

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Document

This document serves as the official **Volunteer Policy & Procedures Manual** for **Regina Coeli Hostel, Legion of Mary**. It outlines the roles, responsibilities, and operational procedures to ensure that all activities align with **Irish law, best practices in volunteering**, and the **Legion of Mary Handbook**. The policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines for **volunteers**, ensuring a **safe, ethical, and legally compliant** environment.
- Maintain the **core mission** of the Legion of Mary while ensuring **modern volunteering standards**.
- Establish fair and **sustainable working conditions** for volunteers.

1.2 Overview of Regina Coeli Hostel

The **Regina Coeli Hostel** is a **faith-based** initiative operated by the **Legion of Mary**, dedicated to supporting **women experiencing homelessness**. It provides **temporary accommodation, spiritual support, and guidance** to help residents rebuild their lives. The hostel functions **entirely through volunteer work**, with individuals offering their time and skills to assist in various aspects of daily operations.

1.3 Core Principles & Mission

Regina Coeli Hostel operates under the following principles:

- **Charity & Service:** Providing **unconditional support** to all residents, regardless of background.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Ensuring every resident is treated with **compassion and respect**.
- **Faith & Community:** Offering **spiritual guidance** while respecting individual beliefs.
- **Integrity & Accountability:** Complying with **legal and ethical standards** in all activities.

This manual is a **living document**, subject to **periodic updates** to reflect changes in **legislation, volunteering standards, and organizational needs**.

2.1 Legal Compliance & Volunteering Standards in Ireland

All volunteer activities at Regina Coeli Hostel must comply with:

2.1.1 Irish Employment & Volunteering Laws

- Volunteers **must not** be treated as employees (i.e., no employment contract, wages, or job obligations).
- Working hours must align with **reasonable volunteer practice**, ensuring no excessive workload.
- Volunteers must receive **breaks, days off, and time for personal needs**.
- The hostel must comply with **Health and Safety at Work Act (2005)** and the **Children First Act (2015)** if any residents are under 18.
- Garda Vetting (background checks) **must** be completed for volunteers working directly with vulnerable residents.

2.1.2 Safeguarding & Protection Policies

- Volunteers must follow **Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse – National Policy & Procedures (HSE)**.
- Any **suspected abuse** (physical, emotional, financial, or sexual) **must** be reported to the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** following **Tusla's** guidelines.
- Confidentiality and data protection must align with **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)**.

2.1.3 Health & Safety Regulations

- All volunteers must complete **mandatory training** in Fire Safety, First Aid, and Manual Handling.
- The hostel must comply with the **Fire Services Act (1981 & 2003)**.
- Volunteers should be informed of **emergency evacuation procedures**.

2.1.4 Equality & Non-Discrimination

- Regina Coeli Hostel operates under **The Equal Status Acts (2000-2018)**, ensuring no discrimination based on **gender, race, religion, disability, or background**.
- Volunteers **must treat all residents with respect and must not impose religious beliefs**.

2.2 Organizational Structure of Volunteers

The hostel operates **solely through volunteers**, divided into **two main categories**:

2.2.1 Indoor Sisters (Full-Time Volunteers)

- Live **inside the hostel** and engage in **daily operations**.
- Work a **maximum of 35 hours per week** (to comply with ethical volunteering standards).
- Receive **accommodation and meals** but **no salary** (ensuring compliance with volunteer status).
- Follow the **Legion of Mary Handbook** regarding behaviour, dress code, and religious obligations.

◆ **Important Note:**

Indoor Sisters (Full-Time Volunteers) must never exceed **35 hours per week**. This follows ethical volunteering standards in Ireland, ensuring fair and sustainable engagement. While there is no strict legal limit, guidance from **Volunteer Ireland** and **The Wheel** highlights that volunteers should not perform full-time equivalent work to prevent exploitation.

