

NYCI Organisational Policy on Volunteering and Volunteerism

Introduction

The NYCI policy on volunteering is the first formal step in the development of a support programme that will assist voluntary youth work organisations in the recruitment and retention of volunteers. The Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work by Indecon found in 2012 that there were 40,145 volunteers engaged in youth work in Ireland. Indecon estimated that these volunteers contributed over 5.5 million hours per year which has an economic value of between €147m (average hourly wage) to €47m (minimum wage rate). It is impossible to estimate the very significant societal value and contribution of this volunteer effort.

NYCI recognises that Youth Work volunteers are among the prime deliverers of services to young people, and therefore seeks to reinforce a commitment to volunteering and volunteerism by the establishment and development of key support resources and structures.

Vision

NYCI is committed to promoting, developing and sustaining volunteering as being fundamental to society, and a worthwhile activity for people to engage in; and aims to support the development of best practice to ensure and support the involvement of volunteers in voluntary youth organisations and the youth work sector in Ireland.

Mission

NYCI will:

- Establish strategic partnerships to develop promote and support volunteering among policy and decision makers, the business community and the education sector.
- Develop, promote, nurture and support volunteering within the youth sector and within NYCI, and develop resource materials and structures to help further the involvement of volunteers in voluntary youth organisations.
- Develop training initiatives, and with relevant agencies, support the development of accreditation systems that recognise volunteers' prior learning and experience.
- Promote the development and delivery of modules in Youth Work training and continuous professional development courses on Volunteer Support and Volunteer Management.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to reaffirm NYCI's commitment to volunteers and to be the first step in providing a series of implementation objectives that will provide for

the development of support structures and resources for use by the member organisations of NYCI and any other voluntary youth organisation that may wish to engage with NYCI.

In developing both this policy and subsequent resources NYCI will always recognise the diversity of opportunities and roles of volunteers within the sector. As such, a common definition is not always possible and therefore NYCI's support resources will acknowledge the diversity and address varying needs and barriers that different roles require and experience. In implementing the policy NYCI will also recognise and value the specific expertise and skills that individual volunteers bring with them and will work with organisations to support the development of volunteering opportunities at all levels within organisations.

NYCI Commitment to Promoting Volunteering

NYCI is committed wholeheartedly to working collaboratively with its member organisations and other institutions and organisations within the sector to promote and develop Volunteering in the Youth Sector, in NYCI itself and within its organisations.

NYCI is committed to developing structures that addresses the needs of those volunteering in the youth sector (adults and young people in youth organisations), while also looking at the promotion of volunteering by young people in society in general.

NYCI is committed to promoting the inclusion of volunteer support and volunteer management in the education and training of those working on a full time basis in the youth work sector.

NYCI will also regularly review the policies, strategic directions and procedures of the Volunteer strategy, ensuring continuous improvement.

Diversity of Volunteers within NYCI

NYCI is committed to promoting diversity in volunteering and the need to be flexible in terms of the varying ways in which people can give their time. There are three main types of volunteer currently engaging in and recognised by NYCI, which are as follows:

Occasional Volunteers - These are people who volunteer at events such as Dail na nÓg or help with projects, for example by helping with various consultations. They volunteer occasionally, perhaps a few times a year.

Regular Volunteers - These are people who take on a particular task, on an ongoing basis. Regular volunteers include those undertaking work in NYCI working groups.

Board members - These people hold positions of responsibility in the Governance of the organisation and have been elected by Assembly on the basis of their skills and experience.

Implementation Recommendations

1 Internal Procedures

NYCI is committed to ensuring that there are specific internal procedures in place in order to ensure adequate recruitment, support and supervision of volunteers.

2 Recruitment & Selection

NYCI is committed to ensuring adequate and equal opportunities for all prospective volunteers. These procedures will reflect the philosophy outlined in the NYCI equality policy. NYCI confirms that volunteers shall be recruited on their ability to perform the task alone, and without discrimination on any ground.

NYCI will ensure that suitable role descriptions and support documentation are provided in all volunteer recruitment processes

3 Protecting and Safeguarding Children

Where a volunteer (or staff person) working on behalf of NYCI has unsupervised access to a child as part of their work on behalf of NYCI the organisation will ensure that the volunteer (or staff person) shall be subject to a child protection proofed recruitment and selection process that will include Garda vetting procedures prior to them taking up this role.

