



Volunteer Handbook

Mission Statement

The Irish Wheelchair Association is a national organisation dedicated to the achievement of full social, economic and educational integration of people with disability as equal, independent and participative members of the community.

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Introduction and welcome

Welcome and congratulations on becoming a volunteer for Irish Wheelchair Association. We thank you for your interest and commitment to furthering the aims of IWA.

The association has a long history of volunteering; consequently we are committed to the ongoing development of the role of volunteers within the association. We realise that people volunteer for different reasons including: a personal involvement with disability, an interest in contributing something back to the community, or an interest in developing new skills. Whatever your motivation may be, we are committed to ensuring that your volunteering experience will be a pleasant and positive one.

The number one priority of IWA is to provide consistent quality to the people who avail of our services. As a volunteer you may be involved in the planning, organisation and delivery of IWA services. The Volunteer Handbook has been developed to assist you in understanding and undertaking your role in IWA. The handbook gives a brief history of the organisation and outlines the aims and guiding principles of IWA. Essentially this handbook is your guide to the association, what you can expect of it and what it will expect of you.

As you can appreciate, in an organisation as large and diverse as IWA, it is not possible to include every piece of information in a handbook. However, the handbook will direct you to additional sources of information. Induction training will be provided, during which information in the handbook will be explained in more detail. A nominated staff member or volunteer will be your 'support person' and give you any additional information relevant to your specific volunteer role. I would encourage you to clarify with this person any queries or concerns you may have, no matter how insignificant you might feel them to be.

Again many thanks for your interest in volunteering on behalf of IWA. I hope that it is a worthwhile and pleasant experience for you and the association.

Kathleen Mc Loughlin

Chief Executive Officer

IWA volunteer charter

IWA is rooted in a tradition of volunteerism. The association values the volunteer's role and is committed to its further development within the organisation. In keeping with improving standards in volunteering, IWA has developed a charter which underpins the role of the volunteers within IWA. This charter recognises the two way nature of the volunteering relationship.

What volunteers can expect from IWA

- ▶ To be given meaningful work to do
- ▶ To know what is expected from them
- ▶ To be offered appropriate training
- ▶ To be appreciated and have their voluntary contribution recognised
- ▶ To receive supervision and support
- ▶ To benefit from their contribution
- ▶ To know who to go to if they have a concern
- ▶ To be reimbursed for approved out-of-pocket expenses incurred when volunteering
- ▶ To learn from their experience
- ▶ To be made aware of policies and procedures relevant to their role
- ▶ To be treated fairly and not to experience discrimination
- ▶ To have safe working conditions, including insurance cover
- ▶ To be informed about and be given the opportunity to play an active part in the organisation as a whole
- ▶ To be clear about the volunteer recruitment process and how decisions are made
- ▶ To be able to say no and to leave their voluntary role without feeling guilty.

What IWA asks of volunteers

- ▶ To respect the values and aims of the organisation
- ▶ To be committed to these values and aims, and to their role in the organisation
- ▶ To be reliable and give the organisation sufficient notice if unable to turn up
- ▶ To be punctual
- ▶ To attend essential training and support sessions
- ▶ To undertake to work to a high standard
- ▶ To be honest if they are experiencing problems
- ▶ To respect confidentiality of service users and the IWA
- ▶ To treat people with respect and dignity.

1.0 History and overview of IWA

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) was founded in 1960 by a small group of wheelchair users committed to improving the lives of people with physical disabilities in Ireland. From these modest beginnings IWA has developed into one of the largest national service providers and representative groups of people with limited mobility. IWA works from a rights based approach i.e. we believe that all people have a right to participate, contribute and benefit equally from society. IWA is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee which is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors.

IWA strategic plan outlines the following objectives:-

- ▶ To advocate for change, locally and nationally, by representing the issues and concerns of adults and children with limited mobility
- ▶ To research, develop and pilot new concepts of service delivery
- ▶ To deliver services in partnership with state and non state agencies.

2.0 Standards, guiding principles, policies and procedures

IWA is committed to providing consistent quality services throughout the country. In order to achieve this we ask that all staff and volunteers operate within standards of best practice. These standards are based on both legal requirements and best practice standards. You will find direction to these IWA policies and procedures in your volunteer handbook.

- ▶ Person centred
- ▶ Consultation
- ▶ Choice
- ▶ Partnership
- ▶ Self determination
- ▶ Equality and fairness
- ▶ Inclusion
- ▶ Quality
- ▶ Accountability
- ▶ Dignity
- ▶ Respect.