- **Recommended Daily Hours:** Maximum of **7 hours per day**.
- **Rest Days:** Each Indoor Sister must have at least **two full days off per week**.
- **Flexibility:** While schedules may vary based on duties, no volunteer should work excessive or extended hours.

2.2.2 Part-Time Volunteers

- Assist **once or twice a week**, focusing on specific tasks.
- No accommodation is provided.
- Work shifts of **up to 6 hours** per day.

2.3 Reporting & Accountability

To ensure **transparency and efficiency**, the following reporting structures apply:

2.3.1 Leadership & Supervision

The following roles are essential to maintaining the structure, safety, and compliance of the hostel's operations. **All individuals in these roles report directly to the Manager.**

- **Volunteer Coordinator** – Oversees the daily structure, ensures volunteers are fulfilling their duties, and supports the overall workflow of the hostel.
- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** – Ensures that all child and vulnerable adult protection policies are followed, in compliance with **Tusla's Children First Guidelines** and **Safeguarding Ireland's best practices**.
- **Health & Safety Representative** – Monitors and enforces compliance with safety procedures, following the **Health and Safety Authority (HSA) standards in Ireland**.

◆ **Important Note:** The **Manager has the final decision** on all operational, safety, and safeguarding matters within the hostel and **reports directly to the President of the Regina Coeli Praesidium.**

2.3.2 Incident Reporting Procedures

- All volunteers must **document** and **report** incidents (e.g., accidents, conflicts, safeguarding concerns).
- Incident reports must be submitted to the **Volunteer Coordinator** and, if needed, the **Safeguarding Officer**.

2.4 Compliance with Irish Charity Regulations

Regina Coeli Hostel adheres to the **Charities Governance Code** established by the Charities Regulator. This ensures the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and governance in line with the **Charities (Amendment) Act 2024**.

- **Trustee Responsibilities:** The President of the Regina Coeli Praesidium and key decision-makers ensure that all financial, operational, and safeguarding policies comply with charity laws.
- **Financial Accountability:** Detailed financial records must be maintained and audited as per legal requirements.
- **Annual Compliance Reports:** The hostel submits an annual report to the **Charities Regulator** detailing activities, finances, and governance measures.

For more details, refer to the [Charities Governance Code](#).

2.5 Governance & Decision-Making

All significant decisions affecting the hostel's operations, structure, or policies must follow a clear governance process.

2.5.1 Weekly Regina Coeli Praesidium Meeting

The **Regina Coeli Praesidium** holds a **weekly meeting** where all essential matters concerning the hostel are presented, discussed, and decided upon. The following topics must be included in each meeting:

- **Operational Changes:** Any modifications to policies, procedures, or daily operations.
- **Challenges & Issues:** Discussion of ongoing difficulties, resident concerns, or volunteer-related matters.
- **Financial Matters:** Budget updates, payments, and funding discussions.
- **Resident Cases:** Updates on specific residents, safeguarding concerns, and support plans.
- **Weekly Reports:** A summary of completed duties, upcoming tasks, and overall hostel conditions.

2.5.2 Decision-Making Authority

- The **Manager** is responsible for overseeing daily operations and making urgent decisions when necessary.
- Any decision that results in a **structural, financial, or policy change must be presented and approved during the weekly Regina Coeli Praesidium meeting.**

- The **President of the Regina Coeli Praesidium** has the final say in major decisions and ensures alignment with the **Legion of Mary's principles and the legal framework in Ireland.**

3. Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities

Volunteers at **Regina Coeli Hostel** play a vital role in ensuring the smooth operation of the hostel while upholding the **Legion of Mary's mission** and complying with **Irish volunteering laws and ethical standards**. Volunteers are expected to maintain a spirit of **charity, service, and respect** while carrying out their duties.

3.1 Categories of Volunteers

Volunteers at Regina Coeli Hostel are divided into two primary categories:

3.1.1 Indoor Sisters (Full-Time Volunteers)

Indoor Sisters are dedicated volunteers who **live within the hostel** and commit to daily operations while adhering to the **Legion of Mary Handbook**. Their role is guided by ethical volunteering standards in Ireland to ensure a fair and sustainable workload.

