



**Outhouse**  
LGBTQ+ CENTRE

## VOLUNTEER POLICY

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## Revision History

Revision	Date of Release	Purpose
Initial Draft		Initial Release

## Introduction

This document aims to create a framework around the organisation's volunteer programme and set out the scope, limitations and procedures. This document will set out the role of the volunteer programme in the organisation, the policies and procedures associated with the programme, and, in doing so, aim to create a volunteer programme that is both fulfilling for volunteers and beneficial for the organisation.

## Role of Volunteer Programme at Outhouse

The role of the volunteer programme is to aid the organisation in creating a world where the LGBTQ+ community are safe, seen, and celebrated. The programme is integral to the success of the organisation through the volunteering of individuals' time, skills, and passion across the organisation.

The volunteer programme aims to benefit the organisation through:

- **Increased Capacity:** The Volunteer Programme allows Outhouse to expand its capacity to deliver services and support, addressing the growing needs of the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Diversity of Skills and Perspectives:** Volunteers bring a diverse range of skills, backgrounds, and perspectives, enriching the organisation's ability to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Community Connection:** Through their involvement, volunteers strengthen the ties between Outhouse and the broader LGBTQ+ community, fostering a sense of belonging and trust and helping to drive greater impact.

The volunteer programme aims to benefit the individual through:

- **Skill Development:** The Volunteer Programme provides volunteers with opportunities to develop new skills, gain experience, and enhance their personal and professional growth within a supportive environment.
- **Personal Fulfilment:** Volunteers find fulfilment in contributing to a cause they are passionate about, knowing that their efforts directly impact the well-being and empowerment of the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Networking and Community Engagement:** Volunteers have the chance to build meaningful connections within the LGBTQ+ community, creating

a supportive network and contributing to their sense of community belonging.

## Recruitment and Selection

### Analysis of Need

The initial step in volunteer recruitment is to analyse the needs of the organisation and decide if the needs established can be met by a volunteer. The need for a volunteer position can be suggested by any team member.

Then a short business case must be written to outline why the position is needed and how the position is suitable to be filled by a volunteer. It is then at the discretion of the Operations and Development Manager and CEO if the role will be created as a volunteer role.

When establishing the need for a volunteer several considerations must be taken into account, including:

- What specific purpose will a volunteer serve?
- Is the proposed purpose suitable for a volunteer to carry out?
- Is there scope for hiring a paid staff member to meet this need?
- Can the need be met by reallocating resources from the existing team?
- Does the team to which the volunteer is to be assigned have the capacity to support the recruitment, induction, and performance management of the volunteer?

Once the need for a volunteer has been established, one may progress to the next stage.

### Role Description and Purpose

A role description that outlines the role and responsibilities, essential and desirable skills, and competencies expected of the Volunteer for this position must be written.

If the position already exists (as will often be the case), the Operations and Development Manager will review the role description and update the role specifications before each round of recruitment.

## Advertising

In principle, all roles will be publicly advertised for a suitable period. There shall be occasions when at the discretion of the Operations Manager or CEO, volunteer roles may be offered to limited pools of candidates.

## Applying for a Volunteer Position

Prospective volunteers will apply for volunteer roles using our standard application form. This form asks for their personal details, career and volunteering experience, training, skills, and qualifications, and for a letter of motivation about why they would like to take on this role.

## Shortlisting

The Operations and Development Manager or designee will review the applications after the designated deadline has passed. They will combine a shortlist of individuals to bring to interview for the position. It is permissible at this stage to arrange short phone calls with applicants to gain more information or clarification to assist in creating a reasonably sized shortlist to bring for an interview.

## Interview

The Operations and Development Manager or designees will interview several candidates and, from there decide on a volunteer to recruit to the team. Each interview panel will, in so far as possible, ensure gender balance and always comprise two individuals.

## Management of volunteers

The Operations and Development Manager is responsible for Outhouse volunteers and the overall volunteer programme. The management of individual volunteers will fall to the functional lead in the business unit to which the volunteer is assigned, with the Operations Manager holding an oversight and coordination role across the overall programme.

