

SLIGO - Winner of the European Volunteering Capital 2017



The jury concluded that Sligo clearly makes **supporting volunteering infrastructure a priority with the centre's tenth anniversary in 2017**. There are also project and core grants of different sizes and types made available to organisations. One-off and unique events for the public good that need volunteer support are also supported.

Significant support to reduce barriers is demonstrated (eg. reduced time for criminal record checks, free parking and meeting space and encouragement and clarity for people on state benefits who volunteer). Volunteer organisations are also trained in the rights and responsibilities of volunteers in order to build their capacity to **improve access to people from disadvantaged groups**.

Employee volunteering is supported for both public and privately employed people. **Volunteering strategies are included as part of broader municipality strategies** related to overall development and the volunteering infrastructure organisations make the connections between them and works to improve the synergies. The importance of training for volunteer coordinators is recognised and supported and volunteers are publicly recognised and thanked on a regular basis.

The municipality supports the national quality standards and **the volunteer centre has achieved the national quality award**. There have been several campaigns to promote and encourage volunteering especially to vulnerable and marginalised groups and this is a best practice approach. There are clear, strong links to all levels of formal education and the role of volunteering in active ageing and lifelong learning is well understood.

The incentive and award schemes, including a volunteer discount card, are exemplary and also the encouragement for local organisations to participate in national awards. The value of volunteer time as co-funding is recognised, and data on volunteering is routinely collected and used to inform evidence based policy making. The volunteering strategy and efforts are clearly linked to employability, health and well being and social inclusion strategies.