Roles & Responsibilities:

- **Leadership & Coordination:** Oversee the smooth functioning of the hostel by guiding and supporting other volunteers in their duties.
- **Resident Support:** Providing spiritual and emotional support to residents in line with the **Legion of Mary's principles**.
- **Daily Operations:** Ensuring the efficient running of the hostel by organizing activities, assigning tasks to volunteers, and maintaining a structured routine.
- **Supervision & Mentorship:** Supporting part-time volunteers in their responsibilities and helping them navigate challenging situations with residents.
- **Prayer & Spiritual Engagement:** Participating in daily prayers and fostering a faith-based atmosphere.
- **Housekeeping & Maintenance:** Maintaining cleanliness and order within the premises as part of overall hostel upkeep.

Working Hours & Conditions:

- Maximum **35 hours per week** to comply with ethical volunteer standards.
- Recommended **daily limit: 7 hours**, with appropriate rest periods.
- **Two full rest days per week** to prevent overwork.
- **No monetary compensation** is provided, but accommodation and meals are available.

◆ **Important:** Indoor Sisters must maintain a **spirit of voluntary service** without exceeding ethical limits, ensuring compliance with **Volunteer Ireland guidelines**.

3.1.2 Part-Time Volunteers

Part-time volunteers contribute **on a scheduled basis**, usually once or twice a week, without residing at the hostel.

Roles & Responsibilities:

- Assisting in **meal preparation, serving, and cleaning**.
- Supporting **resident activities and engagement**.
- Providing **clerical and administrative support**, such as organizing supplies.
- Helping with **fundraising and community outreach initiatives**.
- Following guidance and support from Indoor Sisters in their assigned duties.

Time Commitment & Conditions:

- Volunteering is **flexible**, with shifts of up to **6 hours per session**.
- No accommodation or financial compensation is provided.
- Volunteers must undergo **basic training** in safeguarding, safety procedures, and hostel rules.

3.2 Volunteer Code of Conduct

All volunteers must adhere to a **strict Code of Conduct**, ensuring compliance with **Irish law and the Legion of Mary's principles**.

Expectations:

- **Respect & Dignity:** Treat all residents with compassion, upholding **equal status and non-discrimination laws (Equal Status Acts 2000-2018)**.
- **Confidentiality & GDPR Compliance:** Volunteers must not disclose residents' personal information, following **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.
- **Religious Respect:** While Regina Coeli Hostel is a faith-based organization, volunteers must not impose religious beliefs on residents.
- **Health & Safety:** Follow all **fire safety, hygiene, and emergency procedures** to comply with **Health and Safety Authority (HSA) regulations**.

◆ **Note:** Any breach of conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from volunteer duties.

3.3 Volunteer Supervision & Support

To maintain operational efficiency, **all volunteers report to designated supervisors:**

- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Oversees daily tasks, ensures fair workload distribution, and provides support.
- **Health & Safety Representative:** Ensures adherence to **safety regulations and risk management policies.**
- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):** Monitors compliance with **safeguarding policies** to protect residents from harm.

Volunteers are encouraged to seek guidance whenever needed and participate in **ongoing training opportunities** to enhance their skills and understanding of the hostel's mission.

4. Daily Operations & Routine

Ensuring a well-organized daily routine is essential for the smooth functioning of **Regina Coeli Hostel**. The structured schedule helps provide stability for both volunteers and residents while maintaining the values of the **Legion of Mary**.

4.1 Opening & Closing Times

- **Monday to Friday:** The hostel opens at **7:30 am** and closes at **9:30 pm**.
- **Weekends & Bank Holidays:** The hostel opens **one hour later** at **8:30 am**.
- Residents must be inside by **9:30 pm** each evening.

