



Co Wicklow Public Participation Network

Volunteer Policy

1.Responsibility for approval of policy	<i>Secretariat</i>
2.Responsibility for implementation	<i>Resource Worker, Secretariat, Host</i>
3.Responsibility for ensuring review	<i>Secretariat</i>
4. Date of Adoption	<i>6/12/2022</i>
5. Date for Review	

General Principles

Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on volunteering with Co Wicklow PPN. It does not constitute a binding contract. It supplements other Co Wicklow PPN documentation and procedures, as well as clearly outlining our definition of volunteering and our core principles.

Responsibility

The Co Wicklow PPN Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively.

Eligibility

Co Wicklow PPN will consider recruiting volunteers as and when volunteering roles become available. However, individuals must be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation, an understanding of and dedication to the values and ethos of the organisation and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the organisation. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation will be accepted as a volunteer. Persons who present attitudes, opinions or behaviours that are at variance with the values and ethos of the organisation will not be accepted as a volunteer.

Co Wicklow PPN will undertake all reasonable steps to confirm that those people, who seek acceptance as volunteers, are suitable and fit people to undertake the tasks that would be allocated to them by seeking a recommendation/reference from employers or persons of standing within the community.

Working Conditions

Volunteers will be treated equally and fairly and included in the organisation's functions and decision-making processes wherever practical. Volunteering activities can be either in an agreed physical area such as an office or community centre etc., or can be done remotely in the volunteer's home

Where the activity is outside of the volunteer's home, Volunteers are provided with appropriate and safe work sites and have access to the space, equipment, and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably. Where the activity can be completed remotely, volunteers are expected to have their own space and equipment to complete the task.

Co. Wicklow PPN will cover travel costs (as per Financial Policy) and a space/hub to base themselves to do work. Should a volunteer choose to work from home Co. Wicklow PPN cannot cover costs incurred.

Co Wicklow PPN welcomes constructive feedback from volunteers to ensure the volunteer receives a fulfilling and worthwhile experience.

Volunteering times

Volunteering times are negotiated between the activity supervisor and the volunteer and are as flexible as the task(s) allow. When expecting to be absent, volunteers should inform the activity supervisor as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Appropriate behaviour

Volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of Co Wicklow PPN and adhere to its ethos. As a member of the Co Wicklow PPN team, they are responsible for presenting a positive image of Co Wicklow PPN to the outside world.

Representation of Co Wicklow PPN

Volunteers must not undertake anything that might affect Co Wicklow PPN without prior approval from the PPN Secretariat. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, comments on website forums, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations

Confidentiality

Co Wicklow PPN respects the volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information, particularly that of the PPN members and stakeholders to which they are exposed while volunteering with the organisation.

Service at the discretion of Co Wicklow PPN

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of Co Wicklow PPN. Co Wicklow PPN may, at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate a volunteer's relationship with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationship with Co Wicklow PPN. However, notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, preferably in writing.

Recruitment

Role descriptions and person specifications

Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a role description must be made available to each potential volunteer. This must include the title of the volunteering role, starting and finishing dates, hours and place of work the name of the supervisor and tasks to be undertaken. A copy of the final version must be given to the volunteer before commencing voluntary work, as it may be used in supervision and evaluation sessions. Role descriptions will define a time limit (no longer than one year) for voluntary involvement, after which time they are reviewed and updated if appropriate.

Applications

Volunteers are recruited on a pro-active basis by Co Wicklow PPN using publicity avenues that are suitable for the roles that need to be filled. Potential volunteers may also apply speculatively or come via the volunteer placement service provided by County Wicklow Volunteer Centre.

Interviews

If necessary, applications are short listed and suitable candidates are invited to attend an informal chat with the activity supervisor, to ascertain their interest in and suitability for the role, All unsuccessful candidates are thanked for applying and encouraged to reapply for other volunteering opportunities, either current or in the future.

Checks for suitability

A recommendation/reference is taken up by the activity supervisor. The recommendation/references should include the volunteer's most recent employer and/or a suitable person of standing within the community. The recommendation/reference is checked, and volunteers are always warned in advance of the intention to make these checks. If a volunteer refuses permission for the checks and cannot provide an acceptable reason why, he/she will not be placed.

Volunteers are also asked to sign a Volunteer Code of Conduct (see Appendix 1) which includes a declaration that they do not have a criminal record, nor have they engaged in behaviour at variance to the ethos and values of Co Wicklow PPN.

Appointment

Formal appointments are made only after the role description has been agreed and the necessary checks have proved acceptable. No placements are made unless the requirements of the volunteer and the volunteer's supervisor can be met.

Probation

All placements are subject to an initial trial period of three months. During this trial period, the activity supervisor will support the volunteer and attempt to ensure that the volunteer is enjoying working with the company whilst the company is also benefitting from his/her contribution. Relevant training will also be provided to assist the volunteer during their probation period, and all efforts will be made to ensure the volunteer enjoys a fruitful and rewarding experience with the organisation.

At the end of the probationary period, the supervisor meets with the volunteer to discuss the volunteer's suitability for their role. At this point, volunteers may continue in their current role or be asked to leave.

