ie](http://www.volunteerlongford.ie)