

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION PACK

Welcome to *Liverpool Irish Festival* and to your guide to volunteering with us. We're proud of what our volunteers help to achieve each year. This year's Festival will deliver over 40 events and exhibitions, working with over 60 individual artists and speakers, plus additional performers and contributors. Focussed on a 10-day period in October, satellite events and programmes run across the year.

In short, *Liverpool Irish Festival* brings Liverpool and Ireland closer together using arts and culture. It does so by creating an annual 'moment' in October that draws on the history, culture and art of Liverpool, Ireland and the Liverpool Irish. It draws from all aspects of the diaspora, celebrating Irishness and its complex identity. Established in 2003, the Festival has moved from strength to strength, working in partnership with most of the cultural, artistic and social centres of the city.

The Festival is open to everyone and – with a high number of free events – we aim to keep and promote open access, without barriers, to people of all ages and backgrounds.

This pack contains information on

- basic venue information
- volunteer duties and information on shifts
- the *Volunteer Agreement*
- a link to the online application form.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Our primary aim, at *Liverpool Irish Festival*, is to provide our volunteers with an enjoyable, interesting and interactive experience. During that time, you will help audiences enjoy their time with us, signpost for their needs and help the Festival to gather information about their journey. We hope that during your volunteering with us you will

- enjoy *Liverpool Irish Festival* events
- gain experience in event/festival delivery and delivering front-of-house services
- make friends and meet new people, artists and practitioners
- develop essential and transferable skills, including knowledge of national and international practices
- meet and engage in exhibitions, events and/or workshop delivery.

To show our gratitude for your time with us, we will provide you with

- a reference for future employers, where requested
- an invitation to all Festival exhibitions and events (where ticketing is not an issue)
- an invitation to the official Festival opening/closing sessions.

DATES TO NOTE

The closing deadline for volunteer applications for 2024 is **midnight on Sun 15 Sept 2024**. Applications submitted after this time will be ineligible unless we announce a deadline extension.

2024's *Liverpool Irish Festival* runs **Thurs 17-Sun 27 Oct 2024**. We have a wide range of activities that need your support, beginning with our launch and exhibition previews to the closing sessions. For a full programme of events and exhibitions please go to our events pages on www.liverpoolirishfestival.com. This will be updated as programme is announced. Please note: there may be some events slightly outside of these dates.

APPLICATIONS

Any application you submit will acknowledge you've read and accept the terms of the *Volunteer Agreement*, found in this document. The application form will be available online (details follow) as a **Googleform** and as an editable **Word** document. If you need a hard copy, you may collect these – at agreed times – from our **Northern Lights** office (5 Mann Street, Liverpool L8 5AF) or have a PDF emailed to you, if this is preferable for you.

To arrange, email us on assistant@liverpoolirishfestival.com or call the Festival mobile on +44 (0) 7804 286 145.

Process

On receipt of a satisfactory application form (e.g., a form passing basic eligibility criteria), we'll contact your referees (w/c Mon 16 Sept 2024). They will be asked whether they would recommend you for standard front-of-house duties. Assuming they say 'yes', in time, we'll be in touch to invite you to a short briefing session (likely to take place w/c 7 Oct 2024). If your referees don't respond by Sun 29 Sept 2024, we'll ask you to provide alternative referees for us to follow up with, before the briefing session.

At that session you'll be introduced to our team and other volunteer candidates. You'll be asked to select shifts from the Festival rota so we can follow up events that continue to require support. This will be done by email. We'll confirm the full Festival schedule as early as we can following the briefing session.

The briefing session time, date and locations will be circulated nearer the time. If you find that date is/those dates are unsuitable, but would still like to volunteer, please keep in communication with us using assistant@liverpoolirishfestival.com or by calling the festival mobile +44 (0) 7804 286 145.

VOLUNTEERING DUTIES

Volunteering for the Festival is a public-facing role. It involves liaising with visitors, with in-house teams at venues and with our artists. Your primary role will be to make sure that members of the public are safe and set pieces are secure. You'll be available to supply information regarding the exhibition/event you are assigned to and share information about the Festival. You'll answer questions, to the best of your ability, and if answers are not known to you, you'll direct visitors to venue or Festival staff, being generally helpful and polite.

During your shift we may ask you to count the number of visitors or participants, record demographics (using our surveys), encourage visitors to give feedback (and record it) and support visitors in engaging with our social media. During events we ask you to support the Festival team by being helpful, self-sufficient and assisting where or when needed.

