



volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Corcaigh

CORK

Pre Budget- Submission 2021



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Cork Volunteer Centre CLG
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Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20078195
Charity Number (CHY): 19850

Introduction

Cork Volunteer Centre is one of 22 Volunteer Centres nationwide and is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Currently located at 13 North Main Street, Cork Volunteer Centre is staffed by a dedicated team of employees and volunteers (3 full time employees, 2 part-time employees and up to 10 volunteers). In 2019, our funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development was €123,000.

Cork Volunteer Centre was set up to promote the benefits of volunteering to the people of Cork City and Cork County. This aim is achieved in association with relevant statutory and voluntary authorities. Furthermore, Cork Volunteer Centre was established to provide support, training and advice which advances the effectiveness of organisations involving volunteers to promote charitable activities on behalf of the communities across Cork City and County. We are an affiliate of Volunteer Ireland.

This pre-budget submission is based on consultations made with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in relation to the National Strategy on Volunteering and our experience of working through Covid-19. We are recommending the following actions be taken by Government;

- Launch the National Strategy on Volunteering as a matter of urgency.
- Increase the core funding allocation to Cork Volunteer Centre to ensure a robust volunteering infrastructure in the Cork area.
- Fund a national media campaign to raise awareness of the vital work of Volunteer Centres and commend the work of volunteers during the Covid-19 crisis.



Our Services

a. Volunteers

We offer volunteers the following services;

- The opportunity to meet a member of staff to discuss volunteering opportunities that are meaningful for them.
- Access to an extensive database of volunteering opportunities available across Cork City and County.
- Information on the how, why and where of volunteering.
- Ongoing support and information through regular contact.

"I feel very grateful for VC as I feel it's opened up a lot of work opportunities for me. I'm very glad I decided to help out in my spare time as it's made things more meaningful. Since getting involved in st. Finn barrs hospital activity centre last year..."

[Naomi - March 2019]

'Cork Volunteer Centre means a great deal to me. I have a better understanding of what it means to be a great volunteer. Working with you Gosia, Julie and Adam, I feel I am part of a family. Your warm welcome and support at all times has been me a great back up. I have learnt a great deal from the workshops you have provided for us volunteers'

[Theresa, Clonakilty Community Resource Centre]

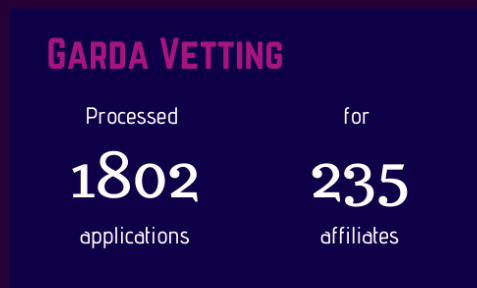
b. Organisations

We offer Volunteer Involving Organisations the following services;

- A free volunteer referral service.
- Guidance and support in developing volunteer roles
- The ability to advertise volunteer opportunities on our database
- Access to an extensive pool of volunteers across Cork City and County and nationwide through I-Vol.
- Training, guidance and support on all aspects of best practice in volunteer recruitment, retention, support and management.
- Networking opportunities for volunteer managers
- Advice and support on volunteer policy
- Garda vetting services

The infographic below highlights the level of activity undertaken by Cork Volunteer Centre in 2019 to support volunteers and volunteer involving organisations over the course of the year. During this time, we met or exceeded many of our targets. For more detail on our activities in 2019, please visit the publications tab of our website to view our annual report. www.volunteercork.ie

2019 IN NUMBERS



Our Activities During Covid-19

The infographic below highlights the volume of activity undertaken by Cork Volunteer Centre from March to 30th June. During this time, we worked hard to provide:

- Increased Community Support through targeted Volunteer Recruitment
- Enhanced Support for Volunteer Involving Organisations
- Increase Public awareness of COVID-19 issues through targeted Communications
- Increased our Partnerships with other key Stakeholders to support the COVID-19 response

Aside from work on Covid-19, we continued to engage with non-profit organisations that continued to provide their services throughout the pandemic. These organisations continued to provide meals on wheels, homeless services, environmental services, cancer supports and so on. As you can see the level of activity was unprecedented. This level of output was only achieved by our teams flexibility and hard work, with the support of our board of management.