IWA standards and practices are underpinned by the following guiding principles:

To achieve these standards consistently throughout the country, IWA and IWA Sports have policies and procedures manuals. These manuals outline in detail the policies and procedures for all areas of service delivery. Your volunteer support person will familiarise you with the policies and procedures relevant to your role.

The policies and procedures manuals include the following general categories:

- ▶ Services Policies and Procedures
- ▶ Personnel Policy and Procedures

- ▶ Health and Safety Statement
- ▶ Finance and Administration Policies and Procedures
- ▶ Information Technology Policies and Procedures.

3.0 Services and programmes

IWA provides a diverse range of services nationally. A number of specific services are provided by staff only. However the majority of activities are provided in conjunction with volunteers.

IWA provide services in every county and in some instances in a number of different locations throughout a county. The variety of services being delivered will vary in each county.

The following is a list of the services provided by IWA (not all of these services involve volunteers):

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▶ Advocacy and lobbying | ▶ Holiday Services |
| ▶ Assisted living services | ▶ Youth Services |
| ▶ Resource and outreach centres | ▶ Training |
| ▶ Motoring advice, assessment and tuition | ▶ Transport |
| ▶ Fund-raising and shops | ▶ Sports |
| ▶ Independent living accommodation | ▶ Community and Social Supports |
| ▶ Information | ▶ Wheelchair Sales, Rentals and Repairs. |
| ▶ Peer counselling | |

4.0 Role Description

IWA welcomes volunteers from all walks of life and backgrounds. Volunteers are not required to have any previous experience in volunteering or indeed in the area of disability. To become a volunteer in the organisation candidates are required to be over the age of sixteen.

Volunteers in the age category 16-18 may not be eligible to be involved in specific areas of personal care and other tasks. IWA is committed to ensuring that every volunteer is involved in meaningful activity while volunteering for the association. In order to achieve this it is important that each volunteer is clear about their role and what is expected of them. Therefore every volunteer will be given a role description at induction stage. This document will also outline the activities they will be involved in and the specific tasks entailed in the activities. Where appropriate the role description may also include the times and locations of the activity. The association aims to ensure that the volunteer's specific skills, expertise and interests are utilised and matched to the work of the association in each region. As the work of the association develops, volunteers may be asked to become involved in new activities. Volunteers may also identify activities/ programmes that they would like to become involved in as their knowledge and insight into the organisation grows. Changes in a person's role description will be agreed by both the volunteer and the volunteer support person.

5.0 Volunteer support, training and development

Volunteers are not paid for their involvement with IWA but the organisation is committed to providing support and development opportunities for all volunteers.

In order to provide volunteers with the support that you may require IWA have identified the role of a volunteer support person. Their role is to provide you with one to one support during your time as a volunteer. This nominated volunteer support person may be a staff member or a volunteer.

IWA will provide opportunities to receive training during your time with IWA. Some of the training will be mandatory, including induction training, while other additional training opportunities will be optional.

5.1 Induction training

Every volunteer will be provided with induction training. Induction training will provide you with an opportunity to learn more about the organisation and familiarise you with your volunteer role.

Induction training will include:-

- ▶ History and Structure of IWA
- ▶ Principles and Values of IWA
- ▶ Disability Awareness Training
- ▶ Person Centred Planning
- ▶ General Health and Safety
- ▶ Introduction to IWA policies and procedures

During induction training you will have the opportunity to meet service users, fellow volunteers and staff.

5.2 Role specific training

During your time volunteering with IWA, you may be asked to participate in training relevant to your role, some of which may be mandatory e.g. child protection, manual handling and lifting.

Mandatory training will relate to the specific work a volunteer agrees to carry out. Role specific training will be outlined by your volunteer support person.

5.3 Optional training

Opportunities for optional training may also be provided during your time as a volunteer. These training opportunities may be provided for volunteers only or in conjunction with staff. As well as being applicable to your volunteer role, this training may be beneficial to other roles in your life e.g. work, education etc.

5.4 One-to-one support

One-to-one support sessions will be facilitated by a nominated support person. Support will be provided to a volunteer at least once in the first six weeks of starting and at least once every six months after that. Both the volunteer and support person can arrange support sessions more regularly if they require. These 'support sessions' will provide an opportunity for reflection and feedback between the volunteer and the support person. It is an opportunity to reflect on your learning, to clarify any areas of concern and to assist you in making decisions relevant to your role. If necessary, amendments to your role can be agreed through this process. It is important to note that this process will provide support and develop your skills.

