



Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers, Ballykelly.

1. Introduction

RVAR is an Association which involves people of all ages more effectively in volunteering and so helps to solve real problems of loneliness and isolation within older generations and also enriches the local community by increasing the intergenerational skills needed to search family history on the Internet.

It does this by:

Working with volunteer involving organisations to improve the diversity and quality of volunteer placements. Our local volunteer association is Limavady Volunteer Centre c/o LCDI, Limavady.

Providing potential volunteers with the means to access volunteering opportunities.

Helping people who might otherwise have found themselves excluded to take part in their communities.

RVAR is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:

Contribute to the delivery of our services.

Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users.

Provide different skills and perspectives.

Offer opportunities for participation by older people who might otherwise be excluded.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers. *Also refer to our student/volunteer induction handbook.*

2. Principles

Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers

Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff.

Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the volunteer centre's work.

Will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

Expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.

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Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.

Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.

Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.

Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible

3. Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with RVAR's Equal Opportunities Policy. Positive action in recruitment may be used where appropriate.

People interested in becoming volunteers with RVAR will be invited for an informal talk with the appropriate contact person from within the management team. They will be given an information pack including general information about the organisation and specific information on the volunteer post in which they are interested. Volunteer Members will be given a role specific induction and information pack.

All volunteers will be asked to complete a simple registration form appropriate to the role that they are applying for. Where applicants are not placed in the role applied for, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles both with RVAR and other volunteer involving organisations who partner RVAR.

Every volunteer role will undergo a risk assessment. For volunteer roles which involve 'regulated work' such as sustained and direct contact with vulnerable adults, RVAR has a legal obligation to ensure that volunteers are not barred from working with vulnerable groups. Potential volunteers for such roles will be required to join the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme, and scheme records and/or disclosure records will be accessed. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

4. Volunteer Agreements and Voluntary Work Outlines

Volunteers will receive a role description and volunteer agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work and a clear idea of their responsibilities and the volunteer's responsibilities to them. This is overseen by a member of the management team.

5. Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken. This is overseen by a member of the management team.

6. Support

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person from the management team who will provide regular support. Support sessions will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed. Where the volunteering role is emotionally demanding these sessions also give volunteers the opportunity to access emotional support from the organisation.

7. The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them. RVAR is committed to developing consultation and representational procedures for volunteers. This is overseen by a member of the management team.

8. Records

Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include the registration form, references, placement details, crisis contact, correspondence and any other relevant information in accordance with RVAR's confidentiality policy.

9. Expenses

RVAR will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses. This is overseen by the Treasurer.

10. Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

11. Health and Safety

RVAR will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and welfare while at work in accordance with the centre's Health and Safety policy.

12. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and staff will work in accordance with RVAR's Equal Opportunities Policy and will prevent discrimination on any grounds.

13. Problems

RVAR has a policy to help deal with grievances that volunteers may have. In line with this policy volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact at any time.

14. Endings

When volunteers move on from their role at RVAR they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with the organisation's member of the management team. On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options. RVAR has a policy on how it will deal with any disciplinary issue regarding a volunteer.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

RVAR will systematically monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy. This policy will be reviewed annually at each AGM (January).

Volunteer Exit Questionnaire

RVAR is committed to continually improving the quality of the service offered to volunteers. As someone who has volunteered with us, we are interested in getting your views on your experience. This information will be used to inform our future work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the following questions. You are not asked for your name and all individual responses will be kept strictly confidential.

1. How long have you been volunteering with RVAR (place an 'x' in the box)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months or less
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 6 months- 2 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 2 years – 5 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 5 years

2. What volunteer role(s) were you assigned within RVAR?	
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3. For which of these reasons are you leaving RVAR as a volunteer? (mark <u>all</u> that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	My ill health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring responsibilities i.e. family, friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	I lost interest
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am going to volunteer with another organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Changing home / work circumstances
<input type="checkbox"/>	I didn't have enough free time
<input type="checkbox"/>	I was being asked to do too much
<input type="checkbox"/>	I didn't get asked to do the things I'd have liked to do
<input type="checkbox"/>	I felt my efforts weren't always appreciated
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) e.g. gained employment

4. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your experience volunteering with RVAR?

	Definitely Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Definitely Disagree
I met people and made friends				
I got satisfaction from my work				
I felt a sense of personal achievement				
It broadened my experience of life				
It gave me a chance to do other things				
I really enjoyed it				
It helped me to build confidence in myself				
It gave me the chance to learn new skills				

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers Ltd, its Directors, Volunteers, Forums and Projects are Equal Opportunities employers, training and advice centres and Management Committee Members who are fully committed to ensuring that the talent and resources of all our directors, members, employees, students volunteers and clients are utilised to the full. We will not discriminate unfairly against any individual in matters of recruitment or selection for any position, promotion, development or training on the grounds of perceived religious or political affiliation or gender or sexual orientation, marital status, disability, colour, race or ethnic origin; nor will we permit harassment of any directors, members, employees, students volunteers or clients on any of the above grounds.

Policy

To achieve our objective, Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers Ltd (herein after referred to as 'RVAR') will pursue the following policy:

1. RVAR Ltd will recognise and ensure compliance with its legal obligations under the Fair Employment (NI) Acts 1976 and 1989, the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (NI) Order 1996 and any other appropriate legislation. The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws within a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. RVAR Ltd also recognises and complies with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which came into force on 1st January 2000.
2. In addition to the above, RVAR Ltd will recognise its moral and social obligations to promote equality of opportunity within the community in which it operates.
3. RVAR Ltd has established policies and procedures designed to promote equality of opportunity. These will be periodically reviewed to ensure that individuals continue to be selected, promoted or treated solely on the basis of merit and in accordance with the requirements of the job and the individual's suitability to fill it.
4. RVAR Ltd provides facilities for any person who believes that he or she has been treated unfairly within the scope of this policy to access the normal grievance procedure.
5. This policy will be publicised throughout the building and elsewhere as appropriate.

Responsibilities

In general, all directors, volunteers, employees, trainees and clients have a responsibility to comply with the policy to ensure equality for all. Specific responsibilities are as follows: the Chairperson will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented for dealing with matters arising. RVAR Ltd does not permit the displaying of flags, emblems or posters or other similar material or the circulation of literature or the deliberate articulation of slogans or songs which may give offence or cause apprehension amongst particular groups of employees, trainees or clients. Any attempt to display such will be regarded as serious misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.

Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with this policy will be regarded as a serious misconduct, which will lead to action under the disciplinary procedure.

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Other Advice

RVAR Ltd will ensure that any aggrieved person is advised of the services of the Equal Opportunities Commission or the Labour Relations Agency and of their rights to seek advice and/or assistance from these bodies.

Roe Valley Ancestral Ancestors Ltd Equality of Opportunity Statement

The member applicant agrees to comply with all applicable fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination and shall use his/her best endeavours to ensure that in all policies and delivery of services he/she has due regard to the need to promote equality of treatment and opportunity of treatment and opportunity between:

1. Persons of different religious beliefs or political opinions; Men and women or married and unmarried persons;
2. Persons with and without dependents (including women who are pregnant or on maternity leave and men on paternity leave);
3. Persons of different racial groups (within the meaning of the Race Relations Northern Ireland Order 1997);
4. Persons with and without a disability (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995); Persons of different ages and
5. Persons of different sexual orientation.

Signature: Elizabeth McNerlin MBE

Position: Director & Chairperson

Date 1st January 2020