

Mental Health
Ireland



Mental Health Ireland National Volunteer Strategy 2023-2026





"I chose to volunteer for Mental Health Ireland because I, like many others, have experienced my own mental health challenges. I recognised the importance of recovery and mental wellbeing and wanted to be part of the positive change taking place in Ireland."



CONTENTS

Glossary	2
Chairperson's Opening Statement	4
CEO's Address	5
Mental Health Ireland's Mission, Vision & Values	6
Purpose	7
Background and Context of the National Volunteer Strategy	8
Coproducing the National Volunteer Strategy	9
Defining Volunteering within Mental Health Ireland	11
Volunteering: The Current Landscape	12
Volunteering: Possibilities and Limitations	14
Mental Health Ireland's Volunteering Journey	16
Identifying Priority Areas and Actions	18
Priorities, Objectives and Actions	19
Monitoring and Evaluation of Strategy	24
Acknowledgments	26
Appendices	27

Bilingual A person who speaks two languages.

Coproduction A strengths-based inclusive process that incorporates the experience and expertise of people as equal participants from the very beginning and throughout the process, planning, development, delivery and evaluation of projects and services.

Family and Friends Close network of social supports who may or may not be related and may or may not live together.

Lived Experience Individuals with personal and/or family experience of mental health challenges.

Mental Health A state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. (WHO, 2004)

Mental Health Challenge This is when a person experiences distress that results in changes in thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. This will vary from person to person, as will the supports that they need in their recovery.

MHA Mental Health Association

MHI Mental Health Ireland

MoU **Memorandum of Understanding and Coproduction** In Mental Health Ireland this refers to a document describing the process of working through coproduction and how this can be achieved in partnership with other groups and organisations.

Multilingual A person who speaks more than two languages.

Non-linear Not progressing in a straightforward way; may change direction or develop in different directions at the same time.

Recovery Education Is the process by which individuals explore, assimilate, and create the knowledge required for recovery to occur in their own lives or in the lives of those they support.

Volunteers Volunteers are from all walks and stages of life, nationalities, ages, and abilities. What they have in common is the desire, energy and willingness to make a difference in their community – and in their own life – by giving of their time, skills and expertise.

Volunteering The voluntary commitment by people of their time, of their knowledge, expertise, skills and abilities for the benefit of the activities and achievements of local Mental Health Associations and Mental Health Ireland.

Volunteerism The voluntary act by people of their time, of their knowledge, expertise, skills, and abilities for the benefit of the activities and achievements of local Mental Health Associations and Mental Health Ireland.

Wellbeing Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life. (WHO, 2001)

Chairperson's Opening Statement

Hugh Kane, Chairperson



Mental Health Ireland is a national voluntary organisation and volunteers play a vital role at all levels, on the Board of Directors and across the network of Mental Health Associations. Volunteers bring an energy, enthusiasm, and a fresh perspective. People from all backgrounds and walks of life generously give their time and talents to improve the quality of life for their communities.

Being a volunteer can give a great sense of purpose and satisfaction and this work can bring immediate benefits to individuals and local communities. At Mental Health Ireland, we are very fortunate to have a cadre of volunteers who are motivated to make a difference, to make things better and to do so discreetly, without a fanfare or expectation of reward.

Being a volunteer is not a solo pursuit and requires support, collaboration, leadership, and training. In this National Volunteer Strategy we have worked through coproduction to understand the needs of volunteers and to respond to these needs.

Mental health is a broad field, and each member of our community can make a contribution: raising awareness, promoting mental health, befriending, providing social connection and services. This is important work and can be very rewarding. It must also be organised and efficient if it is to be effective and impactful.

In Spring 2022, Mental Health Ireland launched its national strategy '*Mental Health for All – Hope, Strength and Action 2022-2024*'. It would simply not be possible to realise any of the objectives set out there without the wonderful contribution that volunteers make.

As Chairperson of Mental Health Ireland, I would like to thank and acknowledge the work of the existing volunteers and to extend a welcome to those who would wish to join Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations in making Ireland a better place to live for all.

Hugh Kane
Chairperson

Mental Health Ireland

CEO's Address

Martin Rogan, CEO



Research tells us that being a volunteer is good for you. It boosts skills, community connection and a sense of purpose. Volunteering is an important role and we want to foster and sustain the sense of collective effort aligned to Mental Health Ireland's shared strategic goals. Mental Health Ireland want to build on this strong foundation and sustain the focus and quality of work, so this Volunteer National Strategy is designed to note the key challenges and to propose practical solutions, so the focus and quality of the work is sustained. This new National Volunteer Strategy looks at the whole life cycle of volunteering from induction and training through to ongoing support and development.

