

West Cork Music Volunteer Policy



Volunteer and Staff at Bantry House ©Ben Russell

Introduction

1.1 Overall policy on volunteers

The achievement of the goals of West Cork Music are best achieved with the active participation of volunteers in different areas of work. To this end, West Cork Music accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers and West Cork Music staff are encouraged to utilise volunteers in meaningful and productive ways.

1.2 Purpose of volunteer policies

The purpose of the volunteer policies is to provide guidance and direction to both staff and volunteers in volunteer involvement and in the management of volunteers. They are for internal use only and do not constitute a binding contract. West Cork Music can alter these policies at any time.

1.3 Scope of volunteer policies

Unless specifically stated, these policies apply to all volunteers in all programmes and projects undertaken by West Cork Music.

1.4 Staff management of volunteers

West Cork Music management shall agree on the use and numbers of volunteers for different events. A designated staff member (line manager) shall be responsible for liaising with volunteers before, during and after their work is completed.

1.5 Definition of a volunteer

A 'volunteer' is anyone who, without the expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of West Cork Music. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by West Cork Music prior to the performance of the task. Volunteers will not be considered as 'employees' of the agency.

1.6 Employees as volunteers

West Cork Music accepts the services of staff as volunteers. This service is outside the normal scope of a staff-member's duties and outside the usual working hours. The undertaking or refusal to undertake volunteer tasks will not in any way affect a staff-member's standing or prospects at West Cork Music. Family members of staff are allowed to volunteer at West Cork Music.

1.7 Service at the discretion of West Cork Music

West Cork Music accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of West Cork Music. Volunteers agree that the agency may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with West Cork Music.

Likewise, the volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever the volunteer's relationship with West Cork Music. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the relevant staff member at West Cork Music.

1.8 Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Volunteers are considered valuable resources by West Cork Music and its staff. Volunteers have the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done.

In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the ethos and mission of West Cork Music.

1.9 Scope of volunteer involvement

Volunteers may be used in all projects and activities of West Cork Music, but will not be used to displace any paid employees from their positions.

Volunteer Management Procedures

2.1 Representation of the agency

Volunteers are not authorised to make public statements as representatives of West Cork Music.

Volunteers are not authorised to resell or offer free tickets to the public, nor to admit members of the public without a ticket, unless authorised to do so by their line manager.

2.2 Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all propriety or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the agency or other corrective action.

2.3 Working conditions

Volunteers shall have the necessary facilities, equipment and space to enable them to work effectively and comfortably.

Volunteers shall be entitled to work breaks where their tasks exceeds three consecutive hours.

Volunteers shall be responsible for presenting a good public image and shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their tasks.

2.3.1 Working conditions – behaviour with staff, volunteers and audience

Volunteers, staff and audience all have the right to be treated with respect and likewise are expected to treat others with respect. Bullying behaviour and behaviour that will cause distress to others is not acceptable. If such instances occur please tell your line manager.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

3.1 Communicating position descriptions

Volunteers shall be told prior to the commencement of their work with West Cork Music what tasks they may be asked to perform and what their responsibilities will be. West Cork Music may ask volunteers to perform additional tasks that were not previously specified, as circumstances require.

3.2 Staff requests for volunteers and new volunteer positions

Additional volunteers may be recruited upon agreement by senior management. Staff wishing for volunteers to be assigned to their team, or for additional volunteers may make a request to the Festival or Event Coordinator. Volunteers may also request additional volunteers be assigned to work with them to help perform the assigned task.

3.3 Recruitment

The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability to perform a task. Volunteers must be physically capable of performing the tasks assigned to them. Volunteers are required to inform West Cork Music if there are tasks which they are unable to perform. While every effort will be made to be inclusive and to find alternative tasks, West Cork Music may refuse to accept service from volunteers who cannot perform the required tasks or who refuse to perform tasks requested of them.

Past service as a volunteer does not guarantee a place as volunteer for future festivals or events. West Cork Music may refuse a request to volunteer at the discretion of the Festival/Event Manager, allowing West Cork Music to open up volunteering opportunities to others.

3.4 Documents for non-EU volunteers

Volunteers requiring visas are required to inform West Cork Music. Any documents required by volunteers to obtain an appropriate visa are the responsibility of the volunteer.

3.5 Placements and assignments

Volunteers who wish to be assigned to particular tasks should inform West Cork Music prior to the commencement of the placement. Attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer.

Volunteers shall not perform services for West Cork Music that require certification or licensing unless currently certified or licensed to do so. West Cork Music may request proof of certification or licensing.

3.6 Re-assignment

Volunteers who wish to be assigned different tasks may make a request to their line manager. Every effort will be made to accommodate re-assignment requests, but may be refused as circumstances require.

Staff who feel that a volunteer is best suited to a different task should discuss the matter with the Festival Coordinator.

3.7 Length of service

The length of service shall be agreed between the volunteer and West Cork Music prior to commencement of the assignment. West Cork Music or the volunteer may request an extension or renewal of a volunteer's services. Volunteers are expected to complete the agreed upon length of service and should give early notice if they are unable to do so.