Volunteer management will consist of:

- Support and Development
- Volunteer forum
- Trial Period / Settling In
- Ongoing support

- Recognition and Appreciation

## Starting Volunteering and the Trial Period

Volunteers must sign a volunteer agreement and intellectual property assignment before assuming their role. They will then be provided with a settling-in plan, training and development plan, and support and development plan.

Each volunteer will have a minimum three-month trial period, beginning at their start date. The length of the trial period depends upon the length with which the volunteer will work with Outhouse and will be determined by the Operations Manager or designee.

At the end of this, they will meet with their volunteer supervisor to discuss their thoughts and future goals for their time as a volunteer in Outhouse. Once the trial period is over, the Support and Development framework comes into use.

The [settling-in period form](#) must be filled out with volunteers once probation has been completed.

## Ongoing Support and Development

As with all team members, each volunteer engages with continuous learning and development throughout their time with Outhouse. This will come in several different forms, including:

- **Tacit Knowledge and Experience:** This is the learning, knowledge, and experience a volunteer gains from their day-to-day work and tasks in their role and on-the-job training provided by employees and other volunteers.
- **Courses and Training:** this includes courses, learning, and training undertaken by volunteers throughout their time with Outhouse.

When joining the team, each volunteer will work with the volunteer supervisor in their area to develop a training and development plan to get the most from their time with the organisation. This plan will be submitted to the Operations Manager for approval.

The training is then entered into the [Volunteer Training registry](#).

Ongoing volunteer support and development will take the form of direction from the volunteer's supervisor and yearly check-ins from the Operations and Development Manager or designee. Volunteers may request a one-to-one meeting with their supervisor if they feel they require more specific guidance,

or information, or have feedback or a support need to help them succeed in the role.

The outcome of volunteer support and development is to ensure that all volunteers work towards achieving Outhouse's charitable purpose and strategic goals effectively and in collaboration with employees.

The framework applied will depend on the expected duration of time the volunteer expects to volunteer with Outhouse.

## The Volunteer Forum

At least twice a year, a volunteer forum will be hosted to bring together volunteers and the Outhouse leadership team. The forum aims to exchange information, provide opportunities for socialisation, and allow volunteers to provide feedback. The forum will last approximately three hours and will be attended by two-thirds of the leadership team, including the Operations and Development Manager or CEO.

The forum will be conducted as directed by its [Terms of Reference](#).

## Managing Challenging Situations

If a volunteer is experiencing any challenges or concerns, there are several avenues to explore:

- Seek feedback and clarification from their volunteer supervisor and peers;
- Organise a one-to-one chat with their supervisor to discuss their experience and work to find workable solutions and discuss what support they need to succeed;
- If a complaint is made against a volunteer, the organisation's [complaints policy](#) will be used.
- If a volunteer has a complaint or grievance with the organisation, the organisation's grievance procedure will be used, see Appendix II
- In some situations, the behaviour or output of a volunteer may fall below an acceptable level, in such situations, the volunteer supervisor or Operations Manager will arrange to meet with the volunteer to discuss how best to support the volunteer where a more formal [support plan](#) may be implemented.
- If the Operations and Development Manager, Volunteer Manager, or designee decides that a volunteer's behaviour is in breach of Outhouse's

expectations and values or if their behaviour impedes the organisation's strategic goals, Outhouse may choose to end their relationship with this volunteer.

## Ending the Volunteer Relationship

There are two situations wherein a volunteer and the organisation may wish to end their relationship

### Volunteer Leaving Outhouse

Should a volunteer wish to terminate their relationship with Outhouse for whatever reason they are asked to let their volunteer supervisor know as soon as possible and to give some notice so we can minimise negative impacts on our patrons. Where possible, an exit interview will be conducted to gain feedback on Outhouse's volunteer programme.

### Outhouse Asking a Volunteer to Leave

If a volunteer does not adhere to the core values of the organisation and its policies or is found to hinder the organisation in its strategic goals, the volunteer will be removed from volunteering with the organisation. Outhouse will endeavour first to discuss the issue with the volunteer first and explore workable solutions however the organisation reserves the right to end its relationship with a volunteer with immediate effect if necessary.

