



## **BROTHERS OF CHARITY SERVICES GALWAY POLICY ON RECRUITING AND SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS**

**'We support people to be valued citizens in their local community, to have ordinary life experiences and to be closely connected to family and friends. We are committed to supporting people to make choices about their lives and to the provision of quality services that meet people's needs.'**

The Brothers of Charity Galway Services Vision Statement

### **The Policy on Volunteers**

The Brothers of Charity Services Galway welcomes applications from individuals who would like to become volunteers in our Services. We value this input and recognise that the cooperation of voluntary work in our Services gives expression to a fundamental trust towards working with the local community, being of service to the local community, and being fully part of the local community.

We welcome the opportunity to develop volunteers' understanding of intellectual disability. We endeavour to provide volunteers with opportunities that will enhance the quality of life of the people who use our Services. We provide relevant training for volunteers on an ongoing basis.

The Brothers of Charity Services Galway have a Volunteer Coordinator who is responsible for providing adequate safeguards for people who use our Services, for volunteers, and for our Services. This Policy will be adhered to in relation to the role of volunteers and recruitment, selection, supervision and training of volunteers.

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Patrick McGinley, Chief Executive

Date: 18 May 2009

Implementation Date: 18 May 2009 (Version 2)  
1 March 2002 (Version 1)

Policy No: 2001/01

## **Role of Volunteers**

The Brothers of Charity Services Galway have on offer a wide range of opportunities for volunteers, given the size and the variety of service areas. The role description specifies what the volunteer will be doing and the context in which the task will be carried out. This will be outlined in the Volunteer Role Description Form [Appendix 9]. The individual needs and requests of the people who use our Services determine the type of skills and qualities sought in a volunteer. In general, volunteers are expected to have the following skills, qualities and attributes.

- They must demonstrate a respectful attitude to the people who use our Services.
- They must be open, positive and encouraging.
- They must show commitment to their role by being punctual and consistent in attendance.
- They must have good communication skills.
- They must be reliable and responsible.
- They must be honest.
- They must respect confidentiality.
- They must work to promote fun and enjoyment.

## **Recruitment**

Recruitment is an essential aspect of any volunteer programme within our Services. Recruitment may take the form of advertising in the media. Care is taken in the drafting of advertisements to ensure that the people who use our Services are not portrayed in a demeaning way or in a way that would attract undesirable applications. In our advertising, we take every precaution to maintain the dignity of the people who use our Services.

Staff may approach prospective volunteers in the community or staff themselves may be approached by prospective volunteers; in this situation, staff should endeavour to maintain the dignity of the people who use our Services.

## **Volunteerism in the Brothers of Charity Galway Services**

“A civilisation flourishes when people plant trees under which they will never sit” (Greek Proverb).

When one considers that most of the agencies involved in the provision of services to persons with learning disability in Ireland were started by pioneering volunteers, there is a proud tradition to be maintained in the involvement of volunteers in our Services. The power of volunteer involvement is proven by the history of those organisations. By involving volunteers, we are able to tap into a diverse population with a wide range of skills and interests to share with the people who use our Services. There is a role, too, for volunteers in choosing positions that strengthen the ethos and mission of the Services.

This input is greatly valued by the Services and it is recognised that voluntary work in our Services gives expression to our strong desire to work with the local community, be of service

to the local community, and be fully part of the local community, and to share this community involvement with people who use our Services.

### **Selecting and Screening Volunteers**

In order to protect the people use our Services and in seeking to maintain their welfare, all who apply to be volunteers, whether they are known to the organisation or not, will be thoroughly screened before being accepted as approved volunteers. The following procedure will, therefore, be used to screen and select volunteers.

- Before being considered for recruitment, potential volunteers will be requested to complete a Volunteer Application Form [Appendix 2], which includes a section for listing referees, and the Garda Clearance Form [Appendix 6]
- The names of persons applying to become volunteers in our services will be submitted to the Human Resources Department by the Volunteer Coordinator.
- After receipt of completed Application Form, the Garda Clearance Form and satisfactory references, the Volunteer Coordinator will arrange an interview with the applicant.

### **References**

All applicants are expected to give the names and addresses of two referees on their Application Form. The referees must not be related to the applicant and they must have known the applicant for at least two years.

Where the applicant is currently employed, one of the referees should be the applicant's current employer. A standard covering letter (Appendix 3), approved by the Brothers of Charity Services Galway, is sent to each referee by the Volunteer Coordinator. This letter stresses the vulnerability of some people with learning disability and the need for volunteers to be honest, reliable and trustworthy. If there is no reply after a reasonable period of time, the referee may be contacted by telephone or, failing this, the applicant is asked to submit the name of another referee. Until both references are received, the application can go no further.

