

SUBMISSION following
Call for Input (CFI) on Key Aspects to be included in a
National Volunteering Strategy
(The closing date for submissions is Thursday, 14 February 2019.)

Organisation/Individual: Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN)

Completed by: Gráinne O Neill

Title/position: Co-ordinator

Contact Details: 059/9172495 or 087/2760139

All materials received by the Department will be subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. This means that all materials submitted during the CFI could be released to a wider audience on request. If you wish to claim exemption from the Act please state this case in your submission along with the justification for so doing.

SUBMISSION

Call for Input (CFI) on Key Aspects to be included in a National Volunteering Strategy

	Section 4: Definition of Volunteering
1	Should we adopt the White Paper definition or the European Union definition of volunteering? Is there a more appropriate definition which could be considered for the strategy?
	• We would agree with the White Paper definition or the European Union definition of volunteering, however, the last point 'is often carried out in support of a non-profit organisation or community-based initiative' does not go far enough. Currently, voluntary work is continuously carried out in support of statutory bodies due to lack of resources/funding or an attitude 'why should we employ someone when we can get a volunteer to do it for free'. • While we agree with volunteering, we need to ensure it is not the only means for keeping a service going and that volunteers should be complimentary to those services rather than a necessity. • Therefore, we recommend 'is often carried out in support of a local government/national service, non-profit/for-profit organisation or community-based initiative for no remuneration.'

	Section 5: Background on Irish Volunteering
2	Do you agree with the outline of the Department's role in volunteering? What additions or amendments would you suggest?
	Lack of recognition of voluntary work in all walks of life and sectors. Volunteers need to feel appreciated and not taken for granted. Formal and informal recognition of volunteers and the work they do needs to be considered.

	Section 6: A Vision for the Future of Irish Volunteering
3	Do you agree with this vision for the purposes of this strategy? If not, what should our vision be?
	Yes.

	Section 7: Objectives of a Volunteering Strategy
4	What objectives for Irish volunteering should be set for the purposes of this strategy?
	While a national strategy for volunteering will have a broader remit the priorities contained in Volunteer Irelands Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022 are a good starting point: - • Advance volunteering • Support the volunteering infrastructure • Support volunteering and volunteers

	• Celebrate volunteering We need to recognise that volunteering is local and therefore I refer to Carlow Volunteer Centre's Strategic Framework: - • Everyone who wants to volunteer should have the opportunity to do so locally • The support needs of organisations depending on volunteers needs to be recognised and met locally • Volunteers need to be appropriately managed, valued and celebrated • The social, cultural and economic contributions of Volunteering needs to be measured • The many impacts of volunteering in Ireland must be recorded to be valued
--	--

	Section 8: The Volunteering Community
5	What is the role of the public in volunteering for the purposes of this strategy?
	While we agree with 8.1; again, there is no mention of statutory or other sectors.
6	What is the role of the VIOs in volunteering for the purposes of this strategy?
	We agree that VIOs need to be included in the development and delivery of national volunteering strategy as they are critical player.
7	Should the role of volunteer supporting infrastructure be expanded for the purposes of this strategy?
	Yes. There are many small rural communities which simply cannot be reached. For the survival and wellbeing of these communities, local infrastructure is vital.
8	Is the current model adequate? If not, what volunteering infrastructure and funding model would best support the development of volunteering?
	Volunteer Centres in each local. Face to face links with volunteers, supports VISO's. Social prescribing has also become very popular and again would show the need for centre's to be in all counties.
9	How can Volunteer Centres, Volunteer Ireland and PPNs work together to develop volunteering, active citizenship and participation in the community?
	Carlow PPN currently works collaboratively and/or in partnership with Carlow Volunteer Centre to deliver training and capacity building. We are both volunteer dependent and so would have common objectives in supporting and building the capacity of our volunteers. Carlow PPN agrees that the Department should encourage VC's participation in the work of the PPN's.
10	How can the Department facilitate co-operation between Volunteer Centres, Volunteer Ireland and the PPNs?
	Regional meetings/workshops targeted at VC's and PPN's where best practice is presented by VC's and PPN's who are currently working in collaboration and working well. To work together they need to be in the same room. A thought-provoking exercise!
11	Are there other areas of research that could be included?
	Yes, analysis on the State's dependency on volunteerism.
12	What is the role of local authorities in volunteering for the purposes of this strategy?