Volunteering requires great interpersonal skills. You'll be working with a range of people, venue staff, the public, artists, reporters and – of course – other volunteers. You're a 'Festival Face', so we encourage you to be friendly, polite, warm and welcoming.

FESTIVAL VENUES

Festival venues change year-by-year. Active venues are listed on our website here:

<https://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events/venues/>

For a full list of addresses and contact details, this is the best place to find updated information.

Some shifts may be outdoors and will be dependent upon the weather. It is your responsibility to ensure that you

- are appropriately dressed
- have suitable protection (sun screen, umbrella, etc)
- can find these venues
- arrive on time for your shift.

DATES AND SHIFTS

The maximum shift length is 4 hours. Due to the nature of our events programme, some shifts will require between 1.5 hours and 4 hours. Wherever possible, we'll aim to place our volunteers in pairs. In advance of the Festival, you will be asked to select shifts from a rota. Each shift begins half-an-hour before the official/published event start time. Full rotas will be available from the first briefing and anyone choosing to do double shifts will be given a suitable break period.

GENERAL CONDUCT

In person: a face of the *Liverpool Irish Festival* team: When you're volunteering, we ask you to please bear in mind that you may be the very first person from *Liverpool Irish Festival* whom a person meets. To that person, you are the festival. They might never meet anyone else in the team. Be as helpful and friendly to them as you would hope a volunteer might be to you. *Liverpool Irish Festival* is friendly, lively and inclusive and that's what a 'Festival Face' needs to be, alongside patient, polite and courteous; you are our representative. The *Volunteer Agreement* below, expands on this, but in general common sense and civility will see you through!

Online: Like every other cultural festival, social media is a major way of speaking with audiences. As our volunteers – and therefore Festival outreach – we'd be delighted if you would and could use your social media accounts to promote and talk about the Festival programme and your involvement. However, when it's clear you're a volunteer and part of the Festival, we need you to read and observe the following principles:

- volunteers are more than welcome to associate themselves with the Festival when they post, but please brand your posts as personal and your own. The Festival cannot be held responsible for any repercussions your content might generate. Please, take part in discussions – that's what social media's for – but keep it courteous, honest and polite
- volunteers may not disclose any financial or operational Festival information. If you're party to any sensitive information, please realise this has been done in trust and 'for your eyes only'. Don't share this beyond the Festival. This includes artist's plans or internal operations. Unless you know we're happy for you to share it, please don't. Trivial things – in the wrong hands – can be misinterpreted or dangerous
- respect opinions. If someone posts something about the Festival you disagree with, it can be easy to wade in 'all guns blazing' (we're half tempted to sometimes), but please take a breath, step back and if you still have to say something, be nice. Sometimes people need to offload and must be given the space to do it within freedom of speech. It doesn't mean they're right, but becoming involved can enflame the initial post beyond reason. Feel free to raise your concern with the Festival who can talk it through with you to determine a course of action
- *Liverpool Irish Festival* maintains the right to ask for any volunteer response on social media to be edited, or deleted, if it brings difficulty to the Festival, e.g., disrepute, mission drift, legal concerns. It must come as zero surprise that any post that includes any racial, ethnic, religious or similar slur will not be tolerated. Explicitly wrong posts could terminate your volunteer relationship with the Festival
- to help spread the good news, it would be beneficial for you to follow our handles [@LivIrishFest](#) and use our hashtags, which this year include [#LIF2024](#) [#LivIrishFest](#).

THE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

This *Volunteer Agreement* describes the arrangement between *Liverpool Irish Festival* and its volunteers. We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding. The Festival will agree your duties and conditions with you before undertaking specific roles, functions or services. This agreement is reviewed per Festival and copies of applications should be held by a Festival representative and you for future use.

Volunteers need to reapply each Festival *. This is simply because things change year to year; we need to keep on top of keeping you supported and safe as a volunteer and your time commitments and circumstances also need reviewing. Additionally, it is important for reviewing emergency contacts and your ability to perform duties according to your health.

* References will not be sought if you have successfully volunteered previously, but updates to medical history, emergency contacts etc, will all be required.

Part 1: the organisation

Your role as a volunteer will be arranged with you following your application. You will be given a start date, shifts and you will know where to arrive and what will be expected. This volunteering role is designed to support **Liverpool Irish Festival** promote its programme across a number of venues, keeping people and work safe and adding to the overall delivery and quality of the Festival. We are there to support the venues and be of assistance where we are needed.