### **Interview**

Once satisfactory references have been received, each applicant is invited for an interview by the Volunteer Coordinator. This will give the opportunity to assess the suitability of each applicant for the particular type of voluntary work involved. It will give an opportunity to the applicant to ask any questions which they might have about volunteering with people with a learning disability.

The Volunteer Coordinator will explain that all volunteers are initially accepted on a six-month probationary period. It will be made clear that the Brothers of Charity Services Galway reserves the right to terminate the work of a volunteer at any time if they prove to be unsuitable. This is made clear on the Agreement Form [Appendix 8] which each volunteer is asked to sign. The applicant will be informed at interview that a central register of volunteers is maintained within the Services and this record may be made available to the Health Service Executive or the Garda if we are requested to provide a list of volunteers who work within our Services.

The Volunteer Coordinator will advise applicants of the possible risks to the people who use our Services or to volunteers themselves in the course of their volunteer work. The Volunteer

Coordinator will be aware of the risks and ways for mitigating such risks in this particular area of service.

When the applicant is accepted as a volunteer, the Volunteer Coordinator agrees the parameters of the voluntary work with the volunteer, and a Role Description Form [Appendix 9] is completed and then retained on file. The parameters of the voluntary task will include details of the degree of supervision which has been agreed.

The Volunteer Coordinator will inform volunteers who are on the Live Register that they should notify the Department of Social Welfare by completing a Form SW1.

### **Insurance**

All volunteers will be properly protected by the insurance cover of the Brothers of Charity Services Galway. As an agency we may be held liable if we fail to take sufficient care in the selection of volunteers or if we fail to provide appropriate training and supervision, or if we fail to meet our obligations as an occupier of a premises. All volunteers are therefore protected by our public liability insurance.

All volunteers who use their cars in a voluntary capacity with the organisation must inform their insurance company of their voluntary work and receive from them a written statement authorising them to do this work under their own insurance cover. A form for this purpose is included in Appendix 6 [Notification from Volunteer to Insurance Company]. A copy of this authorisation is required before a volunteer can take a service user in their own car. A volunteer in this situation should also produce their driving licence to the Volunteer Coordinator who will make a copy for their records.

In relation to the driving by volunteers of minibuses attached to centres or group homes, the guidelines laid down in the Health and Safety Statement in relation to our transport service should be adhered to.

### **Induction and On-going Supervision**

Before commencement, the volunteer will have completed and signed all necessary forms. The Volunteer Role Description Form includes an outline on the tasks to be performed by the volunteer and the parameters associated with the task. The Volunteer Agreement Form includes a confidentiality agreement. The Volunteer Coordinator ensures that the prospective volunteer has read the organisation's policies or guidelines referred to in the agreement form before signing the Volunteer Agreement Form.

On commencement, the volunteer should have the "informal" induction process in the centre or programme that normally takes place for new staff members. The induction manual for the centre or programme should be made available and the volunteer should familiarise themselves with the contents of the manual, doing so with the assistance of the Volunteer Coordinator.

The induction will include the provision of sufficient information on the Health and Safety Policies of the centre or programme where the volunteer will be located. Volunteers who propose to be with the Services on a longer term basis will be offered the Hepatitis B

vaccination programme. The Volunteer Coordinator will send the names of such volunteers to the Occupational Health Department.

The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that the volunteer has all the necessary information in relation to possible risks to themselves. A risk assessment should be carried out in relation to the volunteer working in situations where they are involved in activities, such as in manual handling, swimming, hydrotherapy, horse-riding or risks associated with infection control.

The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that the volunteer understands the Brothers of Charity Services Galway policies, particularly those listed in the Volunteer Agreement Form.

Any work that the volunteer becomes engaged in will be within the framework of the existing ethos and policies of the Brothers of Charity Services Galway. Volunteers will not be brought on visits to the homes of people who use our Services without prior agreement of the family involved.

The Volunteer Coordinator or the support staff will liaise regularly with the volunteer and will monitor the work being done by the volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinator will obtain feedback from the volunteer on their own perceptions of the placement. The volunteer will neither be permitted, nor expected, to undertake work that is outside his or her competence.

Where staff members are assigned to assist and monitor the role of the volunteer, they should be fully aware of the volunteer's role and encourage and facilitate the development of that role. They should also be aware of, and record, arrangements made by the volunteer with service users and keep other members of staff and the manager informed of developments where necessary. The Volunteer Coordinator or support staff should ensure that the volunteer reports any incident which happens whilst with the volunteer. The volunteer will keep a record of journeys made in relation to expense claims and submit these claims, where there has been prior arrangement, on a regular basis to the Volunteer Coordinator.

