

# **Irish Cancer Society Volunteer Policy**

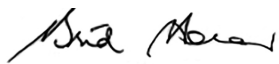
What you need to know about volunteering with us

# Welcome to Volunteering for the Irish Cancer Society

Thank you for volunteering with the Irish Cancer Society. Every hour you give or donation you help to raise brings us a step closer to our vision that, by 2025, three out of every four cancer patients in Ireland will survive their diagnosis and, in future, no one in Ireland will die from the disease.

As a voluntary Chairperson of the Board, I am proud to be part of the Irish Cancer Society's community of patients, survivors, volunteers, supporters, health and social care professionals and researchers. I am so grateful to all those who share their skills, passion and enthusiasm with the Society and help us to deliver, or fund, our vital support services and our lifesaving research. I hope that your volunteering experience with the Society is a fulfilling, uplifting and rewarding one.

Together, we will save lives and significantly improve the lives of people affected by cancer in Ireland.



**Brid Horan**  
Chairperson

## Mission

The Irish Cancer Society is a community of patients, survivors, volunteers, supporters, health and social care professionals and researchers. Together, we are working to save lives and improve the lives of people affected by cancer in Ireland.

## Vision

By 2025, 3 out of 4 Irish cancer patients will survive their diagnosis and everyone affected by the disease will have access to world-class treatment, care and support. In future, no-one in Ireland will die from cancer.



# Values

## **We are compassionate and caring.**

Everyone's cancer journey is individual and we reflect that in everything we do. From the time you are diagnosed, right through treatment and beyond, we provide personal support that is right for you.

## **We are inclusive.**

It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, we are here for you. We are working hard to ensure everyone in Ireland has the same access to care and support during their cancer journey.

## **We demand excellence from ourselves and others.**

We are constantly demanding more of ourselves and others on your behalf. We always believe there is room for improvement and we strive for excellence in all we do. Our services and decisions are informed by best quality knowledge, data and expertise.

## **We value collaboration.**

Collaborating and working in partnership with world-class medical professionals, researchers, organisations and supporters helps us deliver more. We want to be inspired and to improve by challenging ourselves and by benchmarking ourselves against world-class results.

## **We are accountable and transparent.**

We work to the highest standards of governance and financial management. This means we are honest, ethical and efficient in our work. We hold ourselves accountable for the delivery of our goals and objectives.

## **We support sustainability.**

We care about our communities and environment. We strive to be a sustainable organisation and minimise our impact on the world around us.

# Why we Engage Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of the Society. We promote volunteering as a positive way of participating in local communities, raising awareness of cancer related issues, contributing to the provision of vital services and raising funds to support our work towards a future without cancer. Volunteers reflect the interests and needs of those we aim to serve and are our link to communities all over Ireland. Volunteers provide a unique perspective and vital contribution towards the Society's aims and objectives.

## Who is this Policy for?

This policy is intended for Society volunteers who give their commitment, time and effort to carry out roles which have been initiated by, or agreed with, the Society. Volunteers act on behalf of the Society, at our request, in a formal role. We are also fortunate to have the support of many who act in aid of the Society. While support and stewardship is offered, where possible, to these supporters they are not considered volunteers under this policy.

The volunteering relationship is based on trust and does not involve the obligations associated with employment. No payment, other than the reimbursement of agreed expenses (where appropriate) is made to people who give their time to volunteer.

Volunteers are not intended as a substitute for paid employees. Volunteers have a distinctive but complementary role to the work of paid staff. We are strongest in the fight against cancer when working together.



## Ways to get Involved

There are many ways you can help the Society work towards a future without cancer. Your time, experience and enthusiasm can make a difference for people currently experiencing cancer and in helping to ensure fewer people get cancer in the future. Whether your role is in fundraising, service delivery or administrative support, you can make a real difference.

