



Aviva Centralised Vaccination Centre Volunteer Programme

On 3rd March 2021, the Aviva Stadium in Dublin opened its doors as a Centralised Vaccination Centre (CVC) for COVID-19 vaccinations. Dublin City Volunteer Centre (DCVC) was asked by the HSE to develop and manage a bespoke volunteer stewarding programme for the Aviva CVC to help maximise the number of vaccinations carried out daily.

"Biggest day yet in the #covidvaccine rollout yesterday...the vaccine, vaccinators and volunteers are making a real difference"

An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD, Twitter 24 April 2021

The Need

The CVC at the Aviva operates 12 hours per day, seven days per week. The HSE asked for volunteers to come forward to help with guiding patients through the vaccination centre and to make the experience as stress-free as possible. DCVC was tasked by the HSE with designing, implementing and managing a full-time volunteer programme for the CVC at the Aviva to compliment the work of the HSE and site-management staff at the stadium.

This was implemented by DCVC in a very short time frame and included conducting risk assessments, development of a volunteer policy and code of conduct, designing role descriptions, induction and training materials, setting up a bespoke volunteer scheduling system on Salesforce, as well as the recruitment and on-boarding of hundreds of volunteers, 53 Volunteer Team Leaders, two fulltime paid Volunteer Managers and four relief Volunteer Managers.

"When I got a chance to volunteer at the Aviva Vaccination Centre, I saw an opportunity to contribute my time to this great cause. So many front-line professionals have been working extremely hard to get us out of this pandemic, so why not to do my part?"

Sueellen, CVC Volunteer

• **Volunteers involved: 274**

• **Volunteer hours: 21,141**

• **Value of volunteer hours:**

€288,768 (*based on the Living Wage)

Data from March - August 2021

The Volunteer Programme

DCVC has a service-level agreement (SLA) with the HSE to independently manage the CVC Volunteer Programme but we liaise closely with HSE management and the various on-site teams to ensure the smooth running of the day-to-day operations. On average 26 volunteers guide up to 3,500 people through the vaccination centre seven days a week (182 volunteer shifts per week). Between March and August 2021, the volunteers completed 21,141 volunteer hours. At the Living Wage of €12.30 per hour + tax, this equates to €288,768.

With 274 volunteers, this is the largest volunteer programme DCVC has ever directly managed. Managing the programme involves ongoing recruitment, screening and training of volunteers, and, on a daily basis:

- briefing volunteers & volunteer team leaders
- creating daily rosters
- managing volunteers & team leaders during shifts
- shift and incident reports
- administration & updating volunteer records
- managing volunteer expenses
- supporting & supervising volunteers
- developing volunteers' leadership potential
- recognising/celebrating volunteers
- ongoing training supports
- providing ongoing communications
- maintaining quality of service
- providing refreshments for volunteers
- providing volunteer apparel

The “blue army” of volunteers play a key role in the delivery of the vaccination programme at the Aviva. They greet the patients, act as stewards to give directions, manage queues and provide support to the HSE team and security personnel on site as needed.

As result of volunteering on the Aviva CVC Volunteer Programme...

71% of volunteers stated that their mental health and wellbeing had improved

96% of volunteers feel that they are making a useful contribution to their community

82% of volunteers said their interest in doing more volunteering has increased

Source: Volunteer Impact Survey conducted May 2021

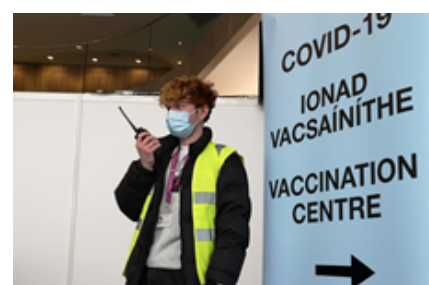
Volunteer Leadership

Initially DCVC staff ran the whole volunteer programme, but it became apparent very quickly that more support was needed. Due to the high calibre and motivation of the volunteers, DCVC was able to recruit two full-time paid Volunteer Managers internally from the pool of existing volunteers at the Aviva CVC. In July this was expanded to two full-time roles and a panel of four additional relief Volunteer Managers.

The layout of the Aviva as a sport stadium poses some logistical challenges when up to 3500 people come through the Centre for their vaccination daily. The volunteers therefore operate in multiple teams, to ensure that patients are guided through the three floors of the vaccination centre efficiently and calmly, while providing information and assistance as needed.

To manage these teams and ensure ongoing communication and flexibility, DCVC trained 53 Volunteer Team Leaders to act as point of contact on the ground and support the Volunteer Manager on shifts.

All the volunteers' outstanding professionalism, energy and willingness to go the extra mile made this programme possible.



Learnings

- Developing a programme of this size and scale requires significant resources and buy-in from staff and volunteers to ensure success. However, many of the resources and systems created, including the volunteer database and scheduling system, policies and procedures, and programme management materials have the potential to be used in future programmes.
- Running a programme at this level with so many stakeholders requires strong communication systems and leadership abilities. Continuous feedback, assessment, adaptation are the keys to success, as is a sense of humour.
- There has been huge public appreciation and feedback about what volunteers are doing at the CVC. People have commented that the volunteers are friendly, good humoured and positive. In volunteer management we often refer to the added client value that volunteers bring as the “luxury of focus”- volunteers can spend a little more time with clients and help show the ‘human face’ of a service. People remember the human touch – the friendly smile when feeling nervous, a little light banter, being greeted as they pass through the various floors.
- The volunteer experience at Aviva has been transformative for many of our volunteers. A number have noted how being part of such a programme has literally “changed their lives”. Others have said they really enjoy the routine, camaraderie and diversity. More commented on the structure and professionalism of the programme, which is not always the case with local volunteering experiences. In DCVC we are considering how we sustain this Volunteer Community that has developed and grown over the past six months.
- Our relationship with the HSE has grown and developed, as has mutual trust, which has been crucial to delivering a successful programme. We have come to understand HSE needs, priorities and workloads and vice versa. The differences between volunteers and paid staff and managing both is now understood. There is great potential for future partnerships.
- In general, in our opinion, there is much scope for volunteers to play complimentary roles in public health and auxiliary services, which has yet to be realised, especially if one compares the numerous ways volunteers can be involved in the UK through the NHS. Significant research pieces have been conducted in the UK on volunteering through the NHS and/or through the pandemic. A recommendation is to conduct research on volunteers in delivering public health/auxiliary services in Ireland with a view to maximising this potential. The pandemic has opened the door for new opportunities and many Volunteers Centres, inter alia, have been involved with COVID-19 Test or Vaccination Centres, which alone would make an interesting research study.

- **WATCH: Volunteers at the Aviva CVC (HSE)**
- **READ: Volunteer Stories**

In the Media

- **“Ray of Hope - RTE’s Ray D’Arcy...”** (The Sun)
- **“Aviva vaccination queue like a practice run...”** (Independent.ie)
- **“Standing Ovation for Volunteers at...”** (Dublin People)