Volunteers are at the heart of the work and bring a special warmth and quality. Human contact, affirmation and genuine concern are vital to protecting and restoring mental health, and volunteers understand this better than anyone.

Thank you for your support and interest. If you would like to learn more about volunteering with Mental Health Ireland or your local mental health association, we would like to hear from you.

Martin Rogan
CEO

Mental Health Ireland

For almost 60 years volunteers have played a central and pivotal role in Mental Health Associations and in Mental Health Ireland. Right across the country, volunteers commit their time and energy to a broad range of programmes and projects to assist others and to offer a helping hand. Many bring particular skills in organising, social media, accounting, fundraising, befriending, mental health promotion and a broad range of community connection and social supports.

For many people in Ireland, life has been difficult, sometimes overwhelming, and this can really knock their confidence. Responding to people at a vulnerable time can make such an extraordinary difference. It reaffirms our values and sends a powerful signal of hope. Taking a moment to check in with a neighbour or friend can make a huge difference. Volunteers in Mental Health Associations work within their communities to be that point of human connection.

The work done by our volunteers is greatly regarded and appreciated by the communities who support them through fundraising and other supports. Voluntary organisations can respond quickly and can reach into communities in ways that larger organisations find difficult. This is particularly important in mental health.

Mental Health Associations attract volunteers across all life stages. People who bring a range of talents and skills. From their busy lives, they donate their most valuable resource – their time. As an organisation, we are very mindful of just how valuable people's time is and we don't want to waste it. It is important to make sure that the experience of being a volunteer with a Mental Health Association is satisfying, rewarding and enjoyable.

Mission, Vision & Values

MISSION

Our Mission is to promote and enhance mental health and wellbeing and to create a culture where we are all respected and supported, especially when our mental health is challenged.

VISION

Our Vision is for an Ireland where mental health is valued and supported as an essential part of everyone's health, so that individuals, family and friends, and communities can thrive.

VALUES

The principles of human rights, equality and equity, recovery and trauma-informed care are all integral to and at the core of our work.

We are committed to using coproduction, being evidence informed, improving accessibility, ensuring inclusion & representation and becoming more sustainable in our practices.

We value volunteers, staff and partners through creating a respectful, equal, and supportive environment.

Transparency, good governance, and compliance with the highest ethical standards are intrinsic to our work.

Purpose

This National Volunteer Strategy will:

- Support current Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations volunteers.
- Develop opportunities and pathways for new volunteers.
- Define being a volunteer and volunteering to reflect Mental Health Ireland's Mission, Vision and Values.
- Respond to the changing landscape of volunteering.
- Recognise and acknowledge that there are limitations to volunteering.
- Provide clear and transparent priorities, objectives and actions that will support the ongoing growth and development of volunteering.
- Monitor and evaluate the National Volunteer Strategy's implementation (both progress and outputs).

"Over my years as a volunteer, I have seen huge progress in terms of conversations around wellness and mental health promotion."



Background and Context for a National Volunteer Strategy

Mental Health Ireland was established in 1966 and has been an innovator in the promotion of mental health in Ireland for over half a century. Today, Mental Health Ireland's aim is to promote mental health and wellbeing for all individuals and communities and to support people with lived experience of mental health challenges in their recovery, bringing practical expression to national policy objectives. We would not be able to achieve this without the incredible work that takes place through the network of active Mental Health Associations within the Republic of Ireland. Mental Health Associations are tirelessly run by dedicated volunteers and staff who work passionately to

promote mental health, whilst supporting people who experience mental health challenges within their own communities.

The new National Volunteer Strategy has evolved from Priority Areas and Objectives stated in the National Strategy 'Mental Health for All - Hope, Strength and Action 2022-2024'. Mental Health Ireland aims to *strengthen the relationship with Mental Health Associations and community partners to maximise the reach and impact of the work and create an organisational culture where staff, volunteers and Mental Health Associations are valued, supported, respected and empowered.*

"I have improved greatly in many skills and qualities, while also being kinder to and understanding myself on a deeper level."

Mental Health Ireland's new National Volunteer Strategy strives to support the current volunteers along with new volunteers by clearly defining what is meant by volunteering, ensuring best practice, and strengthening governance and compliance. Mental Health Ireland also endeavours to create additional volunteering opportunities within the organisation so that skills and expertise can be shared whilst ensuring that volunteers feel supported, informed, recognised, valued, and celebrated.