Here are some of the opportunities we can offer:



**Daffodil Day  
Volunteer**



**Event  
Volunteer**



**Daffodil Centre  
Volunteer**



**Shop  
Volunteer**



**Relay For Life  
Committee  
Member**



**Advocacy  
Volunteer**



**Office  
Volunteer**



**Volunteer  
Driver**



**Peer Support  
Volunteer**

This list is not exhaustive. Other roles are available with the Society and we are always interested to hear offers of support from potential volunteers, including from corporate companies.





# Recruitment

The Society welcomes and respects the breadth of experience, skills, dedication and goodwill that you can bring as a volunteer. All volunteers will be recruited through a process that is appropriate to the role offered and we will ensure that all selections are fair.

## DIVERSITY

The Society strives to create a diverse and inclusive organisation. We are committed to ensuring equality of access to volunteering opportunities and equality of treatment of volunteers. We recruit on suitability for the role and welcome applicants from all walks of life.

## AGE

In most cases you will need to be over 16 years of age to volunteer independently and under 18s will be asked for parental consent. Younger people may get involved in some aspects of volunteering with us if they are accompanied by a responsible adult. There is no upper age limit, however we ask the volunteer to be aware of their own capabilities and advise the Society of the same.

## ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

To help you understand the volunteer role you are undertaking, you will be provided with a role description which sets out clearly what you will be doing as well as relevant times, location and benefits.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

We will post available volunteer opportunities on our website [www.cancer.ie](http://www.cancer.ie). Opportunities may also be advertised via social media or external websites such as Volunteer Ireland or The Wheel. Each volunteer advertisement will outline the recruitment process for the role concerned. Some roles may involve interviews over the phone or in person as part of the recruitment process. These processes are in place to ensure that applicants are suitable for the role in question and give potential volunteers an opportunity to learn more about the role and its requirements.



You may be required to undergo Garda Vetting and/or reference checks depending on the role. If such checks are required, you will always be notified of the intention to make these checks and their importance in the screening and selection process.

We will base our selection on the ability of each applicant to fulfil the role concerned, keeping in mind the important role of volunteers as advocates for the Society, in maintaining our reputation and brand, and in supporting the safety and welfare of sometimes vulnerable people.

You are welcome to volunteer in more than one role with the Society. When applying for an additional role, you may be asked to repeat some or all of the application procedure as the criteria and selection process for each role may be slightly different.

## TRIAL PERIOD

If appropriate, you may be asked to complete a trial period. The trial timeframe depends on the length on the role involved. It is an opportunity for both you as the volunteer, and the Society, to try out a role before committing to it fully.

# Responsibilities and Expectations

Regardless of what role you take up with the Society, we want you to enjoy volunteering with us and we take our responsibilities towards you very seriously. We are very proud of the good reputation of the Society and our wonderful volunteers and ask you to maintain this standard.

## The Society's responsibilities include the following:

- Provide you with a written role description, outlining the purpose, tasks and main expectations of your role.
- Match your skills and experiences with the right role for you wherever possible, by listening to your motivations and aspirations.
- Give appropriate training and support for your role.
- Provide appropriate levels of support and supervision to ensure you are able to perform your tasks and enjoy the experience.
- Explain what is required of you and to consult with you on any possible additions or changes to your volunteer role.
- Respect and listen to what you have to say, consistently encouraging two-way communication.
- Apply our complaints procedure if there is any problem.
- Adhere to all data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) effective 25 May 2018.
- Reimbursement of agreed out-of-pocket expenses, where applicable.
- Necessary arrangements to ensure your health, safety and welfare as a volunteer.
- A positive and friendly atmosphere.
- Equal opportunities to everyone who wants to volunteer.

