



VOLUNTEER POLICY

Effective from: October 2022
Designated person responsible: CEO
Overall responsibility: IGG's Executive committee
First review: June 2016
To be reviewed in: October 2025

Introduction

Volunteering in Ireland is a long-standing tradition. Volunteering plays a significant role and makes a positive contribution to improving the lives of people, and to strengthening communities and civil society. This is a viewpoint that has been advocated for by many organisations over the years and as a result Ireland has a new National Volunteering Strategy 2021 - 2025¹ that will aim to recognise, support, and promote the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish society. This strategy recognises that the best possible supports and infrastructure must be put in place so that volunteers continue to prosper and that volunteering needs of present and future generations will be met. Volunteerism can be described as formal and informal volunteering. Formal volunteering takes place within organisations and therefore for the purpose of this document, IGG volunteers are recognised as formal volunteers.

As a volunteer led organisation IGG is supported by a professional team of staff who are based in National Office and in each of the regions. This policy will outline clearly to staff and volunteers of Irish Girl Guides, the responsibilities, and opportunities for volunteers within Irish Girl Guides. This policy will highlight the support systems and relevant policy, procedures and processes that are in place to support volunteers to complete their role within Irish Girl Guides. This policy will also take in consideration the recommendations from National Policy and WAGGGS in relation to supporting and developing volunteering within Irish Girl Guides which will safeguard the organisation for many more years to come.

Volunteer Policy Statement

The Irish Girl Guides is a volunteer led National Youth Organisation and places immense importance on volunteers' input in all aspects of the organisation. Membership of the Irish Girl Guides (IGG) is open to all girls over 5 years of age and, women of all ages who are prepared to accept the Guide Law and Promise and is open to all who live their life as female. IGG provides a non-formal educational programme in the Republic of Ireland that is dynamic and flexible while offering values-based training in life skills, decision-making and Leadership. Our adult Leaders all work in a volunteer capacity and are trained to implement our programme in which the needs of the individual girl are a priority. There are also opportunities for adult volunteers to be involved in other ways e.g., committee membership, administration, accounts support, communications, specific skills teaching.

“To put it simply, volunteering is doing more than you have to, because you want to, because you care.”

The National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025

Benefits of Volunteering with the Irish Girl Guides

- Being part of a local, national, and international network
- Having an opportunity to meet, mix and socialise with women from all walks of life
- Learning a wide variety of new skills e.g., Leadership, event planning, mentoring, first aid, teamwork, and the protection of children and young people
- Opportunity for personal growth
- Further developing one's confidence and capacity and contributing to maintenance of a positive self-image
- Feeling a part of the community and contributing to its ongoing development
- Meeting new people and building a network while being valued in the community
- Engaging in new activities indoor and outdoor in a fun and enjoyable atmosphere
- Being able to relate, listen to and understand young people
- Being open to diversity
- Develop a new appreciation of the outdoors

¹ National Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2025: [8e18fb45-6e72-47f9-a1fb-7dcd59105c1a.pdf \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publications-and-resources/publication/8e18fb45-6e72-47f9-a1fb-7dcd59105c1a.pdf)

Rights of Volunteers

Volunteers should

- Receive adequate information and a clear role description of what is expected of them and understand what they are doing and how it fits into the bigger picture
- Have access to adequate and appropriate support and supervision from a trained individual
- Be respected by staff and all volunteers and acknowledged in terms of recognition and feedback on their work
- Be reimbursed for the out-of-pocket expenses incurred through volunteering work
- Have an awareness of and access to all the organisation's policies and procedures
- Be able, where possible to attend appropriate forums to contribute to discussions and where appropriate take part in making decisions regarding organisational aims and objectives
- Be able to develop and enhance their skills and have access to suitable training and development opportunities
- Have their personal details kept in an appropriate and confidential manner within the organisation
- Be able to work in as safe an environment as possible

Becoming a member of IGG

IGG defines a volunteer as an individual who freely assists IGG without receiving any compensation for their time or services offered. IGG seeks to involve suitable adult volunteers who share the ethos and values of our organisation and have an interest in the development of girls and young women.

