**Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation**

**Volunteer Policy**

**Policy Approved 29th July 2020**

**1. General Principles**

Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation regards volunteers as a valuable resource. We aim to support and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.

Eligibility

Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation will consider involving anyone as a volunteer. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the organisation. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation will be accepted as a volunteer.

Working conditions

Volunteers are treated as a vital support to the Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation team. Volunteers are provided with equipment and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably.

Working times

Volunteer time commitment is flexible, but unscheduled unavailability can create organisational problems. When expecting to be unavailable, volunteers should inform the volunteer co-ordinator as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made. Volunteers should inform their coordinator in advance if they have a planned holiday.

Appropriate behaviour

Volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation and adhere to its ethos. As representatives of the organisation, they are responsible for presenting a positive image of Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation to the outside world.

Representation of Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation

Volunteers must seek prior approval from the Chairperson before undertaking anything which might significantly affect the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the press, joint initiatives with other bodies, and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

Confidentiality

Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation respects the volunteer’s right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation.

Service at the discretion of Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation

Any voluntary service is at the discretion of Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation. Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation may, at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate volunteers’ relationships with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationships with Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, preferably in writing.

**2. Recruitment**

Role descriptions and person specifications

Volunteers require a clear and accurate description of the tasks and responsibilities they are expected to undertake. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment effort, a role description should be developed for each voluntary opportunity.

Applications

Volunteers are recruited in accordance with Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundations equal opportunities policy.

Checks for suitability

References are always taken up. Other checks may also be completed (for example, ascertaining professional qualifications). Volunteers will be asked for their consent in advance of the intention to make these checks. Garda Vetting is required for some volunteering opportunities.

Appointment

Formal appointments are made only after the role description has been agreed and all necessary checks have proved acceptable. No placements are made unless the requirements of the volunteer and the organisation can be met.

Probation

All placements are subject to an initial trial period of one month and suitability will be reviewed.

**3. Training**

Induction

All volunteer drivers should receive induction when they begin voluntary work with Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation. This consists of a general introduction to the organisation, as well as a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of their volunteering role.

**4. Supervision**

Lines of communication

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers must have access to all appropriate information relevant to their assignments. Volunteers must be consulted on all decisions which would substantially affect their volunteering conditions.

Supervisors

Each volunteer must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for the day-to-day management of that volunteer.

Corrective action

If appropriate, corrective action may be taken following evaluation sessions. Examples include the organisation of training for an identified training need, the reassignment of a volunteer, or the dismissal of a volunteer.

Termination of placement

Volunteers who do not adhere to the organisation’s rules or who fail to perform their volunteer assignments satisfactorily may be asked to leave the organisation. The procedures for terminating a volunteer placement are as follows; namely, an allegation is put to them, they are allowed an opportunity to be heard, informal and formal processes ensue, before a decision is made to terminate.

Grounds for immediate dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, misuse of equipment and materials, abuse of clients and co-workers, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide by Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundations policies and procedures, and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

Concerns and grievances

If volunteers are not satisfied that issues relating to their volunteering are being handled appropriately, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by the Board. The Chairperson will discuss the issue as soon as practical after receiving a written complaint, and take appropriate action. The Board makes any ultimate decision.

**5. Support and recognition**

Support

Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation endeavours to provide the support necessary to encourage and empower volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary work. Support forms part of their role and gives volunteers a safe setting in which to express themselves, let off steam and discuss how they feel about volunteering. Management will always try to be available to volunteers who require support in other areas which are affecting their performance.

Recognition

Volunteers provide a unique service to Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. Drogheda Hospice Homecare Management are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation. Management is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times, such as International Volunteer Day, anniversaries of involvement, Christmas and birthdays.

Expenses

Volunteers give their time and skills free of charge, so it is essential that Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation offers to reimburse any out-of-pocket expenses they incur in the course of undertaking voluntary work for the organisation. The costs of volunteering should never be allowed to discourage those on low incomes, particularly as these are often the very people who have the time to volunteer. Current rates are set out by the Board and publicised to all volunteers.

Insurance

Insurance is provided by Drogheda Hospice Homecare Foundation to cover all volunteers working on behalf and at the direction of the organisation.

**6 Exit conditions for volunteers**

Volunteers are free to exit the organisation of their own volition at any time.