6.0 General Information

6.1 Health and safety

According to health and safety legislation, IWA has a duty of care to its volunteers by ensuring a safe and healthy working environment. All volunteers have an individual responsibility to protect their own health and safety, as well as that of their colleagues and service users. Detailed information on aspects of health and safety are outlined in IWA's Health and Safety Statement. Specific health and safety statements have also been developed for each IWA Resource and Outreach Centre and work place. Your volunteer support person will familiarise you with the health and safety issues relevant to your role.

6.2 Accidents/Incidents

All accidents or incidents that occurs in the course of your volunteering must be reported to the service manager/volunteer support person immediately, and an accident /incident form filled in. These can be obtained from your volunteer support person or IWA manager.

6.3 Confidentiality

During the course of your volunteering you may have access to confidential information regarding IWA and its service users. This information must not be disclosed to third parties during or after volunteering for the organisation. Any breach of confidentiality will be considered gross misconduct and may result in you being asked to discontinue volunteering.

6.4 Person centred approach

IWA design and deliver person centred services that support the individual. Through support, people with disabilities organise the support networks and services they required to enhance their quality of life.

6.5 Concern for service users

If you have any cause for concern regarding the welfare of a person you are supporting, you must report it to the service manager or volunteer support person. This concern may be based on a person's comments or behaviours, an observation or on information you have received from a third party. IWA's aim is to support the person in difficulty, as well as the staff and volunteer working with this person. Reporting your concerns to a manager provides the association with the opportunity for appropriate support to be put in place.

6.6 Mobile Phones

Volunteers who have access to a mobile phone are requested to limit making and receiving personal calls to break times.

6.7 Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all IWA premises and vehicles. Smoking is allowed only in approved external locations, during approved rest periods or breaks.

6.8 Alcohol

Volunteers must adhere to IWA policy in regard to the consumption of alcohol.

6.9 Speaking to the media

Before speaking to the media on behalf of IWA, volunteers must obtain permission from their respective Regional / Area Manager and Director of Communications. The volunteer must act in good faith and not bring the Association's good name into disrepute.

6.10 Retaining personal records

IWA retains information on all service users, volunteers and staff. The information retained relating to volunteers is as follows; your application form, information relating to your application, references, Garda clearance, medical information [where relevant], record of training you have undertaken including induction training, and any other information relevant to your volunteering with IWA. You are entitled to view any information retained and to ask for amendments to be made where it is inaccurate. All information retained by IWA is done in accordance with Data Protection legislation. It is important that you notify your volunteer support person of any changes in personal address or contact details. Your file will be accorded the same confidentiality as staff files.

6.11 Appropriate use of equipment

Volunteers are expected to use equipment in an appropriate and responsible manner, which will benefit the association and its members. Use of IT equipment may be necessary for certain roles. The accessing, viewing and downloading of pornography is strictly prohibited and unlawful.

6.12 Illegal drugs

The consumption of illegal drugs by volunteers during volunteering hours is STRICTLY prohibited. Any breach of this policy will result in a volunteer's immediate dismissal and notification to the appropriate authorities.

6.13 Sexual harassment

IWA strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate acts of bullying and sexual harassment. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that bullying/ harassment does not occur at any level or in any service of IWA. IWA have outlined in the Policies and Procedures manuals, guidelines for any individual who feels that they have been harassed. Your volunteer support person or centre manager will bring this manual to your attention.

6.14 Insurance

IWA volunteers are covered by IWA insurance while engaged in activities sanctioned by the organisation. People using their own cars to provide transport for work purposes may in some instances have to come to an arrangement with their own car insurance company. A certificate of insurance and letter indemnifying IWA should be provided to IWA staff before using a privately owned car in the course of volunteering work.

6.15 Expenses

A volunteer may receive out-of-pocket and other expenses. Expenses are refunded conditional on being approved in advance and being vouched for later by way of receipts, and formally submitted on an IWA claim form.

6.16 Equal Opportunities

IWA works to promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities, staff, volunteers and the general public. Everyone will be treated equally regardless of; gender, race, age, religion, martial /family status, traveller community, sexual orientation or disability.

