

How we work with Volunteer Involving Organisations: A guide to the supports we provide

Who We Work With?

Meath Volunteer Centre works with not-for-profit organisations such as charities, societies, co-operatives, and statutory organisations across a range of sectors in County Meath. On occasion, we may ask to see your constitution or set of rules to clarify your not-for-profit status. Unfortunately we are not in a position to seek volunteers for individuals, commercial companies and/or for-profit organisations.

Registering with Meath Volunteer Centre

Organisations may register with Meath Volunteer Centre in a number of ways including online, by telephone, in person and/or by post. Upon registration, you will receive an automatic response email informing you of your unique VCI code. This code allows you to register new volunteering opportunities directly onto our database. Once checked by our team, those opportunities will go 'live'. Once registered, you will receive by email or post, a welcome pack comprising:

- A guide to effective volunteer management
- A copy of our guide on how we work with Volunteer Involving Organisations
- An invitation to meet with the placement team to get to know your organisation better
- An invitation to join the Volunteer Managers' Network

What Services Do We Provide?

Meath Volunteer Centre provides local eligible organisations with a full service offering in terms of volunteer management from the beginning in terms of planning to involve volunteers, through to recruitment, selection, induction, training, supervision, management and recognition & appreciation.

Promotion of your Volunteering Opportunities to our community of volunteers

Meath Volunteer Centre has an extensive database of Meath-based volunteers who want to get involved in local volunteering activities. Organisations can register, free of charge, on this database at www.volunteermeth.ie and publish and promote their volunteering opportunities making them visible to these volunteers. This service is actively used by thousands of volunteers interested in finding a volunteering opportunity that best suits their needs. Therefore registering your organisation is a great way to raise awareness of your organisation and its volunteering opportunities and ultimately recruit interested volunteers. Registering your organisation and posting your volunteering opportunities is relatively straight forward; the organisation must first register and provide details such as: contact details, staff and volunteer numbers, existence of

relevant policies, charity or company number (where available) etc. If not provided, staff from MVC will seek it at a later stage. The more information you provide upon registration the better chance there is of getting volunteers interested in your organisation and thus subsequent opportunities. Periodically, we showcase a range of available opportunities on our homepage and social media channels focusing on particular themes, locations or sectors. Finally, we can also share your opportunities with other Volunteer Centres across Ireland.

One to One Meetings with Volunteers

We offer all volunteers the opportunity to meet with a member of our placement team and discuss their volunteering needs. These meetings are an important part of the service we provide to VIO's also as they are yet another way in which we raise awareness of organisations and their volunteering opportunities. With over 200 volunteering opportunities regularly available and with many first time volunteers not sure what type of volunteering they want to commit to, a meeting with our experienced placement team gives volunteers clarity and focus enabling them to choose an opportunity that suits their needs and interests.

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Information & Support on recruiting and managing volunteers

Meath Volunteer Centre can provide advice and guidance or access to information on a range of issues relating to managing volunteers. This may relate to the recruitment of volunteers, motivating volunteers, dealing with difficult situations, etc. We also have a range of promotional material including a best practice guide on effective volunteer management.

Meath Volunteer Centre is available to meet with VIO's to discuss how we can best support you in developing policies and procedures concerning best practice in volunteer management. We are also available to answer any queries by telephone or email. Additionally, resources and information sheets are available online at www.volunteermeath.ie.

Volunteer Management Training

Meath Volunteer Centre delivers a four module Volunteer Management Training Programme, nationally accredited by Volunteer Ireland. Each module takes approximately 4 hours and is generally run over 2 full days.

Please see the training pages on our website for further information on the content of these modules. Notification of each volunteer

management training course is advertised to our extensive list of contacts throughout the community and voluntary sector in Meath.

Volunteer Managers Network

Meath Volunteer Centre has established a Volunteer Managers Network which aims to provide peer support and opportunities for up-skilling to individuals who co-ordinate volunteers within their organisations. Meetings are arranged on a quarterly basis and last for approximately two hours. Meath Volunteer Centre recognises that involving volunteers can be hugely beneficial to an organisation but managing volunteers can sometimes present challenges. This network creates a space in which volunteer co-ordinators can talk openly, discuss emerging issues, receive information on latest development within volunteering and seek advice and support.

Garda Vetting

Meath Volunteer Centre provides a Garda Vetting service to voluntary organisations that do not have access to their own Authorised Signatory. An Authorised Signatory is someone who has been trained by An Garda Síochána in the correct administration of Garda Vetting. As many smaller organisations are not in a position to access this Garda training, we are

in a position to act as an Authorised Signatory. To avail of this service, your organisation, or members of it, must be willing to meet with us to ensure that certain procedures are in place before Garda Vetting can begin. A nominal administration fee per applicant is charged for this service. Please ask us if you would like more information on this.