IGG is a uniformed organisation and welcomes volunteers of all backgrounds, ages, cultures, faiths, and abilities (see IGG's Equality and Inclusion Policy) to work as Leaders and Unit Helpers with our different age groups: - Ladybirds, Brownies, Guides and Senior Branch.

Volunteers who wish to assist on an occasional basis are also very welcome to volunteer as a Unit Helper. A Unit Helper helps out occasionally i.e., "now and then", "from time to time", "irregularly", once in a while" when additional help is needed. It is important to understand that a Unit Helper is a casual volunteer only. Male volunteers can function as Unit Helpers. Units may have a rota whereby a group of parents or other adult volunteers take it in turn to help at the weekly Unit meeting or on activities that take place outside the normal meeting place.

Screening process for new Leaders

Adults wishing to become Leaders in the Irish Girl Guides must complete a screening process.

A Commissioner/Regional Development Officer will meet with the applicant to ensure that she:

- has the personal character to set a high standard of behaviour
- understands the aims and methods of IGG and intends to adhere loyally to its rules and policies
- is willing to undertake further training and work towards the attainment of her warrant
- has a particular interest in girls of the relevant Branch age
- is willing to undergo the IGG screening process

The prospective new Leader will be provided with a *Leader Pack* containing all the forms and booklets appropriate to the IGG screening procedure for Leaders. The Commissioner / Regional Development Officer will then explain the steps of this confidential process.

While the process is underway, applicants may help with a Unit strictly under the supervision of a warranted IGG Leader. Until the screening process is complete, applicants must never have unsupervised access to children. Please note that prospective Leaders cannot attend a residential event until they have successfully completed the full screening process including Garda Vetting.

Screening of new Unit Helpers

All Unit Helpers need to submit a signed *Agreement Form for Unit Helpers*. This form is available online or from National Office. Unit Helpers must complete the Garda Vetting process to attend residential events.

A Unit Helper who provides assistance to a member with additional needs on a regular basis must complete the Unit Helper Agreement Form and the IGG Garda Vetting process.

Responsibilities of Volunteers with the Irish Girl Guides

A Leader with the Irish Girl Guides is expected to

- Accept and abide by the Promise and Law and the policies and procedures of the Irish Girl Guides
- Adhere to the code of conduct for IGG
- Successfully complete the IGG screening process which includes Garda Vetting
- Plan and carry out, after the necessary training, effective programmes for her/their Unit
- Work towards the attainment of her/their Warrant (a licence to be a recognised Leader in IGG)
- Complete the IGG Safeguarding and Child Protection Training within 6 months of taking up a Leadership role.
- Attend on-going trainings
- Wear official uniform when required
- Help the girls to become responsible members of the community, by participating in our IGG Journey programme actively encouraging them, increasing their self-confidence and abilities to plan and risk assess, providing support and opportunities for development
- Be familiar with records that must be kept (Unit membership/programmes/finance)
- Participate as much as possible in District/Area meetings and projects
- Agree to the organisational policy on volunteering along with any other relevant policies and guidelines and implement them to the best of her/their ability
- Respect confidentiality
- Respect the rights of others in the organisation
- Be reliable, honest, and mindful of the Irish Girl Guides' good name
- Treat everyone you meet when representing IGG with courtesy and respect
- Communicate information appropriately

Responsibilities of the Irish Girl Guides

- Ensure the volunteering experience is a rewarding one for all volunteers
- Listen to volunteers
- Ensure equal access and not to discriminate
- Define clear, meaningful roles for volunteers
- Have policies and procedures for volunteers
- Provide all necessary information to volunteers
- Provide training where necessary
- Provide Safeguarding and Child Protection Training
- Recognise the roles all volunteers play and contributions they make
- Provide appropriate insurance cover
- Inform volunteers of all relevant organisational policies and protocol
- Provide adequate support and supervision where necessary
- Reimburse out-of-pocket expenses incurred in their role as volunteers
- Provide a safe working environment
- Have a system of rewarding its volunteer

Volunteer Roles and Opportunities within Irish Girl Guides

Volunteering with IGG is a rewarding way to help girls and young women to develop the best in themselves. IGG supports its volunteers to develop new skills which are transferable to other Areas of life.

Many volunteers may choose to be involved at a local level by supporting Guiding as a Leader in a local Unit for a particular age group. However, some may prefer to assist with financial management, property management, catering for events or by helping local Leaders with programme activities or administration tasks.