Volunteers can expect **Liverpool Irish Festival** to provide:

1. Induction and training suitable to the tasks you will be asked to complete using knowledge and skills we provide.

2. Supervision, support and flexibility – we will

- explain the standards we expect for our services
- encourage and support you to achieve and maintain such services
- provide a named person for each event who will brief you per shift
- provide a named person to whom you can speak about your role outside the confines of the shift pattern
- do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us
- listen to ideas you have about the volunteer programme.

Remember you can always, if you have serious concerns, contact Emma Smith (the Festival's Artistic Director and CEO) on emma@liverpoolirishfestival.com and on the Festival mobile +44(0) 7804 286 145, though we would ask you to be mindful of business hours and business needs especially during the Festival.

3. Expenses. Only expenses **agreed in advance** with the Artistic Director and CEO (or with the Festival Coordinator) – and for which receipts can be provided – will be reimbursed. This will include any public travel costs and/or car mileage, either of which must be agreed in advance.*

* We anticipate volunteers ordinarily volunteer from the local area using public transport. If you are considering volunteering from further afield (i.e., more than 10 miles away) please consult us on your expenses expectation in advance so we can consider our budgets.

As single shifts are only 4 hours, **Liverpool Irish Festival** would not expect to provide expenses cover for food. Individual and bespoke offers may be made if multiple shifts are covered or where events involve food; we would expect to agree these in advance. Please keep all your receipts to give to us when we reimburse any previously agreed expenses.

4. Health and safety. To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, we would refer you to standard health and safety procedures. At each event briefing, we will outline all housekeeping information and any potential personal or public risks to be aware of. It is your duty, if you feel something is unsafe, to report it to a member of the Festival team. This team member must respond in such a way that you feel the risk has passed or swap your position to one where you feel able to handle the reasonable risk associated with the work.

5. Insurance. Since summer 2022 the Festival has carried employers and public liability insurance, year-round, rather under an events insurance licence. We ensure we carry adequate insurance cover for volunteers carrying out duties in the Festival's name. This being the case, it is expected you will act within common sense principles and within the law, in order that we can keep you protected from harm and the organisation free from false liabilities.

6. Equal opportunities. The Festival endeavours to treat all volunteers in accordance with our equal opportunities policy, available in our [Policy Pack](#)

7. Problems. We will try to resolve – fairly – any problems, complaints or difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us. We will refer to the relevant policies in our Policy Pack to ensure we use the appropriate policy and procedure.

In the event of an unresolved problem, we will offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the procedure set out here. If the complaint or difficulty cannot be resolved by a Festival team member, the volunteer has a right of appeal to the Board.

Complaints or difficulties will be dealt with by the team member it is reported to as soon as is reasonably possible, but must be considered within 5 working days of the grievance being brought to their attention. If the matter proceeds to Board level, the Board will consider the matter within two weeks of it being brought to its attention, and will communicate its decision as soon as possible.

Part 2: the Volunteer

Further to the guidance about general conduct above, *Liverpool Irish Festival* will expect you to

- help *Liverpool Irish Festival* fulfil its aims and event delivery protocols
- perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability
- follow the organisation's procedures and standards, including health and safety, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and equal opportunities, in relation to its team members, volunteers and clients. It does not expect you to know these rights by rote, but believes you should understand common sense approaches to good guides of conducts, treating people with equity and presenting a professional appearance and manner
- maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients
- meet the time commitments and standards which have been mutually agreed to and to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made when this is not possible
- provide referees as agreed who may be contacted and to agree to a Disclosure and Barring check being carried out where necessary.

This agreement is binding in honour only and is not a legally binding contract between us. It may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. The submission of an application and its acceptance is an honourable agreement, rather than a legal one, and may be cancelled at any time by either party and it cannot – nor will it ever – be regarded by either party as an employment relationship. Submitting your application indicates to *Liverpool Irish Festival* that you have read the relevant policies referred to herein and that you understand it is your duty to protect any child, young person or vulnerable adult with whom the Festival brings you in to contact. In advance of submitting your application you have considered what action you will take if abuse is discovered or disclosed.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Please complete the online form, [using this link](#).

Alternate formats are available. Download a *Word* version [here](#). [A printable PDF is also available](#), though will likely need completing by hand.

To request a hard copy form or if you require any more information, please email assistant@liverpoolirishfestival.com. Remember, the deadline for submissions is midnight on **Sun 15 Sept 2024**.