How We Provide Our Service

Face-to-Face: Meath Volunteer Centre is based in Kells and operates an open-door policy between the hours of 9.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. MVC has access to eight outreach locations across the county and we are available to meet with you at any of these locations by appointment or alternatively we can come to your office/premises. If you wish to talk to us about how we might be able to support your organisation please contact us by telephone or email. From time to time we organise training events, network meetings, open mornings and community meetings that might be of interest to you.

Electronically: As our database is electronic and held online, we also manage our communication via our website, social media and email. We try to keep our website updated with useful information and we circulate other information via email and social media. If you do not wish to receive future communication

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from us via email please let us know. In terms of ensuring the accuracy, relevance and timeliness of information, MVC operates a regular cleansing of its I-VOL database in respect of organisations to ensure that information we have is as accurate as possible; therefore you may be contacted periodically to verify and update your organisations' information.

Telephone: Meath Volunteer Centre placement team are available by telephone to answer questions – please feel free to give us a call. If we cannot help, we will try and find someone who can.

Paper: There are guides, information sheets, good practice templates, etc. available at our office and outreach locations. We can also post you out information is so desired. While most people use email these days, if you wish to be contacted in another way please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you.

What Do We Expect From You?

That You Keep Volunteers Updated:

Many of the people applying to be volunteers may not have done this before and therefore may not know what to expect. They may not realise how long the process is going to take, you might just be extremely busy, they may think you have forgotten about them, and

some may think they were not good enough for the role – which can have repercussions for other choices they make. Therefore it is important that volunteers are kept updated on how their application is proceeding – even if it is just a quick email to say “no change”. Of course, volunteers may not get back to you, or messages might get lost, or sometimes there is confusion about who is to get back to who, in which case please let us know.

That You Keep Us Updated:

If a volunteer has been placed with you, if they were completely inappropriate, or if you never heard from them again, please let us know. This information helps us provide a better service by better understanding your service. We can also follow up with the volunteer to get some feedback, or if you have lost the volunteers contact details, which is very easily done, we can get them for you again! 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.

If you have any photographs or testimonials from volunteers we would love to see them. We can add them to our website and / or Annual Report – these kinds of documents always help generate more interest in your organisation. If there are any changes to

staffing, please let us know so that we can update our contacts database.

That You Abide By Our Equal Opportunities Policy:

We recognise that in our society certain individuals and groups of people are unfairly discriminated against, both directly and indirectly. They are often denied the same treatment or opportunity on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, caring responsibilities, mental or physical health/disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic/national origin (including membership of the travelling community), political or religious beliefs, economic status, criminal record, trade union activity, or a combination of any of these.

We strive to eliminate all such forms of discrimination and to create a climate in which equal opportunities are promoted as a means of developing the full potential of everyone who is involved with our organisation. We do this by fulfilling our legal obligations and by taking positive action, which goes beyond the requirements of the law but by avoiding stereotyping and tokenism. We realise that not every organisation has an equal opportunities policy. However, we do want to make sure that any volunteers that we refer to, or place with organisations do not suffer undue

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discrimination. This does not mean that you must accept anyone who contacts you; there might be very good reasons, for example, why you are looking for someone of a particular sex. It simply means that you do not turn anyone away, only because of the colour of their skin or only because they use a wheelchair, for example.

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, the person it was with, and any important information discussed.

We will also record if you have completed any of our volunteer management training modules, or have requested to attend. You are free to request a copy of any information we hold on you or your organisation. Please ask us or request to see our data protection policy and procedure for further information.

Acceptance of these Conditions

Having sent you this document, we will assume that you agree to abide by its conditions, unless we hear otherwise from you. If you fail to meet the conditions of this document we will explain to you where we feel the conditions are not being met. Support and

training can be made available at this stage to assist the organisation to better meet these requirements. If you continue to fail to meet the conditions Meath Volunteer Centre reserves the right to discontinue our service to you.

Refusal of Service

Under certain circumstances we may refuse to accept an organisation registration, or refuse to place volunteers with the organisation. This may be due to the nature of the organisation (i.e. for-profit), continued breaches of our Equal Opportunities policy, or knowledge that the organisation engages in unlawful behaviour, etc. For a full explanation of why and how this might occur please see our policy 'Criteria for non-Registration or non-placement of volunteers and non-registration of, or non-placement of volunteers with organisations.'

Appealing This Decision

Should you disagree with the Manager's decision to suspend our service to you, please write to the CEO of Meath Partnership, and your appeal will be duly considered by the Board.

Compliments and Complaints

Meath Volunteer Centre welcomes all feedback, both positive and negative as it allows us to deliver a better service to the community.

Please address your comments to:

The Manager
Meath Volunteer Centre
Unit 7 Kells Business Park,
Cavan Road,
Kells,
Co. Meath
or by email to info@volunteermeath.ie

If you wish to see our Complaints Policy, we can post or emailed you a copy. Also a copy can be downloaded from our website www.volunteermeath.ie.

Please note:

Meath Volunteer Centre is managed by Meath Partnership and funded by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. MVC is part of a wider network of volunteer centres and a member of Volunteer Ireland. Further information on the network can be found at www.volunteer.ie.

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