4.2 Prayers & Spiritual Support

- Volunteers (and residents who wish to join) **pray the Rosary** before the hostel opens.
- The Rosary is also prayed **before serving teas at 7 pm**.
- Spiritual support and guidance are available daily for residents seeking assistance.

4.3 Meal Preparation & Serving

- **Breakfast:**
 - **Monday to Friday:** Served from **8:30 am to 9 am**.
 - **Weekends & Bank Holidays:** Served from **9 am to 9:30 am**.
- **Teas:** Served daily from **7 pm to 7:30 pm**.
- **Daily Menu:** A fresh and healthy menu is prepared each day, ensuring nutritional balance for residents.
- **Praesidia Involvement:**
 - Each day, a different **Praesidium group** is responsible for preparing and serving tea.
 - Every group must participate **at least once per week**.
 - All **Praesidia members must receive proper training** in food handling and safety.

4.4 Housekeeping & Maintenance

- Indoor Sisters oversee housekeeping to ensure cleanliness and safety.
- Volunteers and residents work together to maintain common areas, dormitories, and hygiene facilities.
- Any maintenance issues must be reported immediately to the **Health & Safety Representative**.

4.5 Manager's Responsibilities

- The **hostel manager** is responsible for **purchasing food and essential supplies** to maintain daily operations.
- They must ensure all procurement aligns with **budget guidelines and financial transparency**.
- The manager oversees **inventory management** and addresses supply shortages promptly.

4.6 Required Training for Volunteers & Managers

- All volunteers and Praesidia members handling food must complete **food safety training** as required by the **Health Service Executive (HSE)**.
- The manager must undergo **training in homeless and mental health support**, following Irish government and HSE recommendations.
- Required training includes:
 - **Fire Safety & Emergency Procedures**
 - **First Aid & Hygiene**
 - **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (HSE Guidelines)**
 - **Mental Health First Aid (HSE-approved programs)**
 - **Trauma-Informed Care Training**

This structured daily routine ensures Regina Coeli Hostel maintains a **safe, faith-centered, and well-managed environment** for all residents and volunteers.

5. Code of Conduct & Ethics

Ensuring a respectful, safe, and ethical environment is fundamental to the mission of **Regina Coeli Hostel**. Volunteers and staff must adhere to a strict **Code of Conduct & Ethics** that aligns with **Irish law, safeguarding policies, and the principles of the Legion of Mary**.

5.1 Respect for Residents' Dignity & Rights

- Treat all residents with **kindness, respect, and non-discrimination**, in accordance with the **Equal Status Acts (2000-2018)**.
- Empower and encourage residents to maintain their dignity and independence.
- Engage with residents in a **compassionate and non-judgmental** manner, ensuring a safe and supportive atmosphere.

5.2 Confidentiality & Data Protection (GDPR Compliance)

- Do not share residents' personal information with unauthorized persons, ensuring compliance with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.
- Securely store any documentation or records containing personal data, accessible only to authorized personnel.
- Report any suspected **breach of confidentiality** to the **Manager or Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** immediately.

5.3 Professional Boundaries & Appropriate Behaviour

- Maintain **professional boundaries** with residents to ensure ethical and safe interactions.
- Avoid personal relationships with residents that could **compromise objectivity or professionalism**.
- Refrain from **favouritism, inappropriate physical contact**, or any behaviour that could be perceived as coercive or manipulative.

5.4 Handling Conflicts & Complaints

- Address disputes or complaints with **patience, discretion, and professionalism**.
- Report conflicts or grievances to the **Volunteer Coordinator or Manager** for resolution.
- If a resident has a complaint, **listen attentively, document the issue**, and direct it to the appropriate authority.

5.5 Safeguarding & Protection of Vulnerable Residents

- Adhere to **Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse – National Policy & Procedures (HSE)**.
- Report any **suspected abuse (physical, emotional, financial, or sexual)** immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**.
- Never engage in or ignore any form of abuse, harassment, or mistreatment of residents.