A volunteer Leader is responsible for the running of her local Unit with other Leaders. A Unit usually meets once a week for up to two hours with occasional weekend activities. Preparation work for this weekly meeting is required to ensure the successful running of a Unit. A Leader is a female over 18 years of age who is willing to support Guiding and its values while agreeing to abide by IGG's Conduct Guidelines for Leaders when she signs IGG's *Agreement Form for Leaders*.

In addition, there is an opportunity to support Guiding in governance and management roles at local, regional, and national levels. Examples of such volunteering roles include committee members, Trainers, Commissioners, fundraising, event management, special projects.

Sustainable volunteering is a means of creating and supporting a network of people who volunteer together. In this way over-dependency and reliance on one volunteer should not occur so that continuation through a team of volunteers can always take place.

Unit Level

IGG promotes teamwork and the sharing of responsibility among leadership teams. This promotes motivation, positivity, shared responsibility of the administration tasks and support in learning about the IGG processes and systems. Due to increasing compliance and regulation in the community and voluntary sector particularly where governance and finance is concerned; administrative tasks are essential for completion by the Unit Leadership Teams. Volunteer Leaders form a Unit Leadership Team. The roles in this team are defined by the Leadership group.

All Units must have at least one adult Leader who has completed the IGG Leader warrant process. Leaders with an assistant Leader Warrant assist with the running of the Unit under supervision of other Leaders with a Leader warrant.

The Leadership team as outlined below is supported by the Commissioner structure, Regional Development Officer, and National Office staff.

Role	Description
Unit Contact Person (UCP)	This Leader is appointed by the Leadership Team to receive all communications for the Unit to share with the other Unit Leaders. This position can be rotated among Leaders. The Leader must be over 18 years
Leader over 18 years	Responsible for the running of the Unit, ensuring the necessary administration tasks (census, accounts etc) are completed. Works with the UCP to run the Unit.
Leader under 18 years	Assists with the running of the Unit and is involved in all aspects of planning, preparation, and delivery of the programme.
Gaisce Student	This is an under 18-year-old who assists at a weekly meeting as part of her Gaisce programme. It is someone who is not already a member of IGG in another capacity.
Unit Helper	An interested person who does not wish to, or cannot (e.g., a male volunteer) become a warranted Leader. Occasional volunteers (every now and again, not consistent) who help support the Unit.

Commissioner Volunteer Management Structure - District, Area, Regional

IGG Promotes the use of a Leadership support structure, to assist with supporting the Units, and assisting with communication within the organisation.

- A District is comprised of a group of Units in close proximity to each other. The District Commissioner reports to the Area Commissioner
- An Area is comprised of a group of Districts in close proximity to each other. The Area Commissioner supports the District Commissioners and reports to and attends regional meetings.
- A Region consists of a group of Areas in a geographical Area. There are seven Regions in IGG represented by a Regional Commissioner and a regional team.

The regional team is led by the Regional Commissioner and is comprised of Commissioners, other regional members and regional reps who are appointed to represent the region at National Committees and support the work of the specific branch or committee.

The most up to date information on the support network [is](#) for each Unit and the Unit Leadership Team is available on Online Guide Manager under *My Support Network*.

All volunteers who hold a commissioner role in IGG are automatically members of General Council of IGG which meets on an annual basis.

Role	Description
District Commissioner (DC)	Chair District meetings, support Units/Leader in your District, support completion of accounts/monitor fundraising events, approve warrant applications, approve new Leader applications. Attend General Council
Area Commissioner (AC)	Is a member of the Regional Team, supports DCs in relevant Area, leads the Area Team.
Regional Commissioner	Is a member of the Executive committee (Board of IGG). Leads the Regional team holding regular meetings, supports the development of the Region, plans regional events and trainings, supports the completion of administration tasks by Areas, Districts and Units for compliance purposes, line management of the RDO with the CEO

Other volunteer roles available to support the regional Volunteer Management Structure