CORK VOLUNTEER CENTRE 2020

Activities 12th March - 30th June

ORGANISATION ENGAGEMENTS

COVID-19

245

OTHER

159

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATIONS

COVID-19

1723

OTHER

361



GARDA VETTING

APPLICATIONS
PROCESSED

145

QUERIES
ANSWERED

252

TRAINING
DELIVERED

1

NEW
AFFILIATES

1

VIRTUAL ORGANISATION SUPPORT MEETINGS



51

NEW VOLUNTEER ROLES CREATED

COVID SPECIFIC

13

OTHER

31

+6 ROLES MADE AVAILABLE IN CORK THROUGH OTHER VCS



CORK VOLUNTEER AWARDS



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

CORK VOLUNTEER
AWARD NOMINATIONS
OPENED MAY 18TH

CORK VOLUNTEER WEEK

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

39

VIDEO VIEWS

9483

TOTAL REACH

83342

#REBELRESPONSE #CVW2020

SUPPORTED BY CORK ETB, CORK COUNTY COUNCIL, BALLYHOURA DEVELOPMENT,
CORK CITY PARTNERSHIP, CORK SPORTS PARTNERSHIP & MORE.



VOLUNTEERS REFERRED TO ORGANISATIONS

COVID SPECIFIC

160

OTHER

565

VOLUNTEERS PLACED

COVID SPECIFIC

26

OTHER

62

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

COVID SPECIFIC

78

OTHER

152

MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

RADIO

4

NEWSPAPER

3

COMMUNITY RESPONSE FORUM MEETINGS

CORK CITY

10

CORK COUNTY

19

OUR WEBSITE

NEW SECTION WITH COVID-19 ADVICE AND RESOURCES

LINK: [HTTP://WWW.VOLUNTEERCORK.IE/1991-2/](http://www.volunteercork.ie/1991-2/)

NEWSLETTERS TO VOLUNTEERS

6

NEWSLETTERS TO ORGANISATIONS

6



National Strategy on Volunteering

Cork Volunteer Centre welcomed the announcement by the Department of Rural and Community Development to develop a National Strategy on Volunteering. In response to the Department of Rural and Community Development call for input into the Volunteering Strategy, Cork Volunteer Centre collaborated with other Volunteer Centres in Munster to engage with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across the region to have their say. The detailed submission from 2019 can be found on the publications tab of our website. Cork Volunteer Centre also made a submission on the draft National Strategy launched early in 2020. A National Strategy on Volunteering is vital to put a framework on the volunteering infrastructure in Ireland. Given recent developments with Covid-19 the value of volunteers, volunteer involving organisations, and the Volunteer Centres who support them has never been more evident.

Furthermore, in order to ensure the delivery of the National Strategy on Volunteering and to provide vital support to the community and voluntary sector, we commend the retention of the Department of Rural and Community Development as an entity in its own right.



Recommendation:

Launch the National Strategy on Volunteering as a matter of urgency.

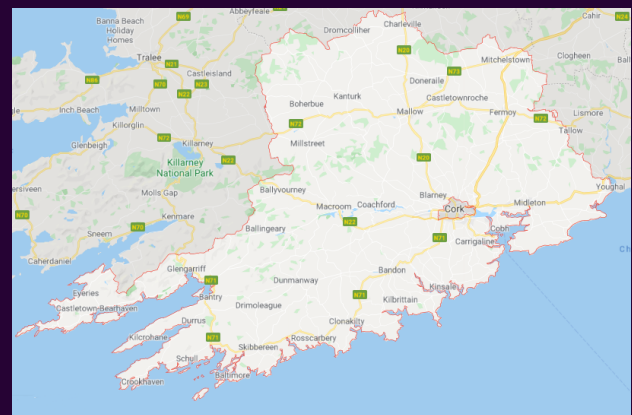
A Robust Volunteering Infrastructure

The economic benefits of volunteering should not be underestimated. The Quarterly National Household Survey (2013) estimates 232.8 million of hours are volunteered annually which is worth over €2bn to the economy when calculated at minimum wage.

The McLaughlin Report, 'Developing Funding Criteria for Volunteer Centres in Ireland' (2018) highlighted some of the inconsistencies and shortcomings of Volunteer Centre funding. The report states that, "Core funding for Volunteer Centres is unevenly distributed and it is difficult to discern a consistent approach or framework for determining how funding is allocated". This haphazard approach to funding that appears to be based on historical agreements is "inconsistent with modern public management" (ibid) which advocates a more strategic allocating of funds to maximise benefits.

The McLaughlin Report (2018) indicated that there should be a minimum amount of funding that every Volunteer Centre receive. This funding will cover staff and overhead costs. However, the report correctly identified other factors that should determine additional funding for Volunteer Centres. These were population size; geographic area; and level of deprivation and disadvantage, in that area.