Coproducing the National Volunteer Strategy



Ireland's 'National Framework for Recovery in Mental Health' (2018-2020) in conjunction with New Economics Foundation (2009) names coproduction as one of the four key principles for recovery, describing it as:

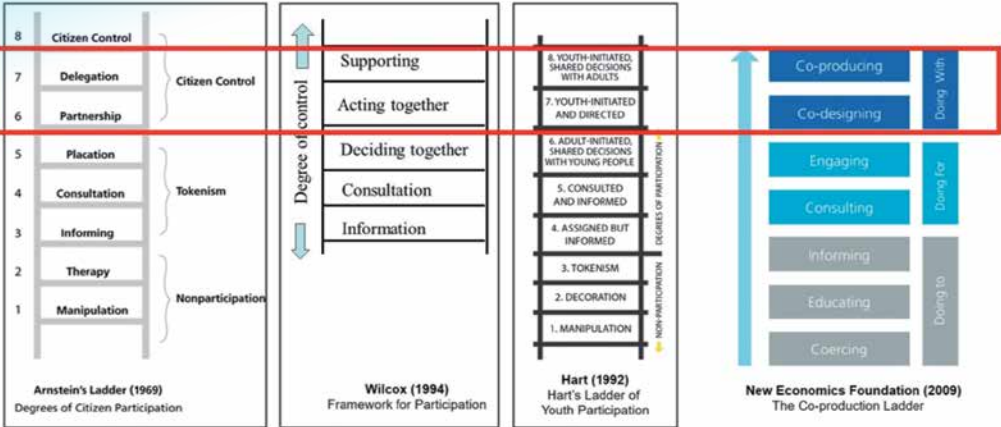
"Delivering in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours."

Informed by this, Mental Health Ireland has created a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on coproduction. The MoU supports the staff, volunteers, and partners in embedding coproduction as a core process.

Coproduction is a strengths-based process that incorporates equal participation from the very beginning and throughout the process, planning, development, delivery and evaluation. For Mental Health Ireland, this means having people with lived and family experience of mental health challenges as active participants alongside professionals from community and voluntary sectors, mental health services, or wider community representatives.



PARTICIPATORY MODELS



There are many different ways of engaging the public and key stakeholders in projects and initiatives that ultimately affect them. They are not all equal.

(Mental Health Ireland Strategy 2022 - 2024 Page 16, fig. 2)

Mental Health Ireland is committed to actively coproducing the National Volunteer Strategy and to actively include the necessary representation from Mental Health Ireland staff, Board Members, Members of Mental Health Associations, Volunteers, Peer Educators, and partner groups. All representatives will have the single view of coming together to coproduce the National Volunteer Strategy.

The first coproduction session was held in November 2021. At this session the group began the process of collating previous data specific to both volunteering and volunteers. The group also engaged with the national network of Development Officers along with members of staff, to get up to date information about the number of active

associations, the number of new associations coming online and the number of volunteers both within these associations and nationally. Volunteers and staff were also asked what is it that they felt was important to see captured within a National Volunteer Strategy. The coproduction group met monthly for a period of 9 months. A subgroup was established to categorise the information gathered into priority areas, detailed objectives, and specific actions.

Forty volunteers, board members, staff members and peer workers from recovery services provided feedback and comments on the draft National Volunteer Strategy. The coproduction group ensured a variety of methods of consultation, including three online sessions and the option to provide feedback by email.

Defining Volunteering within Mental Health Ireland

"I, like many others, have experienced my own mental health challenges. I recognised the importance of recovery and mental wellbeing and wanted to be part of the positive change taking place in Ireland."

The coproduction group reviewed and considered a number of research papers – both national and international – before agreeing on a definition of volunteering to reflect Mental Health Ireland’s Mission, Vision and Values.

Defining Volunteers

"Volunteers are from all walks and stages of life, nationalities, ages, and abilities. What they have in common is the desire, energy and willingness to make a difference in their community – and in their own life – by giving of their time, skills and expertise and through ambassadorship. Volunteers are involved in all aspects of the activities representative of Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations that include health, education, social services, sports, recreation, culture, the arts, fundraising and the environment."

Defining Volunteering

"The voluntary commitment by people of their time, of their knowledge, expertise, skills and abilities for the benefit of the activities and achievements of local Mental Health Associations and Mental Health Ireland in line with Mental Health Ireland’s Strategy."

Potential benefits for volunteers within Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations will include personal satisfaction, experience in key areas of promotion of mental health, committee roles, spokesperson, developing specific skills, Public Relations, marketing, communications and may also allow individuals to test out potential career options.

Volunteering will tend to include three core elements:

Volunteering activity is unpaid.

