

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Cloney Rural Development Association's (thereafter referred to as 'CRDA') aims and approach to the involvement of volunteers. It also provides guidance and direction to volunteers and to staff involved with volunteers. This is not intended to create a legally binding relationship or contractual agreement. This policy applies to all volunteers including interns and people on work placements within each sub group of CRDA

2.0 Definition

Volunteering is work for a not-for-profit organisation, or work for someone who is not a member of the volunteer's family, where only reasonable expenses are paid.

- 2.1 A volunteer is someone who commits time, energy, expertise and skill for the benefit of others, through personal choice and without expectation of financial gain, except for payment for actual out of pocket expenses.
- 2.2 The CRDA Volunteer is a highly valued member of the Association. This is reflected in CRDA's recruitment and selection process, the training, supervision and on-going support that we provide throughout the time volunteers are with CRDA. Whatever the reason for volunteering, CRDA values the gift of a volunteer's time and commitment.

3.0 Aims

CRDA is committed to maximising the participation of volunteers in its existing work. We are also committed to maximising the creation of opportunities for volunteer involvement.

- 3.1 CRDA will ensure that the appropriate organisational structures and financial arrangements are in place to support the participation of volunteers.

CRDA staff at all levels will encourage volunteer participation as appropriate, and will train and support staff and others who manage and support volunteers.

4.0 Volunteering in CRDA

Volunteers are seen as an essential, unique and valuable part of CRDA complementing the work of employed staff.

- 4.1 Volunteers will whenever possible be included in all areas of work within the organisation and at all levels within CRDA.
- 4.2.1 Volunteers do not have the same rights as employees; however to our clients there will be no discernible distinction between employed staff and volunteers.
- 4.3 CRDA makes its commitment to volunteers through the following: -
- 4.3.1 CRDA volunteers can expect:**
- to be valued as an individual
 - to be respected for their individual knowledge and skills
 - to have support, feedback, appreciation, and encouragement
 - to have opportunities to contribute to developments
 - to have opportunities to discuss concerns or problems relating to their duties
 - not to have their duties changed without prior discussion
 - to be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
 - to be insured
 - that CRDA has an agreed volunteering policy
 - up to date information about the organisation and its development
 - information about philosophy, policies and procedures
 - to have clear guidelines within which to carry out duties
 - to have a clearly defined task description for their role
 - opportunities for training, both general and specialised
 - to have an organised working schedule
 - a safe working environment

4.3.2 CRDA expects its volunteers to:

- show commitment to the organisation
- treat clients, staff and volunteer colleagues with respect
- have a flexible approach to their duties
- be sensitive and tactful in their dealings with clients
- follow procedures and guidelines
- be punctual
- be reliable and regular in their attendance
- inform the organisation in all cases of absence
- report any accidents promptly to staff
- respect confidentiality
- have read and understood volunteer policy and procedures
- be prepared to undertake appropriate training
- carry out their tasks to the best of their ability
- discuss concerns with the appropriate person/manager
- consult the appropriate manager, if in need of help and guidance.
- report sickness to the appropriate person/manager.

5.0 Recruitment and Selection

- 5.1 Volunteers will be recruited from the widest of sources in the community. We demonstrate our commitment by working particularly with people on the Community Service Volunteer programme.
- 5.2 Volunteers who have the appropriate knowledge and skills and are representative of the community in which a particular project is based will be welcomed.
- 5.3 All volunteer applicants will be given clear, complete and current descriptions of the tasks and responsibilities they would be expected to fulfil.
- 5.4 All volunteer applicants are required to complete an CRDA volunteer application form.
- 5.5 CRDA will require potential volunteers to make a declaration and sign a volunteer agreement in regards to:
- any physical or mental health problem, or disabling condition, which may be relevant to the volunteer placement
 - any criminal conviction, caution or bind-over
 - the accuracy of information provided on the application form
 - treating all information obtained during the course of tasks assigned as confidential.

Once accepted to the position of volunteer you will be given a clear, complete and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the tasks you are expected to fulfil.

- 5.6 Prospective volunteers must go through a proper selection process which will include a written application, a selection interview, written references and a written notification of the outcome.
- 5.7 Two references will be obtained; one of which must be from someone who has knowledge of the volunteer in an educational or workplace environment. A letter from the volunteers General Practitioner will be sought confirming fitness for the task.
- 5.8 Each volunteer will be expected to undertake a 6 months probationary period at the end of which each volunteer position will be reviewed. You will then be allowed to apply for vacant positions as an internal candidate within the organisation.
- 5.9 At the end of your voluntary service with CRDA, we will provide you with a reference for any prospective employee.