5.6 Health, Safety & Hygiene Compliance

- Follow all health and safety regulations as outlined by the **Health and Safety Authority (HSA)**.
- Strictly adhere to **fire safety, hygiene standards, and first aid procedures** at all times.
- Report any potential **hazards, accidents, or unsafe conditions** to the **Health & Safety Representative** immediately.

5.7 Religious Respect & Spiritual Inclusion

- Respect the religious beliefs and backgrounds of all residents, acknowledging that while **Regina Coeli Hostel** is a faith-based initiative, participation in religious activities is voluntary.
- Do not pressure or impose religious practices on any resident.
- Offer spiritual support to those who seek it, ensuring inclusivity and respect for individual beliefs.

5.8 Training & Development

To maintain a high standard of care and compliance, the following training programs are mandatory:

For All Volunteers and Staff:

- **Children First:** Understanding child protection and welfare responsibilities.
- **Dignity at Work:** Promoting respect and preventing workplace bullying and harassment.
- **Communicating Effectively Through Open Disclosure:** Enhancing transparency and honesty in communications.
- **Cyber Security Awareness:** Protecting personal and organizational data.
- **Hand Hygiene:** Preventing the spread of infections through proper handwashing techniques.

For Roles Involving Food Handling:

- **Food Safety Training:** Ensuring safe preparation and handling of food to prevent contamination.

For Management and Supervisory Roles:

- **Homeless Prevention and Intervention:** Strategies to support vulnerable populations and address homelessness effectively.
- **Mental Health First Aid:** Recognizing and responding to mental health crises appropriately.
- **Trauma-Informed Care Training:** Understanding the impact of trauma and integrating this knowledge into practices.

These training programs are accessible through the **HSE's online learning portal, HSeLand**, and other accredited providers. Completion of relevant training is required prior to commencing duties, with regular refreshers as stipulated by organizational policies.

5.9 Prohibited Conduct & Disciplinary Actions

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited and may result in **immediate dismissal** from volunteer or staff duties:

- Discrimination or harassment based on gender, race, religion, disability, or background.
- Verbal or physical aggression towards residents, volunteers, or staff.

- Breach of confidentiality or improper handling of personal data.
- Engaging in inappropriate relationships with residents.
- Failing to report safeguarding concerns or violating hostel policies.

Note: Any violations of this Code of Conduct will be addressed by the **Manager and Volunteer Coordinator**, with disciplinary actions taken as necessary.

This section ensures that **Regina Coeli Hostel** maintains a **safe, ethical, and legally compliant environment** where all residents, volunteers, and staff are treated with dignity and respect.

For more details, refer to the HSE Mandatory Training at <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/training-and-development/>

6. Health, Safety & Wellbeing

The **Regina Coeli Hostel** prioritizes the **health, safety, and well-being** of both residents and volunteers. This section outlines key safety procedures, compliance with **Irish health and safety regulations**, and essential training requirements.

6.1 Fire Safety & Emergency Procedures

- All volunteers must complete **mandatory Fire Safety Training** in line with the **Fire Services Act (1981 & 2003)**.
- Fire exits, alarms, and extinguishers must be **regularly inspected** to ensure they are in proper working order.
- **Fire drills** must be conducted **at least twice a year** to familiarize volunteers and residents with evacuation procedures.
- In case of fire, volunteers must:
 - **Activate the nearest alarm** and call **112 or 999**.
 - **Assist residents** in safely evacuating through designated exits.
 - Assemble at the **designated safe area** and ensure all residents and volunteers are accounted for.
- Emergency evacuation plans must be **clearly displayed** throughout the hostel.

6.2 First Aid, Hygiene & Infection Control

- Volunteers must complete **First Aid and CPR Training**, including the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), as recommended by the **Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC)**.
- Compliance with **HSE infection control protocols** is mandatory, including proper handwashing, sanitization, and food safety standards.
- The hostel must maintain an **adequate supply of first aid kits**, which should be **regularly checked and restocked**.
- Any **injuries or medical emergencies** must be reported immediately to the **Health & Safety Representative**.