4 Induction

Volunteers will receive an appropriate induction, which will include information on the aims, background and organisational framework of the organisation. Additional information will be provided to help the volunteer in their work. NYCI will strive to make the information sessions accessible and relevant to needs as appropriate. Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills will also be provided as appropriate.

5 Roles & Responsibilities:

NYCI recognise that volunteers require a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position which they are expected to fill. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, NYCI will ensure that a role description will be developed for each volunteer position. Role descriptions will be reviewed and updated regularly, or whenever the work involved in the position changes substantially.

All role descriptions should include a description of the purpose and duties of the position including details of management accountability channels; a timeframe for the performance of the role, qualification criteria, and a description of role benefits.

6 Training

NYCI will ensure that volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment if necessary. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the position and the capabilities of the volunteer.

7 Support & supervision

NYCI acknowledge that volunteers should benefit from appropriate support and supervision processes and will therefore develop specific structures to ensure that this happens. Such structures and support information should be contained in a Volunteer Support Handbook.

NYCI also recognises that some aspects of supervision will require specific emphasis and consideration of the demands on volunteers and be tailored accordingly.

8 Relationships between paid staff & Volunteers:

NYCI will support a culture of productive co-working between staff and volunteers to ensure the most effective delivery of the aims and objectives of the organisation. NYCI will ensure in developing staff and volunteer support structures that both cohorts understand and respect the needs and abilities of the other and the special and specific demands faced by each other. NYCI will seek to create a respectful working environment.

9 Young people volunteering

NYCI recognises the many varied and diverse roles young people (12-25 years) fill in youth organisations today and also in society in general.

NYCI also recognises the special and specific issues that engaging with young people (particularly under 18's) entails and will ensure the implementation of the necessary structures to protect both the young person and the organisation. This will include any necessary documentation including parental consent and the provision of proper adult supervision and support under the relevant Child Protection Guidelines

10 Recognition

NYCI is committed to the recognition of volunteer contributions which should be part of the formal and informal operations of the program.

NYCI will influence the development, in conjunction with other relevant bodies of accreditation systems that recognise volunteer's prior volunteer commitments and experiences.

11 Health and Safety

NYCI will, as far as is practical, care for the health, safety and welfare of its volunteers. Volunteers should be provided with copies of relevant organisational health and safety procedures and receive appropriate support and training.

12 Expenses

Volunteers will be reimbursed travel and other approved expenses where provided for by NYCI's Expenses Reimbursement Schedule, on provision of the appropriate claims and receipts.

13 Participation

Volunteers will be given opportunities at the appropriate forums to participate in discussion and consultation on issues concerning the organisation and its work. They should also be able to feedback through their appointed supervisor or management structure.

14 Personal Insurance Cover

NYCI will ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that volunteers are suitably covered and protected whilst carrying out their duties on behalf of the organisation.

15 Grievance and Dispute

NYCI acknowledges that the relationship between the organisation and its volunteer workers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any formal contract. However, it is important that the organisation is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to those who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service. It is therefore essential that a structured procedure be in place to deal with any behavioural or performance issues. NYCI will put in place appropriate grievance and disputes structures for volunteers, details of which will be included in the Volunteer Support Handbook.

NYCI Charter for Volunteers

NYCI recognises the rights and responsibilities of volunteers as follows: -

Rights of Volunteers:

Volunteers have the right to: -

- Receive adequate information and a clear role description of what is expected of them and to understand why they are doing a task and how it fits into the bigger picture;
- Be assigned suitable jobs and are able to ask for another job if it is not what they signed up to do;
- Have adequate support and supervision from a suitably trained supervisor;
- Be respected by paid staff and acknowledged in terms of recognition and feedback on their work;
- Be reimbursed for the out of pocket and travel expenses within the policy laid out;
- Request a reference when applying for a job;
- Have an awareness of and access to all of the organisations policies and procedures;
- Be able, where possible to attend appropriate forums to contribute to discussions on organisational aims and objectives;
- Be able to develop and enhance their skills and have access to suitable training and development opportunities;
- Have their personal details kept in a confidential manner;
- Work in a safe environment.

Responsibilities of Volunteers:

Volunteers have the responsibility to: -

- Agree to NYCI's policy on volunteering
- Respect confidentiality
- Be reliable, honest and mindful of the NYCI's good name
- Not commit themselves to an unmanageable workload and to only work to a specified role description
- Report back as required and keep in regular contact with designated NYCI staff
- Treat everyone they meet when representing NYCI with courtesy and respect