6.0 Training and Development

6.1 CRDA is committed to offering all volunteers the opportunity to enhance existing skills and to develop new ones.

6.2 All volunteers will receive support and regular supervision in accordance with CRDA's Supervision Policy. The content of the supervision should be educational, supportive and on a task management basis.

7.0 Volunteer Management Procedure

7.1 Volunteer records

Confidential records detailing names, addresses and telephone numbers are maintained on a database. Original copies of the volunteer application form, references, interview notes, and specific checks are also held in CRDA's Human Resources Department. Volunteer records are accorded confidentiality and each volunteer will have access to their own personal record in accordance with data protection.

7.2 Volunteer Code of Conduct

The purpose of this code is to ensure that the relationship between volunteers, staff and clients is as positive and successful as possible and to ensure clarity of role.

7.2.1 Some do have and Don'ts

DO:

- **Do** respect the client's right to a confidential service by not discussing them in any forum or context other than in discussions with your supervisor.

Reason: you are providing a service for someone who will need to feel safe and secure in the knowledge that they can trust you. It is also easy for other people to identify clients from the slightest bit of information.

- **Do** remain within the law when working with clients and encourage them to remain within the law.

Reason: if you break the law or encourage a client in any way to break the law this could put yourself, the client, and CRDA at risk.

DON'T!

- **Don't** buy gifts or give money to clients. Don't borrow from clients.

Reason: you will be giving a gift of time, interest, and consistency during your relationship with the client. You are not expected to spend money and doing so could create an expectation or dependency.

- **Don't** develop a physical relationship with clients. Clear boundaries are essential.

Reason: you are in a more powerful position than the service user and such a relationship would be exploitative.

- **Don't** accept/put up with any form of harassment from clients. If such incidents occur, or you feel they are likely to occur, please contact your supervisor, who will support you in dealing with this.

Reason: any form of harassment, intimidation or abuse is not to be tolerated and you have the right to conduct your voluntary work without fear of it.

- **Don't** give your home address to clients and never invite clients into your home.

Reason: your time away from volunteering is exactly that – time away. You need space and privacy. During your agreed time with clients you are protected by policies and guidelines and in your time you are not.

7.3 Communication

Achieving good communication within the organisation and particular projects/activities is crucial. Everyone must work to achieve this. Volunteers are asked to make every effort to keep up to date with information and to attend relevant meetings. Those with supervisory responsibilities will provide relevant and updated information to Volunteers on a regular basis. In order to meet Health and Safety requirements Volunteers must sign the Attendance Register when either arriving or leaving the project/activity.

7.4 Insurance

All volunteers are covered by CRDA's Employers Insurance Policies whilst they are engaged in activities on CRDA's behalf. Volunteers are also covered by CRDA's Health and Safety policy

7.5 Reimbursement of expenses

All volunteers will have appropriate out of pocket expenses, such as travel costs reimbursed on production of receipts. A maximum of 30p per mile will be paid to cover travel expenses. Volunteers working a minimum of 5 hours

per day will be provided with a lunch allowance to the maximum of £3 per day.

7.6 Absence

Volunteers are asked to inform their supervisors if they will not be available for work due to illness, holidays or for any other reason. It is helpful if volunteers can give CRDA as much notice as possible so that cover may be arranged. There may be occasions when volunteers may wish to take a break from work for a period of time and CRDA respects this.

7.7 Dress Code

As ambassadors of CRDA, volunteers are expected to present a positive image of the organisation.

7.8 Health & Safety

CRDA has a statutory responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, not to harm or damage the health of volunteers through their involvement in the activities of the organisation.

All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe manner and not to act in a way that may cause injury to others.

8.0 Smoking

CRDA operates a non-smoking policy in its offices. Doing so is considered to be a breach of CRDA's policy.

9.0 Drug/Alcohol/Substance Misuse

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, which may inhibit the faculties of an individual, is not permitted in any CRDA property. Any member of staff or volunteer in breach of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with CRDA's Disciplinary Procedures.

10.0 Confidentiality

- Volunteers should regard all information they have access to or are given as a result of their volunteering as being confidential. No information should be released to a third party without first seeking the agreement of your supervisor and/or the individual concerned, as appropriate.
- Volunteers should not disclose personal details (home address, telephone number etc) to clients but should use their business address when an address has to be given.
- CRDA will fulfil its duty to safeguard the information contained within application forms etc.

- Volunteers have the right to access their own records, including personal training records and application forms. Should you wish to see these records this can be arranged by giving the personnel department 24 hours notice.

End