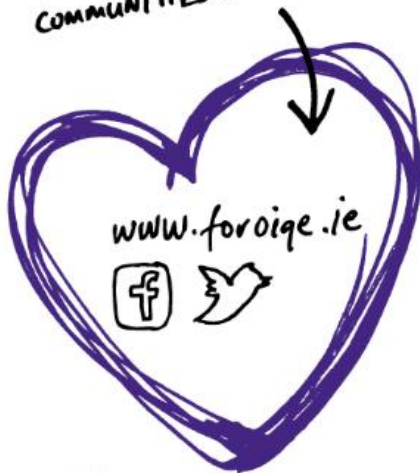




AT THE HEART OF
BUILDING STRONGER
COMMUNITIES IN IRELAND



Policy and Information on Volunteering in Foróige

Foróige, National Youth Development Organisation

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Volunteering policy statement

Foróige seeks to involve suitable adult volunteers who share our values and interest in youth development. We will take all reasonable steps to welcome and support them; value their contribution and provide opportunities to be part of achieving Foróige's purpose, through roles with young people or in supporting the organisation's work in other ways.



Introduction

This document provides information on many aspects of volunteering in Foróige. If you have a question on anything here, do please contact a Foróige staff person.

Foróige's purpose is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in that of the community. Foróige believes that each adult and young person is a unique and creative individual who can contribute to improving the world we live in. Our policy reflects this purpose and values.

There were over 5,000 volunteers in Foróige in 2011.

This document was approved by the National Executive of Foróige in September 2012.

The place of Volunteerism in Foróige

Volunteerism is essential to Foróige's ability to make a positive difference for so many young people. Volunteer participation is needed and encouraged at all levels, including in leadership of the organisation. We value volunteerism for its unique benefits including the example it shows to young people, how it builds stronger communities and the many different perspectives and sets of skills it brings to Foróige.

While this document is about adult volunteering, Foróige strongly supports volunteer action by young people (under 18) through age appropriate programmes e.g. Citizenship or Leadership; and structures e.g. committees and participation structures.

Definition of a volunteer

A volunteer is someone who freely contributes time, skills and service at the direction of and by agreement with Foróige, but is not paid nor expects to be paid. Special arrangements may be made for corporate and student volunteering. In Foróige volunteers are aged 18 years or over.

Those who work with young people are generally known as "Leaders" or "Mentors". Support volunteer roles include trainers, IT support, PR, fundraisers, support for new clubs and administration. Support roles may not include work with young people.

Paid staff volunteering

Volunteering in the organisation by Foróige paid staff is welcomed. To avoid any potential conflict of interest, staff should discuss their intentions with their manager.

Equality Policy

Foróige, the National Youth Development Organisation, is committed to creating an environment which promotes equality and dignity. The organisation is committed to treating all employees, young people and volunteers equally and fairly regardless of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community. Foróige opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Foróige is committed to and will support diversity and equality at all levels of involvement in the organisation.

Recruitment and Selection

Role Descriptions

To help volunteers understand the role they are taking, on we provide a role description which sets out clearly what the volunteer will be doing.

Recruitment

Volunteers are recruited in line with "*Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers in Foróige*" In summary, potential Regular Volunteers are asked to:

- Complete an application form
- Provide referees, whom Foróige will contact
- Sign a pre-garda vetting declaration
- Undergo Garda vetting

- Attend an informal interview
- Attend training called “Starting out in Foróige” and child protection training
- Sign a volunteer agreement

Procedures for support and occasional volunteers may vary. Please ask for more information. Volunteers working one to one with young people such as in mentoring roles, participate in additional steps to get the best possible match.

Volunteers should not normally begin their role until these procedures have been completed. Foróige may update recruitment procedures from time to time.

Given the need to match the right volunteer with the right role, Foróige regrets that it may not be able to accept every application.

Club members becoming volunteers

Club members are encouraged to consider taking up leadership roles in Foróige when they become adults. They may become adult leaders in the club in which they had been a member at the start of the next club year following their 18th birthday, If joining another club or club type as a leader they can move when they become 18 if this is appropriate. Members who wish to become leaders are subject to the normal recruitment and selection procedures. Former members should not have full responsibility for discipline issues in the first year. Even if of similar age, a leader may not be in a relationship with a Foróige member. Eighteen year olds who have not been members join in the normal way.

Volunteer’s role in recruitment

Volunteers are encouraged to recruit other volunteers locally in consultation with staff. All new volunteers must go through the recruitment and selection procedures.

Training and Development

Foróige seeks to ensure all volunteers in the organisation feel equipped for their role, and have opportunities to develop their skills; with benefits for Foróige and the volunteer’s personal development. Training is an important part of this.

“Starting out in Foróige”

Volunteers are expected to attend Level One and child protection training so as to have the necessary information and skills for the role. Special arrangements may be made where the role does not involve contact with young people.

Ongoing training

Those working with young people should attend other courses such as Leader training levels 2, 3 and 4 or other courses as they become available. Foróige may also design specific courses based on needs identified by volunteers or staff.

Progression

Foróige encourages volunteers to progress in the organisation as they grow in experience, knowledge and skill. This may involve opportunity to try a new role or take on more responsibility. Foróige will support this with training as needed.

