

how we work with volunteers

A guide to the support we provide
volunteers in county Louth



Louth Volunteer Centre is an independent and free matching service to encourage more people to become involved in volunteering across the county. Our role is to provide information and advice to people interested in volunteering and to help organisations looking for volunteers. In doing so we work with Volunteer-Involving Organisations to gather information about their volunteering needs and provide that information to you through our database. Louth Volunteer Centre is a member of Volunteer Centres Ireland, a national network of Volunteer Centres. Further information on the network can be found at our web site www.volunteerlouth.ie

Who Will We Work With?

Louth Volunteer Centre will provide a placement service to anyone resident in Ireland wishing to find out more about the volunteering opportunities available. Accessing our service puts you under no obligation to choose a volunteering vacancy and your details can be removed whenever you wish. If you reside outside of Louth, we will forward your details to your local volunteer centre, unless you specifically wish to apply for a vacancy on our database.

What Services Do We Provide?

Access to a Database of Volunteering Opportunities: Louth Volunteer Centre has a database of organisations throughout Louth who are seeking volunteers to get involved in their work. Our database provides you with information on the organisation and the vacancies. These opportunities can be ongoing (daily, weekly or monthly) or once-off (community events for example). For some of the once-off events, we will send out an email to everyone asking if they can help (if you don't want to receive these once-off emails please let us know).


If you have further questions please feel free to ask us. You do not have to register with us to look at the database, but if you wish to register your interest in a vacancy you will need to be registered.

Information & Support on the Vacancies in the Database and on Volunteering in General: Louth Volunteer Centre can provide advice and guidance, or access to information, on a range of issues related to the opportunities on our database and volunteering in general. We can answer questions you might have and we may have booklets or other information that might also help. This might relate to a particular role, the skills needed, affect on social welfare payments, etc. Resources are also available online, at our website www.volunteerlouth.ie. There you will also find links to other web sites that might be useful to you.

How We Provide Our Service

Electronically

Because our database is electronic and held online, we do a lot of our communication via our website and email. We try to keep our web site updated regularly and we circulate other information via email.



We send regular updates of new vacancies to all our active volunteers and we can also answer queries or seek information for you via email. If you do not wish to receive further emails please let us know.

Telephone

Louth Volunteer Centre staff will be in touch with you by phone after you register and to find out how things are going. We are always available to take your calls too and if we can't help, we will try and find someone who can. So please give us a call if you have any questions or comments.

Face – to - Face

Louth Volunteer Centre has an office in Drogheda, with Outreach Offices in Dundalk and we are available to meet with you at any of these offices. Alternatively we would like to be able to come to a community space local to you if you need it, but it may not always be possible. Feel free to ask.

Paper

Some volunteers wish not to use email, so we keep those volunteers up -to-date by using phone and posting out regular updates. Let us know if you would prefer us to use this method.

The Placement Process

“Placement” is what we call the process whereby you find a volunteering role. It works like this: You, the volunteer registers on our database. We can do this in a number of ways. Most people prefer to complete the form themselves online on our website www.volunteerlouth.ie. Others give us a call and we complete it on the phone. Some fill in our paper form and post or drop it into us, while others arrange to come in and see us and we do it with them. Please try and give us as much information on this form as possible as this will help us help you better.

The volunteer is given a Unique Identifier (this is just a number we use) and you receive an automatic email from us explaining how the service works. If you apply without email we will send this by post. Within a few days you will receive a Welcome phone call from us just to check that everything is okay. If you want to talk to us before that, feel free to give us a call.

Volunteers take responsibility for searching the database themselves for a suitable opportunity – you know better than anyone, what kind of volunteering will suit you.

