

Policy: Pobail le Chéile recognises that volunteers are activists who make a vital and valuable contribution to its project work and that the role they occupy within Pobail le Chéile is important and unique.

1. Scope

1.1 This policy provided a framework of guidelines that deals broadly with the practical aspects of involving volunteers.

1.2 Pobail le Chéile project will keep, readily accessible on site a copy of this volunteer policy.

2. Purpose

2.1 To provide and develop a policy on volunteering so that good and consistent practice is used with regard to involving volunteers in the work of Pobail le Chéile, CDP, Ltd.

2.2 To respect and accommodate the diversity of volunteer experience and to be sensitive to the complexity of arrangements and relationships that this creates.

2.3 To ensure that volunteers have a workplace that guarantees freedom from discrimination, where they can expect respect and recognition for their contribution.

3. Principles

3.1 Pobail le Chéile will ensure that those volunteers offering a regular, rather than a short, commitment are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that the mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to Pobail le Chéile's work.

3.2 Pobail le Chéile does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

3.3 Pobail le Chéile expects staff will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in all appropriate aspects of project work.

3.4 Pobail le Chéile recognises that volunteers require satisfying volunteering experiences and also personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the necessary training for them to undertake their voluntary activity effectively and safely.

4. Procedures

4.1 Recruitment

4.1.1 Normally, everyone registering an interest in volunteering with Pobail le Chéile will receive a registration form and a role description.

4.1.2 Where appropriate, prospective volunteers will be interviewed to find out what they would like to do. Their skills, their suitability for the specific volunteers roles being offered and how best their potential might be realised.

References and Screening

4.1.3 Volunteer recruitment must include reference and screening procedures for all volunteers involved in working with vulnerable people.

4.4 Voluntary Hours

4.4.1 As a volunteer, your hours of work are set out in the Volunteer Agreement. Any changes must be made in conjunction with Pobail Le Chéile.

Absence from Project

4.4.2. Volunteers must notify the project as in advance as possible of any planned absences. Frequent absence from the project will be passed to the co-ordinator to discuss with the volunteer.

4.4 Expenses

4.4.1. Pobail le Chéile is not in a position to reimburse any expenses incurred travelling to and from their Pobail le Chéile volunteering site.

4.4.2 Other expenses may be paid Pobail le Chéile if agreed in advance and reimbursement will be made provided receipts are retained and presented.

4.5 Induction and training

4.5.1 All volunteers will be required to undergo an induction before taking up their role.

4.6 Support and Supervision

4.6.1 All volunteers offering a regular commitment will be provided with monthly support sessions in order to feed back on progress, discuss future development and air any problems.

4.7 Volunteer Appreciation

4.7.1 Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning Pobail le Chéile and its work. These may be through a variety of routes such as at support and supervision sessions.

4.7.2. Volunteer Team Meetings are held on a regular basis and it is important for all volunteers to attend. This is to enable us to support you effectively in your role. It gives you the opportunity to feedback into the management structure your experience of volunteering, what you enjoy, what you find challenging, and areas in which we need to improve practice.

4.7.3. Pobail Le Chéile regularly updates volunteers on issues of interest to them.

4.7.4. Volunteers Appreciation evenings recognise and acknowledge the commitment and significant contribution made by those who volunteer with Pobail Le Chéile.

4.8 Insurance

4.8.1 All volunteers are covered by Pobail le Chéile's employer liability insurance policy whilst they are engaged in any voluntary activity on Pobail le Chéile's behalf during the times they are rostered to be 'on duty'.

4.8.2 All volunteers should conduct themselves in accordance with the company's Health and Safety Policy.

4.10 Conduct

4.10.1 Pobail le Chéile operates an equal opportunities policy. Volunteers are expected to have a commitment to our equal opportunities policy. A copy of the policy is available for volunteers to read.

4.11 Problem Solving

4.11.1 We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. Pobail le Chéile's policy is that good communication, openness, and a willingness to listen, help to resolve issues efficiently and effectively.

4.11.2 Complaints against volunteers may come from another volunteer.

Stage 1:

Whilst in no way diminishing the issue or effect on individuals an informal approach can often resolve matters quickly and effectively. Resolving the problem informally involves the complainant explaining clearly to the person engaging in the unwanted conduct that the behaviour in question is not acceptable and that it interferes with his/her work.

Stage 2:

If the complainant feels that an informal approach has failed, they should raise the matter with the coordinator. Mediation is an alternative method of resolving issues, seeking to arrive at a solution through an agreement between the parties. If both parties agree to resolve the issue by mediation, the coordinator will act as an independent facilitator. If the complaint is not serious then it should be addressed in the support and supervision session. The coordinator can decide if the meeting needs to happen sooner than previously agreed. Where the coordinator deems it necessary an external person may be asked to mediate.

4.11.2 Complaints against volunteers may come from a customer.

(Also note the customer complaints policy ratified in May 2015)

Stage 1:

The person who received the complaint must contact the coordinator immediately and if unavailable, another staff member. An initial assessment of the complaint is made by the coordinator and another staff member or committee member. A summary note recording the complaint should be recorded. To ensure clarity, the photo and contact details of the coordinator should be displayed in Pobail le Chéile premises so that volunteers and customers know who to contact should the need arise.

Stage 2:

If the complaint is not serious then it should be addressed at a Volunteer support and supervision session. The coordinator can decide if the meeting needs to happen sooner than previously agreed. If the complaint is considered serious, the volunteer must be notified immediately that a complaint has been made against them and they must cease their volunteer activity while the complaint is being investigated.

Stage 3:

A Volunteer sub-committee will meet to discuss the complaint. The volunteer will be interviewed and given an opportunity to respond to the complaint. Interviews will be conducted with others implicated as appropriate. All information should be recorded. The sub-committee will make a recommendation based on the information gathered. If the complaint is upheld the volunteer may be asked to end their volunteer role with Siopa Pobail. If the complaint is not upheld the volunteer may continue in their role.

4.11.3 Complaints against customers by a volunteer

If a volunteer feels that the behaviour of a customer is inappropriate, **they have the right to refuse to serve that person.** The volunteer should raise the matter with the coordinator. The coordinator will investigate the grievance and will do his best to resolve the matter. In the interests of natural justice, the customer will be given full details of the nature of the complaint and will be given the opportunity to respond. Where a complaint is not substantiated, no negative inference will be made against the complaint provided it is considered by Pobail le Chéile that the complaint was made in good faith.

4.11.4 Where Pobail le Chéile needs to sever a relationship with a volunteer against his or her wishes, the sole grounds should be that:

- a)** The volunteer in question has irretrievably compromised his or her position with Pobail le Chéile in some way.
- b)** The volunteer is not carrying out his/her duties as agreed. Utmost care should be exercised to ensure that the volunteer understands this.