Regional Treasurer	Responsible for the completion of regional accounts and liaising with finance support officer in National Office on all finance administration and procedures.
Regional Secretary	Responsible for the completion of regional minutes.
Regional Rep	Represent the Regions on National Standing Committees. Attends the national committee and regional meetings. While in this role the volunteer has the responsibility to ensure the Regions views are represented at National level.
Outdoor Advisor	Appointed on completion of Outdoor Qualification. Responsible for outdoor training and events in region. One OA per region sits on Regional Team on a rotational basis
Non- Unit Volunteer (NUV)	A Leader who is not working with a Unit but is a member of IGG. They may take up another supporting role in the organisation
Accounts Champion	A Leader in the region with experience to share on using the IGG accounts package. Provides supports to Commissioners and Unit Leader
Online Guide Manager Champion	A Leader in the region with experience to share on using OGM. Provides support to Commissioners and Unit Leaders

National Volunteer Management Roles

These roles are all nominated and voted positions. All volunteers who hold one the roles below are automatically members of General Council of IGG which meets on an annual basis. Further details available in the IGG CLG Constitution plus Terms of Reference for each committee.

These volunteer roles are supported by the National Office staff.

Role	Description
Chief Commissioner	Chief Volunteer and Chair of the Executive Committee. Director and Trustee on the Executive Committee. Oversees the governance and strategic direction of the organisation. An ex officio member of all committees.
Programme & Training Commissioner	Chair of the P&T committee, Director, and Trustee on the Executive Committee. Is responsible for oversight of the IGG programme from development to implementation and the training for all volunteers.
International Commissioner	Chairs the international committee. Director and Trustee on the Executive Committee and is a member of CIGA committee. Responsible for the promotion of international activities in IGG and supports opportunities for IGG members to participate internationally.
National Treasurer	Director/Trustee on the Executive committee, member of Finance and P&T committees. Treasurer role on IGG Trust Corporation Committee. Responsible for the development of the national budget and overseeing all finance administration of the organisation.
President	Director/Trustee on Executive, Chair of the General Council (AGM).
CIGA Chair / Vice Chair	Director / Trustee of Executive Committee. Holds the rotating Chair or Vice Chair of the CIGA Committee
NYCI Board Representative	NYCI board nomination from IGG, Director/Trustee of Executive
Company Secretary	Reports to Executive to ensure the statutory obligations regarding compliance with Company Law is met.
Trust Corporation CLG Chair	Chair of the Trust Corporation CLG. Responsible for the oversight of all IGG properties that are vested in Trust.
Branch Chair	Chairs the relevant committee and is a member of the P&T committee.
- Ladybirds	
- Brownies	
- Guides	
- Senior Branch	
- Trefoil Guild	
National Standing Committee Chair	Chairs the relevant national committee.
- Membership Equality Diversity and Inclusion (MEDI),	MEDI/ ATOC/ Communications are members of P&T.
- Communications,	
- Adult Training and Outdoor Committee (ATOC)	
- Finance Committee	Finance, Governance and HR& remuneration are Directors and Trustees on the Executive Committee
- Governance Committee	
- HR and remuneration Committee	

Other national volunteer roles

These roles are not members of IGG General Council.

National Standing Committee Members	All National Committees require committee members to support finances and administrative tasks, or to represent a specific group in the organisation.
Trainers	This is a position gained through completion of the IGG Trainer qualification and may be for a specific topic such as programme trainer, or a Safeguarding trainer. An Outdoor Advisor is also a trainer.

“Volunteering is any time willingly given, either formally or informally, for the common good and without financial gain.”

The National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025

Leadership Development

As a Leader with IGG, there are opportunities available for you that will support your personal development under the following headings:

- Leadership skills
- personal development
- confidence
- organisational skills

These opportunities will support you to get involved in the decision-making process for the wider IGG organisation. They also support succession planning for the organisation by providing training and skills acquisition for taking on volunteer roles.

Induction training in IGG is supported by the volunteer Leadership team in the Unit, the Regional Development Officer, and the local Commissioner as well as by the qualification process demonstrated below and further details available in IGG *Leading the Way* publication.

Opportunities for Leadership development.

A) Leader Qualification.