6.3 Mental Health & Wellbeing Support

- Volunteers should complete **Mental Health First Aid Training** to recognize and respond appropriately to residents experiencing distress.

- Psychological support resources should be available for both residents and volunteers.
- The hostel encourages a **compassionate, non-judgmental** environment where mental health concerns are addressed with sensitivity.

6.3.1 National Mental Health Guidelines

Regina Coeli Hostel follows Ireland's **National Mental Health Strategy** and best practices from **A Vision for Change** and the **Housing First National Implementation Plan 2022-2026** to provide trauma-informed care.

- **Training:** Volunteers must complete **Mental Health First Aid** and **Trauma-Informed Care** training to assist residents effectively.
- **On-Site Support:** The hostel collaborates with local mental health services to provide professional referrals and crisis intervention.
- **Safe Spaces:** A designated **quiet area** is available for residents needing emotional support.

For further information, refer to [Mental Health Ireland](#).

6.4 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

- Volunteers must complete **Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Training**, in accordance with **HSE and Tusla guidelines**.
- Any signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation must be reported to the **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** immediately.
- Volunteers must maintain **strict confidentiality** while ensuring appropriate action is taken in safeguarding cases.

6.5 Government & HSE-Recommended Training for Volunteers & Managers

The following courses are required or highly recommended for volunteers and hostel managers:

- **Fire Safety Awareness Training** (HSA & Fire Services Act)
- **First Aid & CPR Training** (PHECC)
- **Manual Handling Training** (HSA compliance)
- **Mental Health First Aid Training** (Mental Health Ireland)

- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Training** (HSE & Tusla guidelines)
- **De-escalation & Conflict Management Training** (Irish Council for Social Housing)
- **Trauma-Informed Care Training** (HSE-recommended for homeless services staff)
- **Emergency Preparedness & Response Training** (Irish Red Cross or equivalent organization)
- **Food Safety & HACCP Training** (For those handling food, in compliance with FSAI guidelines)

◆ **Note:** Volunteers and staff are encouraged to **refresh their training** periodically to ensure continued compliance and best practices.

6.6 Routine Safety Measures & Emergency Preparedness

- A **nightly safety check** should be conducted before the hostel closes, ensuring fire exits are clear, alarms are functional, and all residents are accounted for.
- Volunteers should be trained in **basic conflict de-escalation techniques** to manage difficult situations calmly and safely.
- The hostel should maintain an **emergency contact list**, including local **hospitals, mental health services, Gardaí, and fire departments**.
- A **designated emergency response team** should be established among volunteers to lead emergency procedures and provide immediate support in crisis situations.

6.7 Reporting & Monitoring Health & Safety Issues

- Volunteers must report any **health, safety, or safeguarding concerns** to the **Health & Safety Representative**.
- Regular **risk assessments** should be conducted to identify and address potential hazards.
- Compliance with the **Health and Safety Authority (HSA) regulations** is essential for maintaining a safe working environment.

This section ensures that **Regina Coeli Hostel** remains a **secure, supportive, and legally compliant** environment for all volunteers and residents.

7. Reporting & Documentation

To ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with **Irish regulations**, all volunteer activities must be properly documented.

7.1 Volunteer Attendance Tracking

- All volunteers must **sign in and out** at the designated logbook or digital system upon arrival and departure.
- If a volunteer **cannot attend their scheduled duties**, they must:
 - Notify their **President** and find a replacement to cover their duties.
 - If they cannot contact their President, they must inform **someone on duty at the front office of Regina Coeli Hostel**.
 - This should be done **at least 24 hours in advance**, whenever possible.
- Each **Praesidium President** must monitor volunteer attendance and report any irregularities to the **Volunteer Coordinator** of Regina Coeli Hostel.
- A **visitor attendance book** is maintained for volunteers attending **Praesidium meetings, conferences, or events** to ensure accurate records in case of **fire or emergency**.