Feel free to call us and ask questions, but we will give you the time to search the database yourself. If you don't see anything that you like, or if you are just unsure what you want to do, feel free to give us a call and ask for a face-to-face meeting, where we can talk through your options. A face-to-face meeting will include the following:

- Registration online , if applicable. (Remember that you can say “Pass” for any question you do not wish to answer. The details on the form are for our records and to aid us in suggesting suitable opportunities.).
- Discussion of your interests, skills, time commitment etc. We may chat about what volunteering you have done before, or what skills you might like to gain from your volunteering.
- Browsing the volunteer opportunity database, discussing different roles, further exploring interests, etc.
- Deciding on one or more opportunities that you are interested in

Registering Interest in an Opportunity

This is where you see one or more opportunities on the database that you are interested in. To let us know, you need to “Register” your interest in them. At this stage you are still not committing to a role, you are just showing an interest, but we ask you to limit this to just three opportunities at a time. You can go back and look at more if they don't work out.

How do you register your interest?

If you are doing this online, just click on the “Register” button and enter your email address. - Alternatively give us a call.

Contacting the Organisation:

- If you find one or more opportunities that you are interested in, we encourage you to make contact with the voluntary organisation yourself and we will provide you with the contact details, answer any questions you have, etc .
- If you want us to contact the organisation for you, we can do that too.
- Each voluntary organisation has its own recruitment process, and you will need to follow that process to apply to be a volunteer with them. Our database should detail what that process is – it may just be an informal chat, you may need to fill in an application form, and for some you will need to undergo Garda Vetting. We can answer any questions you have

Follow -Up

We like to try and keep in touch with you while you are applying for a vacancy, so if anything happens, such as you start volunteering, or you decide not to do it, or you've been in touch with the organisation and they have not been back on to you, please let us know. It helps us to gather this kind of information, and if you want, we can follow up with organisations on your behalf. You may also receive emails or calls from us just to check in with how things are going.

Regular Updates & Contact

Every 2 or 3 weeks we will send out a list of the new volunteering vacancies that have come in and the once-off opportunities that are available.

De-Registering

If at any stage you wish to be removed from our database please let us know and we can de-activate your file.

What Do We Expect From You?

That You Keep Us Updated

Please let us know how you are getting on, both during and after the placement process. This helps us to help you better, it can help us identify problems and it also lets us know how successful or otherwise the service is being. We will also seek feedback on our service once a year.

So please help us out if you have a few minutes to spare and complete the questionnaire we circulate at that time. If you have any photos, or feedback on how you're doing we would love to see them. We can add them to our web site and / or Annual Report

That You Keep Your Organisation Updated

We know how busy our lives can become at times, but it is important that the organisations you have approached are kept up to date. If you are unable to follow up with a role for a few weeks, or decide after speaking to the organisation that you are no longer interested, please let them know, or let us know and we can pass it on.

Recording of Information

In addition to the information you provide on registration, our database allows us to record notes on the contact we have with you. This will generally include the date of the conversation and any important information discussed. We will also record the opportunities you are interested in, when you have started volunteering and the estimated number of hours you will be volunteering.

You are free to request a copy of any information we hold on you. Please ask us, or request to see our data protection policy and procedure for further information.

Refusal of Service

Under certain circumstances Louth Volunteer Centre may refuse to accept a registration, or refuse to place volunteers with an organisation. This may be due to inappropriate or unsafe behaviour. For a full explanation of why and how this might occur please see our policy: "Criteria for non-Registration or non-placement of volunteers with organisations."

Appealing This Decision

Should you disagree with the Manager's decision to suspend our service to you, please write to the Chair of Louth Volunteer Centre, Fitzwilliam Business Centre, Laurence Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth outlining your reasons. Your appeal will be considered by the Board, or a sub-committee of the Board of Louth Volunteer Centre.

Compliments and Complaints

Louth Volunteer Centre welcomes all feedback, both positive and negative as it allows us to deliver a better service to the community.

Please address your comments to The Manager, Louth Volunteer Centre, Fitzwilliam Business Centre, Laurence Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth, or by email to info@volunteerlouth.ie. If you wish to see our Complaints Policy, we would be happy to post or email it out to you. A copy can also be downloaded from our web site www.volunteerlouth.ie