IGG has a qualification to be a recognised Leader in IGG. This consists of defined areas of learning through a combination of Unit attendance and support, online training and specified trainings and is called an:

- Assistant Leader Warrant
- Leader Warrant

The Assistant Leader Warrant is an important part of the induction process. The achievement of a warrant is based on a period of service and training with a Unit. Everything you do as a Leader in your Unit and as a member of your District or Area forms part of your pre-warrant training. The same requirements for the Assistant Leader Warrant apply to Leaders of all branches. It is anticipated that this warrant will be gained within the first six months of involvement.

A key priority is to complete the IGG Safeguarding and Child Protection Training within 6 months of taking up a Leadership role. Full details on these qualifications and other opportunities are available in *Leading the Way*.

Once you have completed your Assistant Leader Warrant, you can choose to work towards your Leader Warrant requirements. To qualify for this warrant, a longer period of commitment to Leadership in IGG is required, more experience and training must be built up and the ability to accept full responsibility for all aspects of the Unit's activities must be demonstrated, this process also involves being recommended by your RDO/Commissioner.

The requirements for both the Assistant Leader and the full Leader Warrants are outlined in *Leading the Way*. This free publication also includes notes to help with the completion of the various sections and a checklist for recording the relevant parts as they are achieved.

On completion of the above qualifications there are a number of additional qualifications available for the Leader and further information is available in the Handbook on IGG website.

B) Leadership Training

Adult members play an essential role in fostering the growth and development of girls and young women by acting as role-models and by sharing their commitment to lifelong learning. Training provides adult members with skills, knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and other learning opportunities needed to be effective in their roles. It acknowledges that an adult member brings experience, qualifications and attributes to their volunteer role which contributes to their own learning. Training in IGG recognises that learning is a lifelong process and not the result of a one-off training event. It promotes adult learning through a variety of means and throughout an adult member's life with IGG. Any event designed to help adult members learn is described as training. Such events can be called many different names e.g., workshops, trainings, seminars, conferences.

There are many training events organised throughout the year. It is important that volunteer Leaders attend trainings when they are available, to gain new ideas, learn new skills, share knowledge, and keep up to date. Sometimes the most important part is the tea/coffee break when they have an opportunity to share ideas, have queries answered and have problems/challenges discussed; as well as having a sense of belonging, inclusion, and friendship.

C) Leadership development opportunities

IGG has a support structure as outlined on previous pages. This structure provides opportunities for Leadership growth and development which support the future of the organisation Leader. These opportunities promote the further development of your skill set through:

- Leadership opportunities
- teamworking
- managing a team
- managing people
- event management
- completing accounts
- IT skills

If a volunteer is interested in undertaking a role outside a Unit and volunteering at a regional or national level, they should highlight their interest to their Regional Commissioner.

The Leadership development opportunities are vital to the continued growth and development of IGG and enables

- Sharing the load and limiting burnout of volunteers
- Creating an appealing environment for volunteers
- Building a stronger organisation
- Smoother transition between volunteers

Leader Support

This is available in a number of formats as outlined below:

Volunteer Support – Commissioners, other Leaders in your Unit or District or Area or regional teams; plus, National Standing committees.

Staff Support

- Regional Development Officer who are employed by IGG to support the recruitment and retention of volunteers, support, and development of new and existing Units, support regional activities.
- National Office Staff who provide professional support at all levels of the organisation from assisting all Unit Leaders with queries on the running of their Unit, safeguarding queries, Leader qualifications, Unit accounts support, OGM support, PR and communications within the organisation, website queries, distribution centre for Uniform, programme materials and badges. Plus, a vital role in the implementation and support of the Strategic Plan through the support of national committees, the governance, and finances of the organisation.

Publications/ Resources - Trefoil News, IGG newsletter, regional newsletter and a number of publications that are available on the IGG website or in hard copy on request; IGG Website and social media channels.

Leader Expenses

All Leaders in IGG should not be out of pocket when volunteering as a Leader in IGG. There is an Expense Policy where it clearly outlines processes and procedures relevant to expense claims.

Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers' service is recognised in a variety of ways ranging from informal thank you letters to the presentation of badges and certificates acknowledging length of service.

Complaints procedure

IGG's Safeguarding and Child Protection booklet provides clear guidance on IGG procedures and who to contact for support with complaints, incidents, or safeguarding concerns.

The IGG complaints policy is available on the IGG website.

Policy review

IGG's Volunteer policy should be reviewed every three years by the Executive Committee.