

The Volunteer Programme

Sphere 17 RYS believes that volunteers can make an important contribution to our service and has dedicated a member of staff to the role of Volunteer Coordinator. Our aim is to recruit a range of volunteers with diverse interests, skills and experiences, and to provide them with the quality of support that will make their involvement in our service mutually rewarding, in line with our volunteer policy. Our volunteer policy and practice is informed by our commitment to Volunteer Irelands Charter for Effective Volunteering.

Volunteers can contribute to every aspect of Sphere 17 RYS and there are a range of possible volunteer roles, whether it is working directly with the young people, as part of one off events or regular structured groups, or by participating in other non-direct ways e.g. maintenance support roles, governance roles (participating on the Board or committees) etc.

We have developed a standard Volunteer Agreement template but the role description will be tailored to meet the specific voluntary activity that is agreed.

In order to best ensure we can make this a meaningful experience for volunteers we have invested some time in our volunteer recruitment and management processes. These include providing each volunteer with a dedicated *Mentor* who will work closely with their volunteer offering support and information, acting as the primary point of contact for the volunteer.

There is a high value on training and development within the organisation, and volunteers will also have the opportunity to participate in many of the staff training sessions provided. There is also some mandatory training for staff in relation to child protection and welfare, and those selected to volunteer for governance roles on the Board have statutory responsibilities associated with being a Director.

We ask that volunteers would make a minimum commitment of 6 months to the organisation so their experience and contribution can have a more significant impact.

Sphere 17 RYS is informed by Volunteering Irelands' Charter for Effective Volunteering outlined below.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

Volunteers are considered for selection on completion of the Sphere 17 RYS Volunteer Application Form, and, as with employees, following successful interview will be subject to Garda vetting and reference checks. The results of the vetting process are known to one designated person, and any findings will not be discussed or disclosed to any other member of the team. All volunteers' personnel records will be kept confidential.

Volunteer Recruitment Process

The following is a general outline of the volunteer recruitment process or steps:

- Following the initial enquiry from a potential volunteer applicant, the Volunteer Coordinator (VC) will contact the prospective volunteer to arrange a meeting
- At the meeting an outline of the application process is provided, incorporating the application form and garda vetting form. The applicant will also be provided with a brief outline of the organisation and what they can expect from their experience as well as copies of relevant information relating to volunteering in the organisation. The VC will remain in contact with a prospective volunteer during the garda vetting process which can take circa 6-8 weeks.
- Once the garda vet confirming suitability has been returned, the VC will contact the applicant to update them, and clarify that it is okay to proceed with named referees via telephone reference checks. At this point the VC can also clarify whether there are specific preferences/requirements in terms of when/where/how the applicant can volunteer. This will help identify a suitable venue, activity and Mentor. A further meeting time can be provisionally arranged if possible.
- Subject to satisfactory reference checks, the VC will meet with the applicant and introduce them to their Mentor in the organisation. This will typically be someone we anticipate will be working alongside the volunteer. The proposed role of the volunteer will be confirmed including venue, dates, times etc. The mentor is responsible for providing their volunteer with an induction to the service covering key organisation policies, systems, practices relevant to their role, and introducing them to other staff members/ young people and the youth centre(s). The Mentor will also work with the volunteer to prepare an agreed job description
- An initial shadow session is then arranged to provide the volunteer with their first experience. This can help to make sure that the organisation/centre and volunteer are the right fit for one another, before fully signing up. A follow up confirmation meeting will be scheduled for after the shadow session where the volunteer agreement can be confirmed and signed. The 6-month commitment allows for a 6-week trial period.

Volunteer Support and Training

Volunteers will be provided with initial induction, including an overview of the organisation and its work.

Sphere 17 RYS is committed to the training and development of its volunteers and will provide opportunities, as appropriate.

One to one supervision and support of volunteers is considered a key aspect of training and development. All volunteers will be provided with regular supervision by their designated mentor.

Volunteers will be supported to develop their skills in line with best practice; however, the organisation reserves the right to discontinue the volunteer arrangement should any practice be deemed unacceptable.

Out of pocket expenses are reimbursed by prior arrangement with the assigned Mentor

Volunteer Agreement

This Volunteer Agreement demonstrates how we value our volunteers. We want to assure you that we appreciate your contribution to Sphere 17. We are dedicated to ensuring that you have a quality volunteer experience which is both productive and rewarding.

We agree to accept the volunteering services of: (Name) _____

beginning on _____ and ending on _____

The volunteer agrees to volunteer for _____ hours on the following days:

Mon ☐ Tues ☐ Wed ☐ Thurs ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun ☐

The volunteer role is: _____ and their volunteer mentor who will provide supervision is _____

Sphere 17 Regional Youth Service commits to the following:

- To provide adequate information and training so you may meet the expectations as described in your volunteer role description.
- To allow for a six-week trial period.
- To explain what is required of you and to support and provide encouragement to help you achieve the desired results.
- To assign you with a named supervisor who will provide you with regular support and supervision meetings and act as a 'go to' person.
- To treat you with respect and courtesy at all times.
- To be receptive to any comments and feedback from all our volunteers.
- To value and recognise our volunteers as a significant resource in achieving the goals of our organisation.

The Volunteer commits to the following:

- To fulfil my role as outlined in the attached volunteer role description.
- To perform my volunteer role to the best of my ability.
- To follow the organisation's policies and procedures.
- To meet time and task commitments and to provide sufficient notice when not available.
- To act in a way that is in line with the aims and objectives of the organisation and that enhances the work of the organisation.

Agreed to by:

Signature (on behalf of the organisation): _____ Date _____

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date _____

This volunteer agreement is binding in honour only, and is not intended to be a legally binding contract between the volunteer and the organisation. Neither party intends any employment relationship to be created now or at any time in the future. This agreement may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.