## In turn, we expect you as a volunteer to:

- Fulfil and perform your role to the best of your ability and as outlined in your role description.
- Agree to a trial period as described in your role description, where relevant.
- Treat all those you encounter in your role with respect and dignity. Harassment or discrimination of any kind on the basis of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, family status, civil status, disability, religion, and membership of the Traveller community will not be tolerated and may lead to early termination of the volunteer agreement.
- Respect and adhere to the Volunteer Policy and any data, confidentiality or other agreements you may be asked to sign.
- Always consider and protect the Society's good reputation in your actions and conduct.
- Act responsibly and within the law.
- Let your staff contact know first if you have any problems so that we can find a solution together.
- Inform your staff contact if there are changes in your personal circumstances that may affect your volunteering. Most importantly, inform your staff contact if you will be late or unable to attend your allocated volunteering shift, if relevant.
- Attend and engage in the support and supervision provided to you by your staff contact.
- Have the best possible experience by getting involved and enjoying your volunteering experience!

## Training and Development

You will have access to training or information to help you successfully carry out your volunteering role. You will be offered an appropriate induction including information about the volunteering environment and any equipment you may be using in your role. If you choose to take on an additional or alternative role or activity as a volunteer, your staff contact will be happy to help you widen or develop your skills and knowledge accordingly.



## Support and Supervision

You will receive ongoing support from your staff contact. Depending on the nature of your role and time commitment involved, you may be invited to engage in scheduled support and supervision meetings. These meetings will give you an opportunity to discuss how your role is progressing, what supports you might need and future plans. It is an opportunity for you and your staff contact to work towards making your volunteering experience more fulfilling.

Given the nature of the volunteer roles on offer in the Irish Cancer Society, we recognise the need to provide emotional support to our volunteers. Whether involved in a patient-facing role, or working alongside other volunteers, there is potential for volunteers to experience upset or emotional distress as they engage with others experiencing cancer. We have a range of supports available to volunteers including access to one-to-one counselling for those impacted by cancer as well as a Volunteer Emotional Support Clinic, staffed by specially trained volunteers who will be available to take your call and discuss with you anything you have found tough or triggering in the course of your volunteering.

## Recognition

Volunteers make an invaluable contribution to the work of the Society and all those we aim to serve. It is important to us that your volunteering efforts are recognised and rewarded. Your assigned staff contact is responsible for thanking volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that you make to the organisation. The Volunteer Manager is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times throughout your volunteer involvement.





## Expenses

It is important to the Society that volunteering be inclusive and accessible to all. We believe that the costs of volunteering should never be allowed to discourage those on low incomes. Agreed out-of-pocket expenses are provided for a number of volunteer roles, where appropriate. The expenses policy will be outlined in your volunteer role description. Payment of reasonable expenses must be authorised by your staff contact in advance and receipts will be required. Unclaimed volunteer expenses will be used to continue to fund investment in research and providing services for cancer patients and their families.

## Insurance

The Society has appropriate types of insurance in place to cover its volunteers. However, our insurance does not cover your personal belongings.

## Using Your Own Vehicle

The Society does not provide motor insurance for you as a volunteer. Those volunteering for the Transport Service will be given specific advice related to motor insurance and their volunteering. Where agreed in advance by your staff contact, you may be able to claim towards the cost of travel where appropriate.

## Health and Safety

We are committed to ensuring your well-being and safety whilst you are volunteering and, in turn, we expect our volunteers to contribute to maintaining a safe working environment.

As a volunteer, you are asked to:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and other persons who may be affected by your actions or omissions.
- Co-operate with staff by assisting them to fulfil their statutory duties.
- Follow any health and safety policy and measures as instructed to you as part of your induction or training.
- Report accidents/incidents or dangerous circumstances to a member of staff, whether or not any person has been injured.
- Be aware of actions to take when an emergency situation arises and who, from the Society, to contact for support.

## Smoking and Substance Abuse

Smoking is responsible for one third of all cancers and it is important for the Society to lead the drive towards a smoke-free Ireland. All Society premises and events are smoke free. You are required not to smoke when volunteering with the Society or when wearing a badge, branded clothing or anything that would identify you with the Society.

Volunteering whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be acceptable.