7.0 Code of Conduct

IWA is committed to ensuring that a person's involvement with the association is a positive and pleasant experience. This applies to people with disabilities, volunteers and staff. IWA therefore asks all volunteers to commit to a Code of Conduct that promotes a positive environment. Where volunteers operate outside this Code of Conduct, they may be asked to discontinue volunteering for the association.

The following behaviours are considered to be in breach of the Code of Conduct:

- ▶ Theft
- ▶ Corruption
- ▶ Misuse of telephone, email, internet and other facilities
- ▶ Viewing or downloading of pornography
- ▶ Criminal conduct
- ▶ Breach of confidentiality
- ▶ Assault, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour of service users, fellow volunteers, staff or the general public
- ▶ Abuse of alcohol and drugs
- ▶ Non adherence to health, safety and hygiene standards
- ▶ All forms of bullying, sexual abuse and/or harassment and discrimination
- ▶ Lack of respect for people with disabilities, fellow volunteers, staff and the general public
- ▶ Adherence to good practice in regard to reliability and commitment
- ▶ Gross negligence.

8.0 Moving on - ending the volunteer involvement

IWA never wants to lose a volunteer but understands that circumstances change and people move on. The two way nature of volunteering means that either the volunteer or the organisation may decide to end the volunteering relationship.

A volunteer may decide to discontinue volunteering for any number of reasons including a change in family/work/education commitments. Equally the volunteer may feel that they have contributed all they can to the work of IWA. If you feel that you can no longer volunteer for IWA, then we would ask that you inform your volunteer support person at the earliest opportunity. While recognising that it is not always possible, IWA would ask you to continue in your volunteer role until alternative arrangements are made to fill this role. Once you have been a volunteer for a period of time, IWA will provide you with a written reference of your participation with the organisation.

Before you finish up IWA would appreciate it if you would provide some feedback on your experience with IWA.

If you have enjoyed your experience please tell others. And of course if you would like to return to IWA then get back in touch and we would be delighted to talk with you.

9.0 Grievance and disciplinary procedures

IWA wants you to enjoy volunteering with the organisation. However, if problems arise in the interest of fairness IWA operates a grievance and disciplinary procedure. This procedure allows for the fair and speedy resolution of difficulties that may arise during a volunteer's involvement with IWA.

If IWA considers that a volunteer is unsuitable for their volunteer role based on their performance, conduct or non adherence to IWA policy and procedures, it retains the right to ask the person to discontinue volunteering.

Details of IWA grievance and disciplinary policy and procedures are available from the centre manager.

IWA thanks you for deciding to become a volunteer and we look forward to your participation in the Association.

Declaration

It is each volunteer's responsibility to adhere to the standards, guiding principles, and Policies and Procedures as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook. We ask volunteers to sign the following declaration that they will abide by these and the Code of Conduct during their time as a volunteer with IWA.

Part A to be retained in booklet

Part B to be detached and returned to your local IWA office.

PART A To be retained by Volunteer

I hereby declare that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the standards, guiding principles and Policies and Procedures outlined in the IWA Volunteer Handbook.

Name (please print)

Date of joining IWA

Address

Name of volunteer support person

Signed

Dated

PART B To be returned to your local IWA office

I hereby declare that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the standards, guiding principles and Policies and Procedures outlined in the IWA Volunteer Handbook.

Name (please print)

Date of joining IWA

Address

Name of volunteer support person

Signed

Dated

Glossary of Terms

ALS:	Assisted Living Services
IWA:	Irish Wheelchair Association
HSE:	Health Service Executive
POM:	Personal Outcome Measures
Volunteer Support Person:	A nominated person (who may be a volunteer or IWA staff member) whose role is to support a new volunteer.

Regional Centres

Ballinagappa Road, Clane, Co Kildare
Tel 045 861 346 | Fax 045 861 144
Email clane@iwa.ie

Claddagh Court, College Road, Kilkenny
Tel 056 776 2775 | Fax 056 776 1921
Email kilkenny@iwa.ie

The Granary, Bessboro, Blackrock, Cork
Tel 021 435 0282 | Fax 021 435 0288
Email cork@iwa.ie

3-4 Liscarton Villas, Kells Road, Navan, Co Meath
Tel 046 907 2539 | Fax 046 907 2657
Email navan@iwa.ie

Cúl Árd, Wellpark, Galway
Tel 091 771 550 | Fax 091 771 549
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