



Volunteer Policy and Procedures Manual

Kerry Mental Health Association Mission Statement

It is the Mission of Kerry Mental Health Association CLG:

1. To promote mental health to everyone in County Kerry
2. To support people with mental health challenges, their families and carers through the activities of our Branch network and
3. To provide accommodation for persons with mental health challenges

Kerry Mental Health Association CLG Vision Statement

It is the vision of Kerry Mental Health Association CLG:

1. That everyone values their mental health as an essential part of personal wellbeing
2. That society is better informed about how to take care of its mental health and
3. That people with mental health challenges are respected and supported.

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Introduction

Kerry Mental Health Association relies on the commitment, hard work and dedication of its volunteers. This Volunteer Policy is designed to ensure that your time and efforts are fully recognised and valued and that the volunteer partnership benefits and protects the interests of both parties. Most importantly, the Volunteer Policy safeguards the interests of the people that Kerry Mental Health Association strives to help.

This policy outlines a set of guidelines for those engaged in volunteering and fundraising for and within the organisation, as well as those involved in the governance and running of the organisation.

You can volunteer with Kerry Mental Health Association in a variety of ways including:

- Befriending
- Visits to mental health service users who are in hospital or at home
- Attending day centres to assist social activities
- Trips to the cinema or theatre
- Celebration of birthdays
- Day outings for shopping or perhaps a trip to the seaside or a walk in the woods or countryside
- Visits to tourist attractions, scenic areas and gardens
- Christmas parties, hampers and gifts
- Securing grants to help cover the expenses associated with the needs of people in our community with mental ill-health
- Donating time and professional expertise for various fundraising/promotional/administrative needs

Our branches also organise or provide financial support for various therapies that may be helpful. Many of the services are provided in the various local HSE-run Day Care Centres throughout the county.

Kerry Mental Health Association welcomes volunteers from all sectors and backgrounds, including Nurses, Social Care Students, Care Workers, Administrators, Drivers, etc.

To become a volunteer, the first step involves completing and returning the following forms, which you will find at the back of this handbook:

- Volunteer Application Form
- Garda Vetting Form

Please return all of the above forms to our head office at Kerry Mental Health Association, Upper Lewis Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry, V93 Y0YC or email to Volunteers@KerryMentalHealth.ie.

When we receive this information, we will then continue with your application and contact you regarding volunteering opportunities available within the organisation.

If you have any questions or would like more information about any of the above, you can contact Volunteers@KerryMentalHealth.ie or phone 064 66 31009.

About Kerry Mental Health Association

Introduction to Kerry Mental Health Association

Kerry Mental Health Association is a volunteer-led, countywide non-profit organisation that aims to promote mental health and to actively support people with mental health challenges and their families and carers by identifying their needs and advocating their rights. The strength and impact of Kerry Mental Health Association in the county is largely achieved and reflected through the calibre of volunteers associated with and attracted to work with us.

We have nine branches throughout the county where the volunteers pursue befriending and support activities to enrich the lives of neighbours and friends who are living with mental health challenges, including mental illness. These branches are located in Castleisland, Corca Dhuibhne (West Kerry), East Kerry (Rathmore), Iveragh (Caherciveen, Valentia, Waterville), Kenmare, Killarney, Killorglin, North Kerry (Listowel/Ballybunion) and Tralee.

Kerry Mental Health Association is an Approved Housing Body with nine residences in Tralee, Killarney, Listowel, Killorglin, Rathmore and Caherciveen providing housing for people living with mental ill-health who are on the county council housing list.

Mission and Aim

We are committed to constantly reviewing and updating our programme of activities, to respond to the local and county needs. To support this we try to match new volunteers with our programme of activities that reflect both the needs of mental health service users and their families and engage the interests and skills of our volunteers.

Time and again, research has shown that support and social interaction are vital for people recovering from mental health challenges. We in Kerry Mental Health Association are committed to providing services that are recovery-focused i.e. that promote hope and enhance understanding in relation to people's abilities and disabilities, active engagement in life, personal autonomy, social identity, meaning and purpose in life, and positive sense of self. As a volunteer with Kerry Mental Health Association, you will have the opportunity to join our team of committed volunteers who are making a difference in the lives of individuals, families and the local community.

Primary Objective

Our objective is to promote the general welfare of people and to support those with mental health challenges and/or their families and carers through the provision of information, by advocating on their behalf; to provide education and training programmes that promote mental health and wellbeing and/or supports those with mental health challenges.

History of Kerry Mental Health Association

Kerry Mental Health Association (KMHA) was formed at a public meeting in Tralee on 29th November 1966 with the aim of supporting people with mental ill health through a range of befriending activities. The members of the Association also had the aim of promoting mental wellbeing and an

understanding among the public of mental illness, advocating empathy with those who are experiencing ill health and removing the stigma associated with mental illness.

It remains a goal of Kerry Mental Health Association to inform students in secondary schools and at third level about mental health and to make them aware of the resources that exist to help those with mental illness or who's mental health may be under threat for any reasons.

On 28th June 1971, seven members formed The Kerry Mental Health Association CLG (a company Limited by Guarantee) and the Registrar of Companies issued an Original Certificate of Incorporation on 10th August 1971.

Structure of Kerry Mental Health Association

Our Board of Directors (Executive) meets every month and its role is to determine policy. The members of the Board are elected at the AGM. The Executive comprises a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, and there is allocation for a further five members. The General Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the organisation. The Housing Manager deals with all matters relating to Kerry Mental Health Association's role as an Approved Housing Body.