Support and Recognition

Contact person

Each volunteer will have a designated member of staff or volunteer, who may be called a “Contact Person”, to guide them in their role and will have regular access to that person. Support will be tailored to the role.

Expenses

Unfortunately we are not in a position to pay expenses in many roles and the volunteer should consider this before taking on the role. Where expenses are paid, it is with the agreement in advance of the club, project or local or national governance structure commissioning the work. Expenses are subject to the production of receipts. Child care and loss of earnings are not covered.

Recognition

Volunteers should receive appropriate recognition for their volunteering. This will be done in line with best practice and detailed in “Volunteer Recognition in Foróige”, which will be available on the staff and volunteer portal. Foróige actively supports recognition by other volunteers, young people, parents and staff.

Access to Information

Volunteers should be included in meetings about day to day happenings in groups /roles in which they volunteer. General volunteer information will be made available on the volunteer section of our website www.Foróige.ie

Provision of References

Foróige staff may at their discretion, provide a reference to a volunteer after the person has volunteered successfully for at least one club year, or 3 months in the case of those who volunteer more than 10 hours a week.

Conditions of Service

Child protection and other policies

Foróige has policies on child protection, equality, good practice in working with young people, tobacco alcohol and drugs, and other topics which all adult volunteers must implement. These policies are available from staff, and are covered in training.

Insurance

Foróige volunteers are covered by the Organisation’s Public/Products Liability Policy for accidental injury/illness, provided the activities engaged in are covered under the policy and the Organisation is found to be legally liable.

Foróige does not have Personal Accident Insurance cover nor does it insure the personal possessions of volunteers against loss or damage. Volunteers may involve young people only in activities covered by the organisation’s Public/Products liability policy.

Health and Safety

Foróige volunteers must take care to ensure their own safety and the safety of the young people with whom they work. This is covered in training.

Volunteer records

Personal information about volunteers will be stored, accessed and maintained in accordance with the requirements of relevant legislation.

Confidentiality

The organisation advises volunteers of the need for confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information; particularly so in child protection, governance matters, donations and personal or financial information on donors.

Representing Foróige

Opportunities for representing the organisation publically should be accepted and prepared for in consultation with a staff person who should in turn consult Foróige communications staff. All volunteers have a responsibility to uphold the good name and reputation of Foróige and may not make statements which would significantly effect or obligate the organisation. When representing the organisation volunteers must promote the views of the organisation and not their own personal opinions. Volunteers may also support young people to speak on behalf of a club or group.

Absences and breaks in service

Volunteer roles are really important. The volunteer should notify the Club Leader or staff person of anticipated absences and where appropriate try to replace themselves with another regular or occasional volunteer. Significant amounts of absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's involvement with the organisation.

A volunteer absent for more than one year who wishes to return must reapply to be a volunteer including redoing Garda vetting. Leaders of over 8 years service may have up to 2 years break before having to reapply in cases of illness/family crisis, where the reason is notified to staff when leave is being applied for; and there is occasional contact with the volunteer during the break. Any volunteer taking a break from their role should inform their staff/Leader Contact Person.

Volunteers who resign must reapply to be a volunteer if they wish to return.

In both the above situations, reapplication does not guarantee acceptance.

Leaving Foróige

While we place great value on volunteer involvement we recognise the right of volunteers to leave Foróige at any time. It is important that a staff person is informed when this happens.

Volunteers agree that Foróige may decide to end the volunteer's relationship with the organisation at any time and for whatever reason, without advance notice or giving reasons.

Exit interviews

Where resources allow, exit interviews are offered to departing volunteers to allow them express views on their time with us.

Settling Difficulties

Foróige aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The local group/club/project, with staff support if needed, is responsible for initial handling of problems regarding volunteer conduct or complaints. They will seek to ensure those volunteers' views are heard, noted, acted upon promptly, and aim for a positive and

amicable solution. If local means do not settle the issue, it can be referred to the Area Manager who may involve the Volunteer Development Manager and or HR Manager.

Corrective action and Dismissal

Volunteers who do not perform their volunteer role satisfactorily will be supported to do so correctly. If the problem has not been resolved after a number of attempts to support the volunteer, their role with Foróige may be ended. Grounds for terminating a volunteer's involvement include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Abuse or mistreatment of others including young people, volunteers, staff or parents.
- Recklessly ignoring policies and procedures
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while in your role
- Theft or misuse of the organisation's resources, including those of a club affiliated to/registered with Foróige.

A separate document details disciplinary procedures including right of appeal and will be available from HQ.

Complaints Procedure

In the event of a volunteer needing to complain about a staff person or another volunteer concerning something which cannot be resolved locally, they should refer to Foróige's complaints procedure, which will be available on our website.

Working relationship with paid staff

Though volunteers and paid staff may have different roles, they are considered partners in achieving the organisation's purpose and should work together in that spirit.

All staff who support or work alongside volunteers will undergo training in volunteer support and in implementation of the provisions of this policy.

In recruitment of paid staff Foróige will seek, amongst other factors, evidence of commitment to volunteerism.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by Foróige every 3 years to ensure it remains up to date and meets the needs of volunteers, the organisation and staff.