It will benefit the broader community through helping to improve society and the lives of others.

It is undertaken freely and not compelled so it is completely voluntary.



Volunteering: The Current Landscape

According to Volunteer Ireland, in 2018 about a million Irish people – more than a quarter of over-14s – were volunteering, clocking up 233 million hours of peoplepower a year.

As well as the satisfaction from making a positive difference within their local community, volunteers have reported better mental health, better physical health, and a greater opportunity to make friends.

Based on responses from 13,095 volunteers registered on the National Volunteering database I-VOL in 2018, the top motivations for choosing to volunteer are:



The landscape of volunteering and how individuals volunteer has and continues to change. Within Mental Health Associations throughout Ireland at present there are approximately 280 active volunteers. Within the organisation volunteers have occupied a variety of roles including committee roles consisting of board members/chair/vice chair/treasurer as well as project specific roles including fundraising and peer support volunteers. In the wake of the global pandemic, the ways in which people can volunteer has altered significantly with informal volunteering becoming more popular. With this in mind, it has become increasingly important for Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations to adapt to how people will volunteer into the future by creating new opportunities while continuing to value the current volunteers.

Virtual volunteering and project/task specific volunteering are two new trends that have become popular in recent years.

Virtual volunteering is carried out entirely or partially via the internet and can work well for volunteer roles relating to social media, content creation, graphic design work, mentoring/coaching, on-line trainings etc. Virtual volunteering opens additional opportunities for people of all abilities and removes the need for volunteers to be based in a particular location. The introduction of these accessible options creates a more inclusive volunteer culture in Mental Health Ireland and in Mental Health Associations.

Task/project specific volunteering is an alternative to an open-ended, long-term commitment, where volunteers complete a specific task within an agreed time frame. This form of volunteering has become more popular when individuals have limited time to contribute and are not restricted by location. This form of volunteering lends itself particularly well to mental health promotion initiatives such as the **Hello, How Are You?** Campaign and **World Mental Health Month** as well as fundraising initiatives. It also supports project specific tasks such as once off administration support and can also support specific cohorts, companies, and students to volunteer together.



"Carlow Mental Health Association are a great bunch of people and we have become friends, so I benefit personally from time spent working on projects with like-minded people."



Volunteering: Possibilities and Limitations

In Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations, voluntary activity is designed to promote mental health, wellbeing and recovery. The possibilities of volunteering within Mental Health Ireland are highlighted by the significant amount of requests from individuals looking to volunteer, to share their experience and expertise across a wide variety of different areas from supporting mental health wellbeing and recovery activities to website and social media content creation.

However, limitations to volunteering do exist due to factors such as geographical location, matching of skills sets and flexibility with time commitments. The criteria for volunteering, as set out in Appendix A, addresses these potential limitations*. This strategy will help us to clearly define volunteer processes.

"Keep talking, talking, talking. As the saying goes: a problem shared is a problem halved. I'm a big believer in positive mental attitude and think that if you have a positive mental attitude and think positively you can overcome so much."