Our volunteers are important to us. We value and appreciate the contribution made by you and we encourage you to discuss any ideas or concerns you may have with us. Volunteers have been involved with Kerry Mental Health Association since it began in 1966 and have been pivotal to our success within the community and wider county.

This manual has been developed as a guide; it contains useful information that will assist you in your role at Kerry Mental Health Association. The content is based on best practice however should you require further explanation, please feel free to discuss with the General Manager of Kerry Mental Health Association and/or the Volunteer Coordinator/Chairperson in your local Branch.

We hope you will enjoy your time with us and we aim to make your experience enjoyable and will invite you to regular social occasions. We offer you flexible volunteer hours in line with the services provided and hope that you will find your experience to be fulfilling and worthwhile.

What is Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

What is Mental Illness?

Mental illness is a general term that refers to a group of illnesses, in the same way that heart disease refers to a group of physical illnesses and disorders affecting the heart.

A **mental illness** is a health problem that significantly affects how a person feels, thinks, behaves, and interacts with other people. It is diagnosed according to standardised criteria. The term **mental disorder** is also used to refer to these health problems.

Mental health problems are more common and include the mental ill health that can be experienced temporarily as a reaction to the stresses of life.

Mental health problems are less severe than mental illnesses but may develop into a mental illness if they are not effectively dealt with.

Mental illnesses cause a great deal of suffering to those experiencing them, as well as their families and friends.

Volunteering with Kerry Mental Health Association

Volunteers have played an essential role in the life of Kerry Mental Health Association, in both the management of the association and the delivery of its services since its very beginnings. Volunteers are involved in all facets of the association.

We welcome all those who wish to volunteer with the organisation. Volunteers are not required to have any previous experience in volunteering however all volunteers must be over the age of 18.

Kerry Mental Health Association regards volunteers as a valuable resource and is committed to encouraging them to get involved at all levels of the organisation, and within all appropriate activities. To support this, Kerry Mental Health Association recruits, trains, supports and supervises its volunteers in line with best practice, and aims to act quickly and fairly should difficulties arise.

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers can expect the following while working with Kerry Mental Health Association

- To be treated with respect and as a member of the team
- To be provided with induction training to get the most out of your volunteering
- To be provided with ongoing supervision and support
- To access team training sessions where necessary

Volunteer Role Description

The following Voluntary Roles exist within Kerry Mental Health Association:

- Befriending
- Fundraising Representatives
- Trustee/Director
- Administration Support

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are expected to uphold the following responsibilities while they are working with Kerry Mental Health Association:

- To perform their volunteering role to the best of their ability
- To follow Kerry Mental Health Association's procedures and standards, including those relating to health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality, in relation to its staff, volunteers and members
- To meet time commitments and standards agreed to, and to give reasonable notice so that other arrangements can be made

- To be committed to human rights and equality
- To treat staff members, Kerry Mental Health Association members and visitors with respect
- To respect the privacy and confidentiality of all those who use Kerry Mental Health Association services

Volunteer Support, Training and Development

Volunteering with Kerry Mental Health Association is not a paid role, however Kerry Mental Health Association is dedicated to offering support and development opportunities to all our volunteers Kerry Mental Health Association commits to the following:

1. Induction and Training

- To provide you with a thorough induction of the work of Kerry Mental Health Association and your volunteering role and any reasonable training you may need to meet the requirements of this role.

2. Supervision, support and flexibility

- To explain the standards we expect for our staff and volunteers and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them.
- To provide a named person who will meet with you as necessary to discuss your role and any successes and challenges.
- To do our best to help you to develop your volunteering role with us.

3. Health and Safety

- To provide adequate training and feedback in relation to our health and safety policy.

4. Insurance

- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by us.

5. Equal Opportunities

- To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy.

6. Expenses

- To reimburse approved reasonable travel and lunch expenses once an Expenses Sheet is completed and receipts have been submitted.

7. Problems/Difficulties

- To try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances or difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us.
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the procedures set out in the staff handbook.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety of Volunteers

It is the duty of Kerry Mental Health Association to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare while at work of all staff, volunteers, members and visitors to the premises. Volunteers will be required to familiarise themselves with the Kerry Mental Health Association Health and Safety Statement and specific safety requirements which apply to their area of work. All volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. Volunteers also have the following health and safety duties:

- To take care of their own safety, health and welfare as well as that of others by their actions and omissions.
- To co-operate with the employer to comply with their legal duties.
- To use all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as issued (as applicable).
- To report any potential risks to their employer or supervisor without delay.
- To report any accidents to their employer or supervisor without delay.
- Not to interfere with anything or anybody in a way that might lead to injury or risk.
- Not to attend for work or during the working time consume or abuse any intoxicant.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere on Kerry Mental Health Association premises.

Fire Safety Policy and Procedures

Fire safety is a critical ingredient in Kerry Mental Health Association's Safety Statement. We must protect our employees, volunteers, members and others from the potential threat of fire. The policy of Kerry Mental Health Association is to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, all action is taken to minimise the risk of fire on premises we work at. Every employee is responsible for maintaining fire safety by avoiding creating fire hazards with either flammable materials or sources of ignition.

Personal Safety and Protection

All staff and volunteers are responsible for their personal security and safety, and that of their colleagues at all times. If staff or volunteers identify potential risks to their safety on the premises, they should make this known to management.