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

Co Wicklow PPN greatly values volunteers and wants them to enjoy their time with the organisation. However, in the interest of fairness and should problems arise, Co Wicklow PPN operates a Complaints procedure. This procedure allows for the fair and speedy resolution of difficulties that may arise during a volunteer's involvement with Co Wicklow PPN.

Training

Induction

All volunteers receive induction training when they begin voluntary work with Co Wicklow PPN. This consists of a general introduction to the organisation, as well as a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of their volunteering role. After the induction session, the volunteer should have a clear understanding of the values and ethos of Co Wicklow PPN, of how they will conduct their work during the course of their involvement with the organisation and should also have a clear understanding of where their contribution fits into the organisation.

3.2. On-the-job training

Training as required will be delivered to support volunteers and to aid their personal development where funds are available to do so.

Supervision

Supervisors

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the day-to-day management of that volunteer

Lines of communication

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials, and meetings relevant to their assignments, Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering conditions.

If a volunteer has any concerns, they should inform their supervisor immediately and with the full assurance that their complaint will be dealt with in confidence. The supervisor will then inform Co Wicklow PPN HR Sub-group and appropriate action will be taken. If a volunteer wishes to by-pass their supervisor, they should contact the PPN HR Sub-group directly.

Evaluation sessions

Volunteers are entitled to receive regular appraisals of their contribution from their supervisor. These review the performance of the volunteers, suggest any changes in work style, seek suggestions from the volunteers on means of enhancing their relationship with Co Wicklow PPN, convey appreciation to the volunteer and ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in his/her role.

Corrective action

If appropriate, corrective action may be taken following evaluation sessions, Examples include the organisation of training for and identified training need, the reassignment of the volunteer, or the dismissal of the volunteer

Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the organisation's rules or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer's involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with their supervisor and/or the HR Sub-group. Grounds for dismissal include but are not limited to the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, misuse of equipment and materials, abuse of co-workers, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide by Co Wicklow PPN policies and procedures and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

Exit Interviews

Where possible, informal exit interviews are held with any volunteers who are leaving the organisation, either because they have reached the end of their project or are leaving for some other reason. Interviews are usually conducted with the volunteer's supervisor and written records are kept. The session should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they offer to improve the way the organisation operates.

Support and Recognition

Support

Co Wicklow PPN endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their

voluntary work. Support forms part of the regular supervision sessions and gives volunteers a safe setting in which to express themselves, and discuss how they feel about their volunteering experience

Recognition

Volunteers provide a unique service to Co Wicklow PPN, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. Co Wicklow PPN Secretariat is responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution they make to the company.

Personal and Vocational Development

Volunteers are encouraged to develop their skills while involved with the organisation and are assisted into assuming additional and greater responsibilities over time, where appropriate and if they desire this

Monitoring and Evaluation

Volunteer involvement

Co Wicklow PPN aims to monitor and evaluate volunteer involvement in the organisation on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements. The organisation values and welcomes the opinions of volunteers and sees it as playing a vital role in improving the work of the organisation in the coming years. To this end, Co Wicklow PPN expects volunteers to be honest, forthcoming and constructive with their feedback and we will strive to address all concerns, where possible

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Appendix 1

Co Wicklow PPN Volunteering Code of Conduct

What volunteers can expect from Co Wicklow PPN:

Volunteers can expect to:

- Be appreciated and have their voluntary contribution recognised
- Be provided with sufficient resources and support in order fulfil their tasks in an efficient and sustainable manner
- Know what is expected of them
- Be offered appropriate training, supervision, and support
- Benefit from their contribution and involvement with Co Wicklow PPN
- Know whom to approach if they have a concern
- Learn from their experience
- Be made aware of policies and procedures relevant to their role
- Be treated fairly and not to experience discrimination
- Have safe working conditions
- Be informed about and be given the opportunity to play an active part in the organisation as a whole
- Be clear about the volunteer recruitment process and how decisions are made
- Be able to say no and to leave their voluntary role without feeling guilty

What Co Wicklow PPN expects from volunteers:

Co Wicklow PPN expects volunteers to:

- Inform themselves about all relevant issues relating to their work for the organisation
- Respect the values and aims of the organisation
- Commit to these values and aims, and to their role in the organisation
- Treat all people they meet during their work with respect and dignity
- Be reliable and give their supervisor sufficient notice if they are unable to attend
- Undertake to work to a high standard
- Be honest if they are experiencing problems, and to inform their supervisor as soon as they arise
- Respect the confidentiality of all PPN stakeholders and the organisation as a whole

I _____ certify that I have read and understand the Co Wicklow PPN Volunteer Code of Conduct and agree to comply with it, as well as applicable policies and procedures that impact the organisation. I have also read Co Wicklow PPN Volunteer Policy, and I agree to abide by the guidelines outlined in the policy.

I also wish to state that I do not have a criminal record and nor have I engaged in behaviour that would be at variance to the values and ethos of Co Wicklow PPN

Printed Name

Signed Name

Date