	Good relations between local authorities and the current volunteering infrastructure is essential to continue the service, however, there needs to be stronger recognition and appreciation as so much work is done on the ground i.e. Tidy Towns etc.
13	What is the role of central Government (outside the Department of Rural and Community Development) in volunteering for the purposes of this strategy?
	The establishment of a National Advisory Group is a step forward, however, the need to recognise and name the states dependency on volunteerism is required.
14	How could the Department further facilitate engagement between the business sector and volunteering?
	• A National Advertisement Campaign. It is an expensive route to take, however, awareness is key for engagement between the business sector and volunteering. • Some businesses already engage with their local VC as company policy may encourage volunteerism in their organisation as tax incentives are offered. An extension of these incentives would facilitate further engagement between the business sector and volunteering. • More collaboration between local VC's and local Chamber of Commerce will help also.
15	What steps can the Department and other stakeholders take to enhance engagement with European and international partners in volunteering?
	Looking at best practice in other countries can help develop our own practice and possible further relations.
16	What other relevant stakeholders, if any, should be considered in developing a volunteering strategy to support volunteering in Ireland?
	The business community – local Chamber of Commerce.

	Section 9: Governance and Funding
17	Do you agree with the approach outlined above? If not, please provide reasons.
	Single Line Funding and Single Line Reporting Mechanism is already being achieved with Local Volunteer Centres as funding is provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development with reporting mechanisms in place, however, the breakdown of where volunteers are working needs to be examined – multi-sectoral.
18	Do you agree with the approach outlined above? If not, please provide reasons.
	Yes, planning is key to ensure success.

	Section 10: Challenges to Volunteering
19	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering?
	A National Advertising Campaign and agree with 10.2.1.
20	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities?

	A National Advertising Campaign – contact VI for your local VC or visit our website for contact details and agree with 10.2.2.
21	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to encourage general participation in volunteering?
	- Many community groups within the PPN are reporting difficulties in trying to comply with legislation re. GDPR, E-Vetting, Governance and CRA. A lot is expected of our volunteers in this respect. These agencies need to speak to each other to streamline what is required as all this ‘red tape’ frightens volunteers away. - The cost of insurance for community groups has become extortionate. Lack of funds to pay for high insurance costs has forced community groups/initiatives to close shop.
22	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to encourage the participation of young people in volunteering?
	By working collaboratively with local Children and Youth Services and agree with actions set out in 10.3.2.
23	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to encourage the participation of marginalised groups in volunteering?
	To encourage active participation of marginalised groups, capacity building is key and agree with actions set out in 10.3.3. However, this is not to say that members of marginalised groups do not currently volunteer as they do within their own communities.

24	Should the strategy seek to focus on or identify particular marginalised group(s) to encourage their participation in volunteering?
	No. As stated above members of marginalised groups do currently volunteer within their own communities.
25	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to mitigate the risks posed by the changing demographic of volunteers?
	- Older/retired persons have more time to volunteer e.g. Tidy Towns groups and as Irelands population is becoming increasingly more aged perhaps we need to focus on this and to recruit more active retired. - In relation to youth, I refer to ‘Tipping the Balance 2002’ pg. 52 and Perceptions of Volunteering which states there is quite a disparity among young people and their interpretation of volunteering. This disparity still exists and a National Awareness Campaign on ‘what is volunteering’ would benefit. - Tax incentives should be considered as an incentive to volunteer.
26	What specific audiences should the national volunteering strategy focus on?
	All audiences – youth, older persons, our new communities, our travelling community and businesses. Awareness on ‘what is volunteering?’, the benefits of volunteering and volunteering opportunities is required. This can all be placed in to a document but who is going to read it?? A national advertising campaign around volunteering and the strategy is required.