The Volunteer Coordinator will undertake a review of the volunteer's placement and work no later than six months after the volunteer commences voluntary work with the organisation. This review will involve a discussion with the volunteer on their role as a volunteer to ensure that the volunteer is satisfied with his/her role and to give feedback on the progress of the volunteer during the period involved. The Volunteer Coordinator will liaise with any assigned staff members or service users who have been involved with the volunteer over the period of time to review any difficulties arising or any training needs that may have become apparent.

Where a volunteer's input is proving to be unsatisfactory or not working out, and if it is found necessary that the input of the volunteer should be terminated, then the Grievance Procedure used in relation to staff should be adopted, though not necessarily in such a formal way. The volunteer should be treated with the same system of fairness, justice and consistency that applies in dealing with staff performance.

### **Training**

Training and support is an essential part of any volunteer programme. To prevent volunteers from feeling discouraged and/or isolated, the Volunteer Coordinator will endeavour to support the volunteer, emphasising how the people who use our Service benefit from their

volunteering, that they are making a difference in the quality of life of the people they are working with, and that the Services value their input and contribution. Some volunteers initially will have little or no experience of working with people with learning disability and will need particular training in order to do their work effectively. An initial training day, which is mandatory for all volunteers, consists of Client Protection, Disability Awareness, Communication, Confidentiality, Health & Safety, and the Role of the Volunteer. If deemed necessary, further levels of training are provided. An example of this would be manual handling, infection control, and the Health and Safety Policies of the centre or programme where the volunteer is located.

### **Rewards**

Given that the rewards of volunteering are mainly inherent in the experience itself, every effort should be made to acknowledge and affirm in a practical way the contribution that volunteers make within the Services. Opportunities arise where volunteers can be included in celebrations at Christmas, the end of the school year, at the Annual General Meeting and other such functions that arise within the Services.

In the agreement made with volunteers in relation to their input, on their commencement the situation in relation to out-of-pocket expenses should be clarified as part of the agreement. Financial support is available for volunteers where out-of-pocket expenses are incurred. Volunteers will be reimbursed for such out-of-pocket expenses. Examples include, travel expenses, expenses arising in taking service users to the cinema, a restaurant or bowling. In some instances volunteers may not wish to avail of reimbursement and their wishes in this regard should be respected. For volunteers who claim travel expenses, the rate per mile paid for the use of a car will be that which pertains within the Services for staff when claiming expenses on training courses.

### **Evaluation of the Volunteer Programme**

Evaluation of the volunteer input to the Services is an important aspect of our overall evaluation programme. Through regular evaluation, we can assess the effectiveness of the voluntary input and make changes, over time, which will improve the service being offered both to volunteers and to the people who use our Services.

In centres and programmes where volunteers are located, regular service evaluations should include an evaluation of volunteer input in terms of the following.

- To decide the extent to which we are meeting the objectives of a volunteer programme within the Service,
- To help make choices about the types of work volunteers are doing, the use of resources and future planning,
- To highlight any problems or difficulties being experienced and identify how these might be rectified,
- To provide an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness and value of a voluntary input within the Services,
- To provide evidence to support claims for further support and resources.

**Letter to Applicant**

Dear

Thank you for your interest and for volunteering your services. Please find enclosed an Application Form. It is imperative that you complete the section on References, as it the policy of the Brothers of Charity Services Galway, that references be checked before commencing with the Services.

We also require you to fill out the enclosed Garda Clearance Form.

I would be grateful if you could fill out the forms as soon as possible and return to me, so that we can avoid delay. I apologise in advance for all the paperwork involved in your application, but this is in the interest of the care and safety of those who use our Services.

Yours sincerely

Volunteer Coordinator

**Volunteer Application Form**

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate what qualifications or experience you have that would help in your placement*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*What are your spare- time interests/hobbies?*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Have you any medical history you wish us to be aware of, for example, epilepsy, allergies, diabetes?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Any other additional information you wish us to know*

\_\_\_\_\_

*When are you available?*

	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tues</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
<b>Mornings</b>							
<b>Afternoons</b>							
<b>Evenings</b>							



**Referees**

Please complete the following. One referee should, if possible, be your current or recent employer. We need the names of two people who you have recently, or are at present, working for, or who have known you well for at least two years, and are willing to vouch for your character.

**Referee 1**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Referee 2**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\* I hereby authorise the Brothers of Charity Service to contact the above named with regard to a reference on my character.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Letter to Referees**

Dear

(Volunteer's name and address) has applied to us to become a volunteer with our services and has given your name as a referee. I should be grateful if you would assist us by completing the enclosed Reference Form. Your replies will be treated in strict confidence.

As some people with a learning disability may be described as "vulnerable," I would be grateful for any information you may be able to give us about (volunteer's name) to indicate his or her suitability or unsuitability to act as a volunteer.