The population of Cork City according to the 2016 census was 125,657 while 417,211 people resided in the rest of the county. This brings the total population of Cork to 542,868 (CSO, 2016). This number represents a staggering 11.4% of the entire country. However, it is up to only one Volunteer Centre to provide our services for all these people. The McLaughlin Report (2018) revealed that this was the highest amount of people being served by any one volunteer centre.



County Cork is the largest county in Ireland by geographical area at approximately 7,500 km². With major towns scattered throughout this area, outreach is a costly venture. In 2019, Cork Volunteer Centre commenced a pilot programme of consistent and regular outreach activities to the County area. These activities bring with it significant travel costs. A need was identified for a more permanent base in the County area. More funding from the Department is required to ensure these activities are adequately resourced to deliver much needed resources to the rural population of Cork. In order to confirm what we anecdotally know to be true, Cork Volunteer Centre, along with the other Volunteer Centres in Munster have engaged a researcher from UCC to establish the different needs of volunteer involving organisations in urban and rural areas of the region. The preliminary findings suggest that rural organisation have different needs and the research make a strong case for further outreach activities. In order to delivery these much needed services, more resources will be required as these activities are time consuming.

With the most people to serve over the largest area, Cork Volunteer Centre needs to be adequately and proportionally funded, however the McLaughlin Report (2018) showed that in 2016, Cork Volunteer Centre received the lowest funding per capita across the entire country. In 2019, Cork Volunteer Centres allocation for funding in 2020 remains at €123,800. In our funding application for 2020, we requested at total figure of €232,873 (€182,257 to cover total salaries – inclusive of Employers PRSI) and €50,616 (to adequately cover our overheads and administration). Please note that this estimate is conservative in that it does not cover the administrative costs of a permanent office in a county location. Given that the population of Cork City and County is approximately 542,868 people (2016 Census), we are asking that our funding allocation be increased to at least €200,000 per annum.

The impact of very low levels of core funding has become extremely apparent during the Covid-19 crisis. Cork Volunteer Centre relies heavily on income from services such as processing Garda vetting applications and training to make up the shortfall in funding. During the Covid-19 crisis, this income dropped by 43%, leaving us to apply for the governments Stability Fund (the outcome of our application is as yet unknown).

During this crisis many non-profits and stakeholder agencies across Cork relied upon us for advice, support and guidance on best practice in volunteer management and recruitment. Furthermore, Cork Volunteer Centre was actively engaged in both the City and County Community Response Forum. We also hosted a virtual Cork Volunteer Week to recognise and thank all the volunteers that engaged in the community response. We are now actively engaging with more than 600 organisations to encourage them to reimagine how they will utilise volunteers going forward. We have demonstrated time and again that we can adapt to changing situations – delivering online training and volunteer managers network meetings. Moving forward, we envisage the importance of our supports to organisations and volunteers becoming ever more necessary. Previous recessions have demonstrated the value of volunteering to those who are unemployed. Volunteering had been shown to have a positive impact on physical and mental wellbeing and well as being utilised for valuable work experience.

Case Study: Farranree Community Association

"The calibre of volunteers referred to us has been exceptional and represent a cross section of society that ranges from young to mature and makes for a happy mix when we all meet up, all are an integral part of the plans we have to progress the service we provide going forward and it is hoped that they will remain with us for many years to come.

Throughout the current COVID 19 crisis all of our volunteers have worked tirelessly to assist us in ensuring that the elderly and vulnerable are catered for and looked after as best we can, working under the stipulations and conditions dictated to us by the HSE, our thanks go out to each and every one of them for their continuing efforts, as without their assistance the service we are now able to provide would not have been possible".

[Russell Bevan - Secretary Farranree Community Association]



Recommendation:

Increase the core funding allocation to Cork Volunteer Centre to ensure a robust Volunteering Infrastructure in the Cork area.

Promotion of Volunteering through a National Campaign.

The Charities Aid Foundation's (CAF) 'World Giving Index 2018' saw Ireland place 7th overall in the proportion of people who volunteer. This is a statistic that should be celebrated and used to motivate further participation in volunteering in Ireland. What cannot happen is complacency, especially considering the ever-changing landscape of Irish civil society. The National Committee on Volunteering (NCV, 2002) commented on the changing nature of volunteering in Ireland and concluded, "that it is vital to plan for such change and to chart the future".