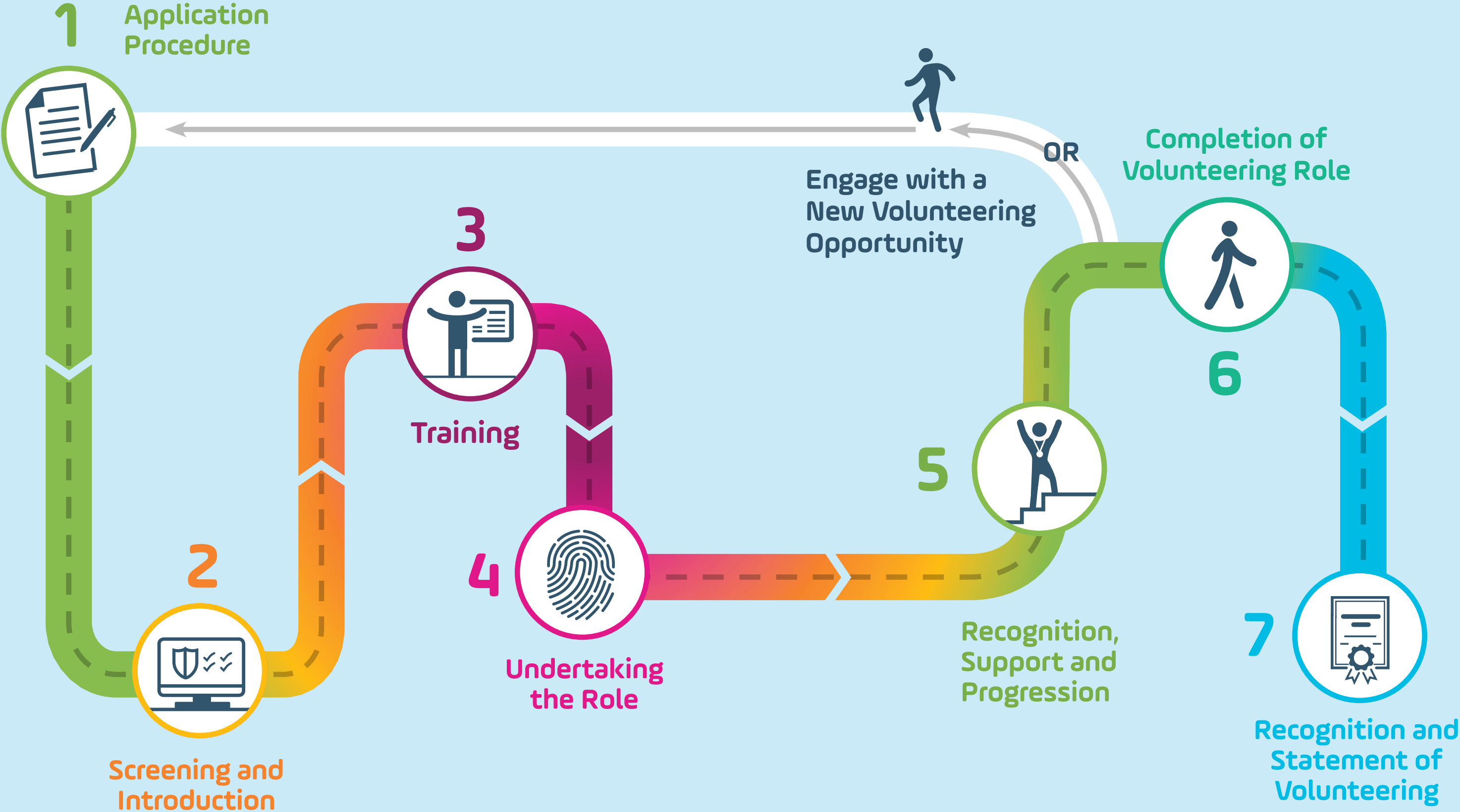
"I want to help others out rather than sit at home bored. If we don't try out new things, we will never broaden our horizons."

"It is an honour to be able to share my caring knowledge and insights with others in need."

"By volunteering my time, I am hopefully helping out others and also helping myself by occupying my time and in the process hopefully making many new friends. It's a win, win situation."

*Mental Health Ireland does not engage with organisations that could cause a conflict of interest organisationally and possibly for volunteers.





Identifying Priority Areas and Actions

1. Plan for volunteer engagement

2. Provide volunteer training and development

3. Ensure the necessary volunteer policies and procedures are in place, are fit for purpose and are implemented

4. Ensure volunteering is inclusive, accessible and sustainable

Over the years, volunteering and volunteerism has played a vital role in both Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations. It covers a broad range of activities and offers various volunteering opportunities within communities across Ireland. While preparing this strategy, we have listened closely to the needs of volunteers within communities, Mental Health Associations, staff and community partners.

As this is the first iteration of a National Volunteer Strategy coproduced by Mental Health Ireland, we have created a foundation in which clear and specific goals are reflective of the current volunteering needs across both Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations. We envisage further iterations of this strategy which will grow from the foundations laid out within this strategy.

This strategy identifies the most important tasks that will advance our mission, vision and incorporate our values. In setting out our priorities we clearly state our objectives, actions and how we will achieve our goals, making it clear and transparent for anyone who wishes to volunteer with Mental Health Ireland or Mental Health Associations.

This strategy is presented under four priority areas which address the current needs within both Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations. While each area is presented separately, they are all interrelated and complement one other.

Within each of the priority areas we have grouped together the objectives which help co-ordinate and synchronise the work at all levels. Objectives must clearly state the intentions of this strategy.

Actions have been assigned to each of the objectives. These actions are clear, and they guide a particular task or workflow so that we can progress and follow through in achieving the goals.

PRIORITY AREA



Plan for Volunteer Engagement

1.1

OBJECTIVES

Establish clearly defined and transparent volunteer processes that will support volunteers and volunteering within Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations.

ACTIONS

- 1.1.1 Review and update the current templates relating to the volunteer processes, where none exist, draft new policies and procedures.
- 1.1.2 To set out clear criteria and expectations for volunteering.
- 1.1.3 To coproduce templates and processes that ensure best practice is adhered to.
- 1.1.4 Extend established marketing and recruitment processes specifically for those from priority groups and with lived experience to become volunteers.