## Expenses

Through the normal course of volunteering, volunteers should not incur additional costs nor make purchases on behalf of the organisation. However, there are various circumstances when a volunteer may need to claim expenses from Outhouse. All purchases made on behalf of the organisation must be approved by the Operations Manager or designee in advance of the purchase being made.

Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre will not reimburse volunteers for expenses that are not pre-approved or deemed unnecessary for volunteer duties. Personal expenses, fines, and costs unrelated to volunteer activities are non-reimbursable.

Expense claims must be submitted within 30 days of incurring the expense. Late submissions may not be reimbursed unless accompanied by a valid explanation for the delay.

Once a volunteer submits an expense claim, it will be reviewed by the Operations Manager. They will assess the validity and necessity of each expense. If an expense is deemed ineligible, the volunteer will be notified of the decision.

If an expense is required to be reimbursed, the volunteer must fill out an 'Expense Claim Form', you can obtain a copy from the Operations Manager, with a receipt attached for each item purchased and submitted to the Operations and Development Manager. Only vouched expenses will be reimbursed.

## Intellectual Property Assignment

Intellectual Property (IP) law in Ireland is that the creator owns the IP rights. When a volunteer creates something while volunteering this would mean that the individual volunteer and not Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre who own the IP which could give rise to difficulties. Therefore, all volunteers must sign an intellectual property assignment agreement, found as part of their volunteer agreement. This section of the agreement is legally binding and transfers all intellectual property ownership rights for works and items created in whole or in collaboration with others while volunteering with Outhouse to the centre and for its benefit and for the benefit of its charitable purpose.

## Photo/Video/Audio Consent

Volunteers may be asked to appear in photographic, videographic, and audio content by the organisation. No volunteer is compelled to do so. If they do wish to take part, they will sign a Photo/Video/Audio Consent form, understanding that in doing so consent to Outhouse using such materials for various print and digital media formats.

## Policy Review

### Frequency

This policy shall be reviewed every three years.

### Ownership

The Human Resources and Nominations Committee is responsible for the review of this policy.

# Appendices

## Related Documents

- [Outhouse Volunteer Agreement](#)
- [Internship Policy](#)
- [Volunteer Support Plan Template](#)

## Volunteer Forum Terms of Reference

### Introduction

The Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre Volunteer Forum was established to facilitate communication, collaboration, and empowerment among volunteers associated with Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre. This document outlines the purpose, structure, and responsibilities of the forum.

### Objectives

- Provide a platform for volunteers to meet, at least twice per year.
- Encourage discussion and exchange of ideas to enhance the effectiveness of volunteer efforts.
- Identify opportunities for volunteer involvement in Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre initiatives.
- Conduct training sessions to improve volunteer skills and knowledge.
- Deliver consistent messaging and updates regarding Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre activities and campaigns.
- To create a space in which volunteers can provide feedback to Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre on an ongoing basis.

### Membership

- All volunteers actively engaged with Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre are automatically members of the Volunteer Forum.
- Membership is voluntary and open to all volunteers, irrespective of tenure or role.
- Volunteers are encouraged to attend forum meetings regularly to stay informed and contribute to discussions.

## Frequency of Meetings

- The Volunteer Forum will convene at least twice per year.
- Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed to address urgent matters or specific training requirements.

## Structure

- The forum will be chaired by the Operations and Development Manager or designated staff member.
- Agenda items will be determined in advance and circulated to members before each meeting. Volunteers are encouraged to submit items for the agenda of the next forum meeting at any time.
- Meetings will follow a structured format including updates, discussions, training sessions, and announcements.
- Minutes of each meeting will be recorded, by an employee, and distributed to all volunteers for reference.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

- To submit items for the agenda to the Operations and Development Manager.
- Attend forum meetings regularly and actively participate in discussions.
- Share ideas, feedback, and suggestions to improve volunteer experiences and organisational effectiveness.
- Volunteer to lead or assist in training sessions based on individual expertise and interest.
- Disseminate information and messaging received during forum meetings to fellow volunteers.
- Respect confidentiality and adhere to Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre's policies and guidelines.

## Accountability

- The Operations and Development Manager will oversee the functioning of the Volunteer Forum and address any issues or concerns raised by members.