Volunteer Supervision and Training

4.1 Upon arrival

Volunteers should speak to their line manager upon arrival. The line manager shall outline the daily tasks and activities and give appropriate guidance or training in any equipment or IT programmes. Volunteers will receive specific on the job training to provide them the information and skills necessary to perform their assignment.

The line manager shall give additional information regarding volunteer care and welfare during their assignment, including where appropriate, information on accommodation and meals.

4.2 Supervision

Supervision may be given by a member of staff or by another volunteer. The volunteer shall be informed who the supervisor will be. The supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that the volunteer's tasks are completed. The supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that the volunteer is given all necessary information for their safety and welfare, including workplace safety, accommodation and meals.

4.3 Volunteer/Staff relationships

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the ethos, overall mission and objectives of West Cork Music. Each has an essential and complementary role to play. It is essential that both staff and volunteers accept and respect the needs and abilities of the other and that respect, consideration and value are given to each by the other.

Staff are encouraged to consider how a volunteer can have the most valuable and well-rounded experience, and how they can be put to best use.

4.4 Lines of communication

Volunteers are entitled to all pertinent information necessary to perform their tasks. To facilitate lines of communication, volunteers should give current contact information (mobile phone and email) to the Festival Coordinator and/or line manager prior to commencement, on the understanding that this information may be used by any West Cork staff member for the purpose of achieving the objectives of West Cork Music. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives necessary information rests with the line manager.

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist both formally and informally.

Volunteer Performance

5.1 Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties in a regular, scheduled and timely manner. In the case of illness or other unexpected causes of absence or delay please inform the line manager as early as possible.

5.2 Standards of performance

The key performance indicators for volunteers centre around creating a festival atmosphere and excellent events:

- Keeping concert and rehearsal venues clean and comfortable for artists and audiences.
- Efficient stage management for artists.
- Good interpersonal skills in communicating with audiences, artists and others.

5.3.1 Guidelines for interactions with audience

The Festivals are very busy for both volunteers and for audience members. The large number of events spread out around Bantry and the wider Bantry area, can create stressful situations, especially where people are trying to get to events, or the Festival team is stretched.

If you are in a situation with a member of the audience or the public that is becoming difficult or stressful please:

- Remain calm and polite
- Explain that you are a volunteer and offer to find a member of staff for them to talk to – it is best to avoid getting into an argument
- If the person is a tourist wanting to visit Bantry House, please tell them you are not employed by the House and that their enquiries should be directed to the Bantry House staff
- If the situation arises where you feel that a member of the public has been offensive, please stay calm, walk away and tell a senior member of staff.

Volunteers do not have the responsibility to deny admission to members of the public, where they have purchased, or intend to purchase a ticket, unless in conflict with other admission policies (e.g. Covid-19 Safety Policies). If the situation arises where a volunteer has good and sufficient reason for believing that a member of the public should be refused admission, contact the venue manager, event coordinator or line manager.

Where instructed to do so, volunteers can request ticket holders to wait until a convenient interval to enter the venue, if the event has started.

5.3.2 Guidelines for interactions with venues

West Cork Music uses a variety of venues in Bantry and the West Cork area. It is important that volunteers show respect for the venue itself and the staff working there.

Event coordinators may delegate liaising with venue staff to a volunteer, but otherwise, if there is an issue with the venue, please inform the event coordinator or production manager.

Avoid arguments and altercations with venue staff. If a volunteer feels that a venue staff member has been offensive, please stay calm, walk away and tell your line manager.

5.3.3 Guidelines for interactions with other volunteers, WCM staff and casual staff

West Cork Music has a policy of respect and inclusion for everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, family status, civil status, sexual orientation, disability or membership of the Travelling community. Discrimination and bullying are not tolerated and will be reprimanded. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary measures.

If you feel you have been subjected to discriminatory or bullying behaviour, inform your line manager.

Events and festivals can be stressful environments for staff, volunteers and artists. Please be considerate and understanding of these circumstances.

Sometimes too many people can add to a stressful situation. Offering to help is welcomed, but if your offer is refused, you should accept this answer. If you have not been assigned to a task and are asked to leave so that a member of staff or another volunteer can complete their task, please do so.

5.3.4 Guidelines for interactions with artists

Volunteers must be aware that artists are at a West Cork Music event to work, and should not be distracted before a performance. Volunteers should be discreet in their interactions with artists and respectful of an artist's needs or wishes prior to a performance.

5.4.1 Scope volunteer responsibilities

Volunteers may be given tasks and assignments where they are in positions of responsibility for venues, equipment, cash and people. Care and respect must be taken in these situations.

A member of the box office staff will explain cash handling procedures to volunteers prior to the event.

If a volunteer does not wish to have responsibility for handling cash, please inform the event coordinator before the event begins.

5.4.2 Volunteer purchasing powers

If a volunteer believes that additional equipment or supplies are needed to successfully complete their tasks or for the event, inform the event coordinator, detailing the purpose and cost. The event coordinator must approve the purchase.

The volunteer can either request cash in advance from the West Cork Music office, or be reimbursed after purchase.

All receipts must be kept and given to the West Cork Music office or the event coordinator.

Helen Dawson
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