1.2

Ensure that volunteer's dedication and hard work is valued, recognised, supported, and celebrated.

- 1.2.1 Explore the feasibility of a digital platform for volunteers to access communication and relevant opportunities, policies & procedures.
- 1.2.2 Coproduce a volunteer recognition and acknowledgment process.

1.3

Ensure greater involvement of people with lived experience of mental health challenges and their family members / supporters in the development, design, and delivery of recovery oriented services.

- 1.3.1 Work with Volunteer Ireland to understand and learn from them in relation to creating a welcoming and supportive volunteer culture.
- 1.3.2 Embed volunteering and volunteers in Mental Health Ireland communications and public relations.

Priority Areas and Actions

PRIORITY AREA

2 Provide Volunteer Training and Development

2.1

Provide consistent, reliable and relevant training for all volunteers.

- 2.1.1** Undertake a volunteer training needs analysis within Mental Health Ireland and existing Mental Health Associations.
- 2.1.2** Establish a training template for Mental Health Associations with a focus on good governance principles, Charity Regulation, & risk management.
- 2.1.3** Provide clarity on the importance of volunteerism and create a volunteer welcome pack.

2.2

To co-design, coproduce and cofacilitate a suite of training modules for all volunteers within Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations.

- 2.2.1** Identify existing relevant internal and external training modules*
- 2.2.2** Coproduce and cofacilitate relevant modules to address identified training gaps and emerging needs.
- 2.2.3** Develop a digital directory of third-party trainings that are available.

2.3

To reinforce the membership agreement between Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations to the agreed vision, mission, values, goals and objectives.

- 2.3.1** Strengthen existing and build new relationships between Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations.
- 2.3.2** Create opportunities for volunteers to work in coproduction with Mental Health Ireland staff and volunteers on national and local projects.
- 2.3.3** Generate networking opportunities between Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations.
- 2.3.4** Improve communications by implementing the recommendations of Mental Health Ireland's communication plan.
- 2.3.5** Strengthen communication structures through the development of an improved volunteer database.

* Please see appendix B

Priority Areas and Actions

PRIORITY AREA

3 Ensure the Necessary Volunteer Policies and Procedures are in place, are fit for Purpose and are Implemented

3.1

To ensure transparency, inclusion, equality and diversity at all stages of the volunteer cycle.

- 3.1.1** To coproduce Mental Health Ireland's Volunteer Policy.
- 3.1.2** To ensure to embed the volunteer in all relevant Mental Health Ireland policies.
- 3.1.3** To develop clear and transparent pathways to become a volunteer.
- 3.1.4** To create awareness of volunteering opportunities and actively recruit from the range of priority groups identified in *Sharing the Vision* (2020-2030).

3.2

Have a clear and accessible suite of policies for volunteers.

- 3.2.1** Provide access to all policies in multiple formats.
- 3.2.2** Coproduce a clear and concise volunteer handbook.
- 3.2.3** Coproduce a toolkit and templates for Mental Health Associations to develop their own policy toolkits.

3.3

Ensure adherence to governance and mandatory obligations.

- 3.3.1** Include access to all relevant policies as part of the volunteer induction.
- 3.3.2** Collate and review templates to support adherence to governance and mandatory obligations.
- 3.3.3** Ensure volunteers are Garda vetted (where applicable) and receive necessary training in mandatory processes and obligations.

Priority Areas and Actions

PRIORITY AREA

4

Ensure Volunteering is Inclusive, Accessible and Sustainable

4.1

To make volunteer roles and opportunities easily accessible.

OBJECTIVES

ACTIONS

- 4.1.1 Establish flexible pathways to volunteering.
- 4.1.2 Coproduce templates for roles with accessible language and with ease of access for volunteers and Mental Health Associations.
- 4.1.3 Identify and develop new opportunities for hybrid volunteering including technology requirements, appropriate training, and protocols.

4.2

Attract and engage volunteers from priority groups.

- 4.2.1 Build relationships with priority groups and provide volunteering opportunities which recognise needs and differences.
- 4.2.2 Coproduce resources in accessible formats and languages.

4.3

Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations will continue to strengthen their governance relating to volunteering.

- 4.3.1 Adhere and comply with all statutory and legislative requirements.
- 4.3.2 To ensure relevant ongoing governance training information and resources is available to volunteers.



"I love being a volunteer because it is a privilege to be able to be involved and show support to people who are experiencing mental health difficulties. It is very satisfying to be able to use the knowledge skills that I gained in my work and personal life to support others."

