



How we work with volunteers

YWCA Ireland is an organisation steeped in the tradition of volunteering. We encourage the involvement of volunteers at all levels of our association and within all appropriate activities. Volunteers serve the needs of our service users in a way that enhances and extends the work of YWCA Ireland.

YWCA Ireland defines volunteering as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.

Volunteer involvement will never be seen as a substitution for paid employment. Volunteers will enhance the work of paid staff, never replace it. Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in implementing YWCA Ireland's mission. It is essential that each partner understands and respects the abilities of the other in working towards the mission.

Confidentiality

Volunteers follow the same procedures as staff in areas of confidentiality. Volunteers are expected to keep information related to the work of YWCA Ireland confidential. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in the termination of the volunteer's relationship with YWCA Ireland.

Volunteers are considered to be authorised representatives of YWCA Ireland and therefore have access to information relevant to, and necessary for, the successful completion of their role.

Equal opportunity

YWCA Ireland is committed to being an equal opportunities organisation. All volunteers should be free from discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, race, sexuality, religion, disability & membership of the Traveller Community.

Speaking on behalf of YWCA Ireland

Volunteers must in all cases seek approval from their supervisor prior to any action or statement that might significantly affect or obligate YWCA Ireland. These actions

include public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organisations or any agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

Alcohol & drugs

Whilst volunteering for YWCA Ireland, volunteers are prohibited from:

- Being under the influence, using, possessing, selling or otherwise being involved with illegal drugs
- Abusing alcohol

Role descriptions

YWCA Ireland will define the roles and functions of volunteers. In every situation where a volunteer is involved they will agree, with the YWCA Ireland staff member who supports them, the tasks they will undertake. Volunteers will be adequately prepared for such tasks prior to commencing the voluntary work. Each volunteer should be familiar with his/her role description and feel comfortable in offering suggestions for change and improvement.

Recruitment

YWCA Ireland recruits volunteers for specific tasks and this is done through formal (radio, newspapers & websites) and informal (notice boards, word of mouth) channels. The following will be sent to those responding to YWCA Ireland recruitment campaigns:

- Role description for the volunteering opportunity
- Information about the organisation & the volunteer activity.
- The YWCA Ireland volunteer policy

All volunteers offering their services to YWCA Ireland will have their offers dealt with promptly and be given a warm welcome.

Interviewing

The interview is an informal chat with the YWCA Ireland staff member who will be supporting the volunteer. This gives the prospective volunteer a chance to learn about YWCA Ireland, its mission & available volunteer roles. It will also help determine the suitability of the individual to perform voluntary work on behalf of YWCA Ireland. If both the volunteer and YWCA Ireland agree to the mutual benefits of a partnership a date for induction training will be set.

Character References

Volunteers involved in direct service activity will be asked to provide two references, neither of which should be from an immediate family member. These could be from an employer, school or college, a community representative etc. YWCA Ireland will contact the referees by telephone to ask a standard set of questions relating to the potential volunteers suitability for the position.

Screening

As an organisation committed to the protection of vulnerable adults and children we must ensure that under no circumstances are our service users placed at risk. We do require that our volunteers are subject to the Garda vetting process. Garda vetting is the process by which the Central Garda Vetting Unit (CGVU) discloses details regarding all prosecutions and/or convictions in respect of an individual. The CGVU is the unit within the Garda Síochána responsible for conducting Garda Vetting. Garda Vetting is not conducted by Gardaí at a local level. Please contact our national office for a copy of our Garda Vetting Policy.

Support

All volunteers will receive regular support from a designated named member of paid staff. The level of support will be commensurate to the complexity of the task being carried out.

Recognition

YWCA Ireland will ensure that all volunteers input is recognised and appreciated.

Expenses

Volunteers will be reimbursed for any mileage and out of pocket expenses. To help us budget for this expense we do ask volunteers to consider ways to keep expenses to a realistic level. All expense claims should be accompanied by receipts.

Insurance

Volunteers themselves are covered by YWCA Ireland insurance when carrying out YWCA Ireland approved activities.