27	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to encourage training and development opportunities for volunteers?
	More funding for Volunteer Centres is required to roll out professional training and development opportunities for our volunteers.
28	In what other ways can the Department support enhanced volunteer performance in Irish volunteering?
	Training, same as above.
29	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to encourage training and development opportunities for volunteer managers?
	Survey all managers to find out what training and development is required. Fund training programme over a specific period. Certain training should be mandatory and possibly included in KPI's.
30	What steps may be taken by the Department to support enhanced management performance in Irish volunteering?
	As above - formal training and KPI's.
31	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to address the perception of volunteering involving too large a commitment of time?
	Rather than focusing on time commitment, focus on task commitment and the benefits to their community/community group for the completion of the task.
32	Should a volunteering code of conduct for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) be developed and implemented? What should this code include?
	Yes. A Code of Conduct is very important in any working environment, is good governance and elements such as the following should include the following: - • Represent the organisation with professionalism, dignity and pride, and be responsible for conducting themselves with courtesy and appropriate behaviour • Know where to go for help – there are people here to help you • Ethical - do not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status or disability, and/or sexual orientation. • Diverse - treat others the way you would like to be treated. • Safety – zero tolerance in relation to threats of violence
33	Should a potential Irish code of conduct for volunteers and VIOs be mandatory or optional? Who would regulate it?
	• While a Code of Conduct provides both parties with clear guidelines as to the rules in relation to an individual's behaviour and ensures respect is offered on both sides, but unclear as to who would regulate it? • Agree with Volunteer Canada's benefits of Code of Conduct – 10.6.
34	What particular challenges are facing smaller volunteer involving organisations and how can the Department assist?
	• Agree with point 10.7. Currently, insurance is a huge barrier on anything to do with volunteerism. Also, compliance in relation to GDPR, E-Vetting and Governance/CRA

	are huge issues facing smaller voluntary organisations. Requirements need to be streamlined. • Carlow PPN have and are currently offering training programmes to their members in relation to the above to ensure members are as informed as possible but these issues still place a huge responsibility on our members.
35	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to facilitate QQI assessment of volunteers for the purposes of accrediting skills?
	Agree with 10.8.
36	What actions should be included in a volunteering strategy to encourage the creation of volunteering opportunities?
	Agree with 10.9.
37	What other significant challenges to volunteering should be considered as part of this strategy? How can they be addressed?
	Challenges in relation to 'red tape' – GDPR, E-Vetting, CRA and Governance. While we recognise that these are very important issues, they need to be streamlined as our volunteers are being asked for so much when they are already giving up their time to so many causes.
38	Are there any further challenges, strategic objectives and actions that you feel should be included in a national volunteering strategy?
	KPI's are essential to gauge how VC's are performing whether it be good or bad and to understand why this is.

	Section 11: Monitoring, Measuring and Evaluating the Impact of Volunteering
39	What criteria should be used to assess our progress in assessing the impacts of volunteering?
	Set KPI's for every County once there is a VC in every County. Also, volunteerism does not only occur within multifaceted community sector but in for profit sector also.
40	What criteria should be used to gauge success in delivery of the National Volunteering Strategy?
	As above.

	Section 12: Proposed National Advisory Group on Volunteering
41	Do you agree that a National Advisory Group is the most suitable vehicle to drive this strategy forward?
	Yes, once it's an inclusive process and the right people are around the table.
42	Who should participate in a National Advisory Group?
	• Member/s of Volunteer Ireland • Department Officials • Nominations from Volunteer Centre Managers from across the country

	• Nomination from PPN Co-ordinators • Nominations from Development Partnerships from across the country • Nominations from Chamber of Commerce from across the country • Nomination from HSE re. wellbeing of volunteers • Nomination from national GP's – re. social prescribing
43	How broad should the terms of reference (TOR) be for the proposed Advisory Group or other mechanism found suitable to drive this strategy forward?
	To be decided by the NAG.
44	Does any better mechanism exist to drive this strategy forward?
	No.