"If anyone is considering volunteering I would encourage them to do so without hesitation as it's a very positive, valuable experience."

"We take great pride in our voluntary work and are constantly looking for new opportunities to work within our community to reduce stigma around mental health challenges... an issue we all need to be mindful of."



Monitoring and Evaluation of Strategy

As an organisation, Mental Health Ireland are committed to establishing what works well and what can be done better. To achieve this, metrics will be identified to measure the goals and objectives of this National Volunteer Strategy and a system will be put in place to produce regular reports to track progress. Evaluation of Mental Health Ireland’s Volunteer Strategy will enable us to assess our progress against the stated objectives.

It will help us to answer questions such as:

- How much progress has been made towards our vision?
- Which of the objectives have been completed successfully?
- Which objectives need to be changed or are no longer needed?
- If goals were not achieved, what were the reasons?

In coproducing this strategy, the group identified outputs, outcomes and ways to measure these so that our progress can be assessed at regular intervals. The evaluation process will include the voice and experiences of volunteers and staff to ensure that the volunteers, experiences are captured through questionnaires and/or online evaluations. The following outlines the processes that will be used to measure the outputs and outcomes from this strategy.

Output	What we are doing
Establish clearly defined and transparent volunteer processes that will support volunteers and volunteering within Mental Health Ireland and Mental Health Associations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Setting out clear volunteering criteria* and expectationsCreation of a:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Volunteer application process**Volunteer Induction ProgrammeVolunteer PolicyVolunteer HandbookVolunteer Welcome PackCoproducing a volunteer area on the digital platform

Outputs are straightforward to define and measure. They are the things that happen or are produced. For example, one objective is to establish clear and transparent volunteer processes that will support volunteers. It is easy to establish if these processes happen.

Outcomes can be more difficult to measure and define, and they require specific tools and methods to measure. Taking the volunteer processes example again, one of the objectives is to create clear and transparent volunteer processes that will support volunteers but that is part of achieving a wider goal around supporting volunteers. The outcome from this approach is that volunteers will feel supported, valued and included. To measure this, we will develop a method to assess the experience of volunteers. Measuring outputs and outcomes over the course of the strategy will provide an assessment of impact.

Outcome	What we are doing
Volunteers will feel supported, valued, and included.	Developing questionnaires to capture the volunteers’ experiences and whether they feel supported, valued and included.





Acknowledgements

Mental Health Ireland would like to acknowledge the time, skills, experience, energy and enthusiasm of the coproduction group who worked tirelessly to make this National Volunteer Strategy a reality.

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- Finola Colgan**, Development Officer, Midlands, Louth & Meath
- Catherine Brogan**, Deputy CEO
- Claire Flynn**, Development Officer, Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary
- Ann Sheridan**, Volunteer Board Director Mental Health Ireland
- Jo Donohoe**, Mental Health Promotion Manager
- Maria Healy Walsh**, Operations Manager
- Stuart Garland**, Learning and Capacity Building Manager, Volunteer Ireland
- Paul Dowling**, EVE Larine, Centre Manager and Kildare Mental Health Association Volunteer
- Georgina Lawless**, Fundraising, Engagement & Volunteer Manager
- James Fennelly**, West Clare Mental Health Association Volunteer
- Ciaran Harte**, Volunteer
- Chloe Whelan**, Volunteer
- Ainna Fawcett Henesy**, Volunteer
- Sonia Rennicks**, Head of Education, Training and eMental Health
- Billy Clarke**, Recovery Education Facilitator, Mayo Recovery College

Mental Health Ireland would like to thank all the Mental Health Associations, volunteers, recovery teams, partners, board members and wider team members for their contribution and feedback at the consultation sessions and in written formats.

Appendices

Appendix A - Volunteer Criteria

Mental Health Ireland are committed to welcoming and engaging with people interested in volunteering in mental health, wellbeing, and recovery. We welcome Individuals with a lived experience or those supporting someone with mental health challenges. Individuals with specific skills (website, social media content creators, finance, bilingual/multilingual speakers etc.) that they would like to either further develop or gain additional experience in.

Volunteer Criteria:

For the safety of volunteers and the volunteering process, volunteers will be:

- Over 18 years of age.
- Interested in Mental Health, Wellbeing and Recovery.
- Required to undergo volunteer screening which may include Garda Vetting and safeguarding.
- Expected to complete an application process* please see Appendix C.
- Expected to adhere to Mental Health Ireland’s stated Mission, Vision and Values
- Expected to adhere to the Volunteer Code of Conduct

There may be certain areas, industries or activities that may potentially create a conflict of interest please contact us for more information.