I look forward to hearing from you and I enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for your convenience.

I appreciate your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Volunteer Coordinator

**Reference Check Form**

Applicant's Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Confidential Report by Personal Referee**

How long have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship to the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion is the person:

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| a) Honest _____      | b) Responsible _____       |
| c) Diligent _____    | d) Mature _____            |
| e) Trustworthy _____ | f) Of good character _____ |

Are you aware of any circumstances which would make this applicant unsuitable to work with children?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel that the applicant would be able to cope with the demands presented by working with children or adults with learning disability?

\_\_\_\_\_

Any other relevant comments you wish to make? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Letter to Volunteer re use of Own Transport**

Dear

As a volunteer of the Brothers of Charity Services Galway, you may be using your car for voluntary work with some of the people who use our Services. It is our policy that you inform your insurance company of this work. This protects both yourself and the organisation. A change to your car insurance policy for this work should be free. If your insurance company do ask for an extra premium, please inform us.

Enclosed is a sample letter to your Insurance Company which explains to your Insurance Company your position and requests confirmation that it is satisfactory for you to carry out this volunteering under your car insurance policy.

Could you please send a copy of confirmation to us as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Volunteer Co-ordinator

**Notification from Volunteer to Insurance Company**

Policy Number ..... Car Reg. No .....

Re: Brothers of Charity Services, Galway, Woodlands Centre, Renmore, Galway.

The above Voluntary Organisation where I volunteer has asked me to obtain from you confirmation of my insurance cover under the above-mentioned policy whilst using my vehicle during the course of my voluntary work with them.

I wish to inform you that I want to use my motor vehicle in the course of my voluntary work. This would involve service users occasionally being passengers in my vehicle. Will you please confirm to me that my policy covers me for this voluntary activity?

I must report to the Brothers of Charity Services Galway that I have complete cover. Please let me have written confirmation of this as soon as possible. I hope that this may not involve extra premium but, if so, will you let me know the amount involved.

Yours sincerely,

**ENQUIRY FORM**  
**BROTHERS OF CHARITY SERVICES, GALWAY - GALWAY**  
**HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, WOODLANDS CENTRE,**  
**RENMORE, GALWAY**

REFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

<b>SURNAME:</b>		<b>PREVIOUS NAME (if any):</b>	
<b>FORENAME(S):</b>		<b>ALIAS:</b>	<b>PPS NO:</b>
<b>DATE OF BIRTH:</b>		<b>PLACE OF BIRTH:</b>	
<b>HAVE YOU EVER CHANGED YOUR NAME?</b>		YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>IF YES, PLEASE STATE FORMER NAME:</b>			

**PRESENT ADDRESS / ALL PREVIOUS ADDRESSES**

HOUSE NO.	STREET/VILLAGE	TOWN	COUNTY	POST CODE	COUNTRY	YEAR FROM	YEAR TO

Have you ever been convicted of an offence in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere?

No  Yes

Please provide details \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	COURT	OFFENCE	COURT OUTCOME

**DECLARATION:**

To Garda Síochána, Garda Central Vetting Unit, Racecourse Road, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

I, the undersigned, who have applied to work as a \_\_\_\_\_ hereby authorise An Garda Síochána to furnish to the **Brothers of Charity Services, Galway** a statement that there are no convictions recorded against me in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere, or a statement of all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in the State or elsewhere as the case may be.

**Signature of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Authorised Signatory: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Human Resources Department

According to Garda records there are no previous convictions recorded against the above named applicant.

**OR** the following convictions appear on Garda records.

**NOTE:** Checks were carried out by this office based on the information supplied.  
 The convictions supplied may apply to the subject of your enquiry. Please verify before use.  
 Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Member I/C

<b>C.V.U.</b>
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**Volunteer Agreement Form**

I understand the implications of becoming a volunteer of the Brothers of Charity Services Galway and, in particular, I confirm that I understand and accept the following.

I have received and read the policy and guidelines of the Brothers of Charity Services Galway in relation to the Reporting of Abuse, and I will adhere to these guidelines

I will discuss any problematic issues that arise during the course of my voluntary work with the Volunteer Coordinator.

I acknowledge that the Brothers of Charity Services Galway reserve the right, at any time, to terminate the work of a volunteer, if the volunteer proves to be unsuitable.

Where any motor insurance policy is involved, it meets the requirements of the Brothers of Charity Services Galway.

I have received a written Role Description and I am clear about my responsibilities.

I have read and understood the Policy on Confidentiality and agree to observe these practices with regard to the identity of service users and their families.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Coordinator

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Volunteer Role Description

Volunteer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Service User's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Day(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Support Person:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Coordinator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_