- Feedback mechanisms will be established to evaluate the effectiveness of the forum and make necessary improvements.

### Amendments

- These Terms of Reference may be amended or revised as deemed necessary by the Senior Leadership Team, with input from volunteers.

### Review

- These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years to ensure alignment with the evolving needs and objectives of Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre and its volunteer community.

## Grievance Policy

The grievance policy applicable to volunteers mirrors that applicable to employees.

All volunteers are entitled to bring formal volunteering-related complaints to the attention of the Operations Manager. Volunteers and volunteer supervisors are encouraged as a first point to resolve issues informally. If serious complaints and concerns cannot be resolved, a more formal process is available. Such complaints/concerns will be dealt with per the procedures and guidelines outlined in this Grievance Policy.

While this Grievance Policy aims to explain the process which will be followed, Outhouse reserves the right to decide in each particular circumstance on the appropriate personnel to attend at meetings, the decision maker, the timescale, the manner of the investigation, the appeal and any post-complaint action. Outhouse reserves the right to depart from the steps specified in this Grievance Policy where it is reasonable to do so in the circumstances and where the resulting treatment of the volunteer is no less fair. Any such deviation shall not be a breach of this policy or invalidate any decision made provided that such deviation is not material and does not impact your rights or the essential fairness of the Grievance Policy.

### Principles

- Each step and action under this Policy, whether taken by you or Outhouse, should be taken without unreasonable delay. You must

take reasonable steps to attend meetings regarding this Policy. If you are unable to attend a meeting, Outhouse should be informed as far in advance as possible to rearrange it. A decision may be taken in your absence if you fail to attend a meeting without good reason.

- All grievances should be specified in writing in as much detail as possible. Anonymous reports of grievances cannot be investigated. All relevant parties will, in the interests of fair investigation, be given full details of the complainant, including the name of the complainant and an opportunity to respond.
- At each stage, every effort will be made to resolve the grievance by a mutually agreed date.
- You may be accompanied by a friend at every stage of the grievance process. Their role will be to provide support to you during the process but they do not and cannot speak for you.
- If a grievance is one of a personal nature which you would like to discuss in confidence, Outhouse will provide appropriate assistance.
- You shall not be penalised for raising grievances. Outhouse prohibits retaliation against any volunteer who initiates a complaint or participates in an investigation of a complaint under this Policy. A volunteer who reports a grievance, which after investigation is found to be vexatious, may face disciplinary action, up to and including the end of the volunteer relationship.

## Informal Procedure

### Stage 1

One of the keys to success in Outhouse is our ability to promote and maintain open and direct communication between volunteer supervisors and volunteers. When problems arise, open communication is necessary to learn about and resolve issues in a timely manner and to ensure that productivity is not impacted.

You should raise your grievance informally with your volunteer supervisor who will make every effort possible to resolve it as quickly as possible. If the

grievance relates to your volunteer supervisor, the matter should first be raised informally with the person. If you feel that this would be inappropriate, you should discuss the matter informally with the Operations Manager who will try to resolve it as quickly as possible. You should provide as much detail as possible and outline why the grievance is causing concern.

## Formal Procedure

### **Stage 2**

If a solution to a grievance is not reached at stage 1, you should then refer the matter in writing to the Operations Manager. If the grievance relates to the Operations Manager, you should refer the matter in writing to the CEO. You should set out the nature of the grievance and the specific circumstances at issue. You should also state that it is a formal grievance. The Operations Manager or the CEO, will invite you to a meeting to discuss the grievance and will make every effort to resolve the grievance to your satisfaction and as quickly as possible. Among the actions which the person investigating the grievance may take at this stage in examining the grievance is to seek the views of the volunteer supervisor involved in stage 1. Following the meeting, you will be notified of Outhouse's response to the grievance. If you wish to appeal against Outhouse's response, you must do so within five working days of receiving it by writing to an independent person designated by Outhouse setting out the full grounds for appeal.

### **Stage 3**

On receipt of your appeal, the independent person appointed to hear your appeal will invite you to attend a further meeting as soon as is reasonably practicable. Following the meeting, you will be notified in writing of Outhouse's final decision and the reasons for it.