Appendix B – Existing Mental Health Ireland Training Modules

Mental Health Awareness Training consists of:

- Five Ways to Wellbeing
- Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Community
- Mental Health and Alcohol
- Mental Health and Family Caring: Supporting the Supporter
- Wellness Recovery Action Plan – WRAP
- Coproduction Training Module
- An Introduction to Connect Cafés Training Module



Appendix C: Volunteer Application Sample

Volunteer Application

Part 1: Personal information.

Please complete the following application form to apply to volunteer with Mental Health Ireland. All training will be delivered virtually via zoom and all training information is emailed and/ or posted upon successful application.

Name: _____ Contact Number: _____ Email: _____

County: _____ Tick box here I can confirm that I am aged 18 or above ☐

How would you best describe your current circumstances?

Part 2: Work history, volunteering experience and knowledge of Mental Health Ireland.

Have you previous volunteering experience? Yes ☐ No ☐

What is your understanding of the work that Mental Health Ireland do?

Why would you like to volunteer with Mental Health Ireland?

Please submit your CV with this application.

Note: Mental Health Ireland will require 2 referees & depending on your role may require you to be Garda Vetted. Garda Vetting invitation form & request for referees will be issued to you by email.

Part 3: Availability

Which best describes your availability for volunteering?

1 hour per week ☐ 2-4 hours per week ☐ 5 – 10 hours per week ☐ 10+ hours per week ☐

What is your preference of commitment to volunteering?

A specific time. For example, 1-3 months, 3-6 months ☐ On a project basis ☐ Ad-hoc tasks basis ☐

Which best describes your availability to travel?

I would prefer to stay in my own county ☐ I am happy to travel outside my county ☐

Are you aware of a local Mental Health Association in your area? Yes ☐ No ☐

If you are aware of a local Mental Health Association, please tell us which one is local to you?

Have you been involved with this Mental Health Association? Yes ☐ No ☐

Part 4: Interests & Skills

Mental Health Ireland have some defined and undefined roles. The roles can be physical and / or digital in format and can range from joining a coproduction committee to create a campaign or help fulfil fundraising materials.

Here are some examples of volunteering roles and opportunities we have at Mental Health Ireland.

Choose the ones that you feel most interest and suited to. (You may choose as many as appropriate)

Administrative Support – Assist with sending t-shirts / merchandise. ☐

Graphic design – Help to create posters / graphics. ☐

Coproduction – Join a team to coproduce campaign ideas, programmes or initiatives ☐

Social Media – Support online queries via social media channels. ☐

Mental Health Association – Supporting your local Mental Health Association with projects. ☐

What best describes your interest to interact?

I prefer to do things digitally – emails, zoom meetings ☐

I prefer to do things physically – phone calls, meet in person ☐

What skill sets will you bring to your volunteer post if successful?

Part 5: Our commitment to our volunteers

Training

All volunteers will experience their onboarding introductions and training via Zoom and will be sent some literature and merchandise.

A good way to begin getting to know and understand more about Mental Health Ireland is to read our annual reports and current 3-year strategy, *Mental Health for All – Hope, Strength & Action 2022–2024*.

These can be found on the Mental Health Ireland website. A copy can be sent by post should you require.

Volunteer Policy

Mental Health Ireland entrusts that you have read our Volunteer Policy and understand the commitment along with our procedures.

This can be found on the Mental Health Ireland website; a copy is attached to this application also.

Next Steps

You will be called for an informal meeting online with Mental Health Ireland's Volunteer Manager Georgina Lawless to discuss your application. Following this, if you are deemed suitable, the onboarding process will begin with an induction, training and discussion around suitable projects.

Privacy Policy

Mental Health Ireland will file your application for up to 12 months after you conclude your volunteering or in the event of an unsuccessful application.

You can read our privacy policy on the Mental Health Ireland Website. A copy can be sent by post should you require.

You can choose to opt into our email marketing. This is generally 1 -2 emails per month with updates about the work Mental Health Ireland are doing. Please tick the box below giving your consent if you would like to receive this correspondence.

I would like to receive monthly updates about Mental Health Ireland. ☐ If you have any questions or would like specific information, please contact our team by emailing volunteer@mentalhealthireland.ie



**Mental Health
Ireland**



Mental Health Ireland National Volunteer Strategy 2023-2026

"Volunteering for Mental Health Ireland allowed me to feel part of a supportive team working towards a common goal. Seeing the action on the ground gave me a sense of empowerment, and real hope for the future of how mental health is addressed in Ireland."

MENTAL HEALTH IRELAND



Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

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