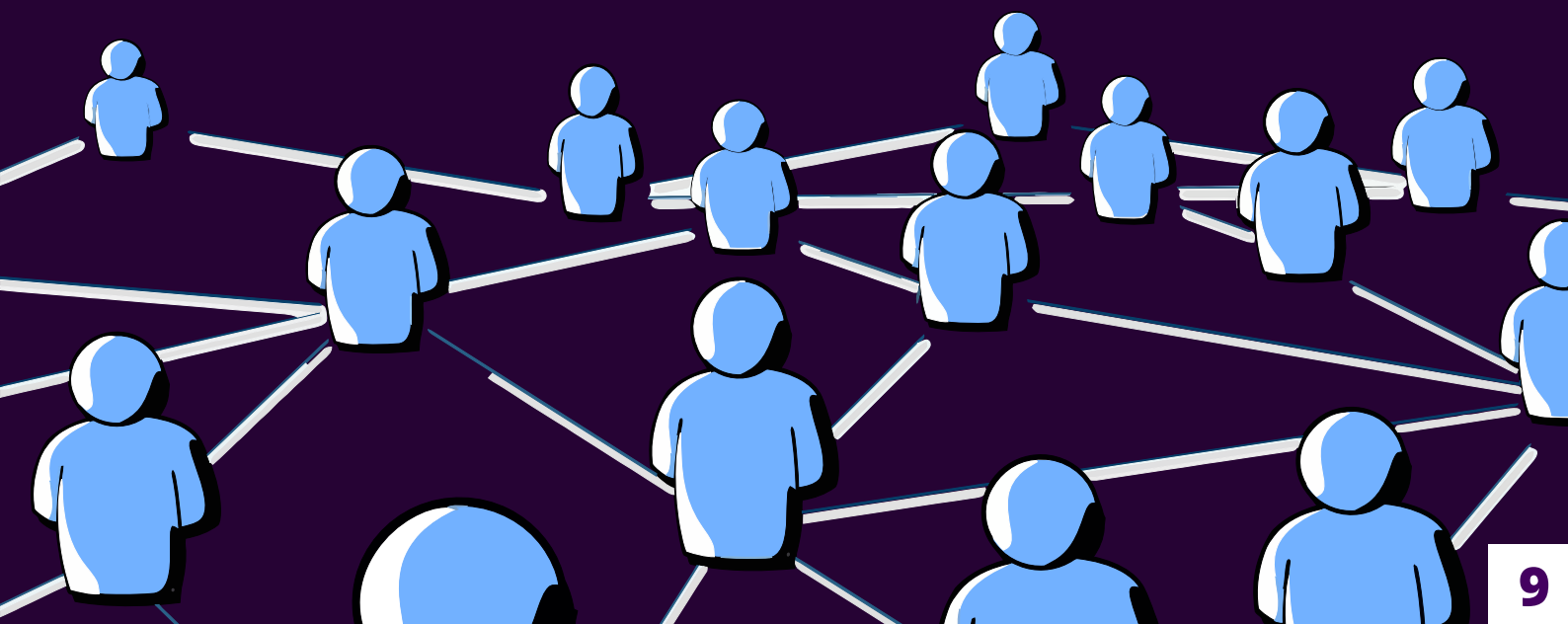
The public response to the Covid-19 crisis clearly indicates that the people of Ireland are more than willing to engage in volunteering. Organisations that are supported by Volunteer Centres benefit from our experience in best practice in volunteer management. This means that volunteers can be assured that they are volunteering in a safe environment.

The Department of Rural and Community Development and the network of Volunteer Centres are in the perfect position to collaborate on both the national and local promotion of volunteering. While Cork Volunteer Centre works hard to raise awareness locally, it needs the backing of a national media campaign to complement it. This campaign could be used to:

- **Raise awareness of the existence and the role of the network of volunteer centres.**
- **Thank volunteers for their vital role during the Covid-19 crisis.**
- **Highlight the existence of I-Vol.**
- **Promote the benefits of volunteering.**

Recommendation:

Fund a national media campaign to raise awareness of the vital work of Volunteer Centres and commend the work of volunteers during the Covid-19 crisis.



Conclusion

Cork Volunteer Centre continues to maximise the voice of volunteering. We provide opportunities for community involvement and social inclusion. We support over 600 non-profit organisations registered with us for volunteer recruitment and more than 200 organisations registered with us for Garda Vetting Services.

We at Cork Volunteer Centre are proud of the achievements of our staff and volunteers. We also recognise, however, how much more we can achieve with the adequate support from the Department of Rural and Community Development. We request that Government seriously consider all of our recommendations to ensure a brighter future for volunteering in Cork and nationwide.