## Media Relations

Stories or comments should not be given directly to the media, unless your volunteer role specifically includes talking to the press or other local media. Generally, our media relations are handled by our Communications Team and our Communications Team and therefore any requests from the press, etc. should be referred to your staff contact who will pass it on to the appropriate team member.

## Data Protection and Confidentiality

The Society is committed to protecting the personal data of its volunteers, staff, suppliers and the recipients of its services. We take great care to protect your information as part of our data protection responsibilities. All volunteers share this obligation of complying with the Irish Data Protection legislation. The Society ensures that all staff and volunteers understand, have access to and can easily interpret the data protection law requirements and its principles and that they have ongoing training if required, support and assessments to ensure and demonstrate their knowledge, competence and adequacy for the role.

Breaches of the Society's Data Protection policies will be taken very seriously, as they risk reputational damage to the organisation, as well as undermining an individual's right to privacy. Such breaches will be investigated and may result in early termination of the volunteer agreement.

The Irish Cancer Society respects the right to privacy of patients, supporters, staff and volunteers. In order to protect the privacy of those you interact with as part of your volunteer role, you may be asked to sign a confidentiality statement.

## Resolving Concerns

### **If you have concerns about your volunteering experience:**

If you have any problems or concerns while volunteering with the Society, you are advised to talk to your staff contact immediately. The Society takes the concerns of its volunteers very seriously and will make every reasonable effort to resolve any difficulties.

It is often preferable for all concerned that any issues raised are dealt with informally. This is likely to produce solutions, which are speedy and effective. However, should the issue remain unresolved, the volunteer may choose to engage in formal proceedings.

There is a written policy and procedure for dealing with volunteer issues and concerns. Your staff contact can provide information on the Resolving Volunteer Concerns Policy. If, for any reason, you would rather not talk to your staff contact, please call the Volunteer Manager on **+353 (0)1 2316 635** or email **volunteer@irishcancer.ie**.

### Where concerns arise about a volunteer:

As a volunteer you are often acting as an ambassador for the Society and therefore it is important that the reputation of the Society is upheld. In addition, the Society must protect other staff and volunteers from any inappropriate behavior. We are required to act if a volunteer's behavior does not meet appropriate standards or is in breach of our values, policies, and/or expectations as set out in this document. We will endeavor to resolve any issues arising but in some instances the Society may decide to end the volunteering arrangement.

If any issues relating to a volunteer's conduct or behaviour arise the staff contact will discuss this informally with the volunteer and will work to provide support, training and assistance as necessary.

If it is necessary to invoke a formal process concerning a volunteer's conduct or behaviour the Society will follow the written Addressing Volunteer Behaviour Policy. Your staff contact can provide information on this policy. If the alleged behaviour is of a very serious nature the Society reserves the right to end the volunteering arrangement with immediate effect.

### Bullying and Harassment

The Irish Cancer Society does not tolerate bullying or harassment towards its staff or volunteers, and takes any allegation of such very seriously. Any volunteer who feels they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour should raise the matter with their staff contact or the Volunteer Manager. All complaints of bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and will be investigated promptly and in an impartial manner in line with the Society's written policies referenced above.

### More Information

For more information on the volunteer opportunities available with the Society, please check our website: [www.cancer.ie/volunteer](http://www.cancer.ie/volunteer)

## Thank You

Thank you for volunteering with the Irish Cancer Society. We are grateful to the thousands of people across Ireland who volunteer for the Irish Cancer Society every year. Whether you volunteer for a couple of days in the year, or every single week; whether you fundraise, or you provide support services – you are making a difference and your efforts are appreciated.

## Contact us

Irish Cancer Society  
43/45 Northumberland Road  
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[volunteer@irishcancer.ie](mailto:volunteer@irishcancer.ie)

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least once a year by the Volunteer Manager.

Version 1 : Published January 2021

Version 2 : Reviewed April 2024



**Irish Cancer  
Society**

## **Contact us**

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