7.2 Incident Reporting & Follow-Up

- All **incidents, accidents, or safeguarding concerns** must be documented using an **Incident Report Form** and submitted to the appropriate authority.
- Reports must be reviewed by the **Manager of the hostel** and the **Safeguarding Officer**.
- The reports will then be discussed in the **Regina Coeli Praesidium meeting**.
- The **President** is the only person authorized to report to external agencies. If the **President is unavailable**, the **Manager and Officers** may handle the reporting.
- A **special form and file** will be maintained for incident reporting, separate from the **Daily Diary**.

7.3 Financial Transparency in Fundraising Events

- All fundraising activities must be pre-approved by the hostel's **Praesidium meeting**. Every fundraising event must have a detailed project approved in advance by the Praesidium meeting.
- Clear financial records must be maintained, including:

- **Income and expenditure logs** for fundraising events.
- **Receipts and invoices** for all purchases related to fundraising.
- **Regular financial reports** submitted to the **finance committee**.

7.4 Record-Keeping & Compliance

- Volunteer records must be securely stored in compliance with **GDPR regulations**.
- Attendance logs, incident reports, and safeguarding concerns must be retained for **a minimum of five years**.
- All documentation must be accessible only to **authorized personnel**.

7.5 Annual Report & Social Responsibility

- An **Annual Report** must be compiled to provide transparency on all hostel operations, ensuring compliance with modern **best practices in homeless accommodation, women's rights, human rights, voluntary work, NGOs, and social responsibility** in Ireland and the UK.
- The Annual Report should include:
 - **Volunteer activities and impact**, including hours contributed, key projects, and personal development programs.
 - **Financial statements**, detailing donations, fundraising outcomes, and expenditures to ensure full transparency.
 - **Incident reports and safeguarding measures** taken throughout the year to maintain a secure environment.
 - **Social responsibility initiatives**, such as engagement with local communities, partnerships with NGOs, and sustainability efforts.
 - **Achievements, challenges, and future plans**, outlining progress and strategic goals for the upcoming year.
- The Annual Report must be **reviewed and approved** by the **Regina Coeli Praesidium meeting** before distribution to stakeholders.
- Regina Coeli Hostel is committed to upholding **ethical, community-focused, and sustainable practices** by:
 - **Providing a safe and dignified environment** for residents and volunteers.
 - **Ensuring responsible use of funding** and donations, aligned with financial integrity principles.
 - **Engaging in outreach programs** that support the homeless community, women's rights advocacy, and social inclusion.

- **Integrating sustainability practices**, such as reducing waste, implementing energy-efficient policies, and promoting environmental awareness in hostel operations.
- **Collaborating with relevant organizations** to promote continuous improvement in service quality, volunteer training, and resident care.
- **Adopting best sustainability practices in the non-profit sector**, including ethical sourcing of supplies, implementing green energy solutions, and partnering with eco-conscious businesses.

This section ensures that **all volunteer activities, attendance, incidents, and financial matters are properly documented**, supporting the overall safety, efficiency, and accountability of **Regina Coeli Hostel**.

8. Volunteer Development & Support

To foster an effective and supportive volunteer environment, Regina Coeli Hostel provides structured training, peer support systems, and recognition programs.

8.1 Training & Development

- **Before Starting Duties:**
 - All volunteers must complete mandatory **Safeguarding Training, Fire Safety Training, and Basic First Aid** before commencing work.
 - They must submit the relevant certificates to the **Manager** before their first shift.
- **Within the First Three Months:**
 - Volunteers must complete training in **Mental Health Awareness, Conflict Resolution, and De-escalation Techniques**.
 - The hostel will facilitate access to **HSE-recommended emergency mental health response courses**.
- **Ongoing Training:**
 - Volunteers will be encouraged to complete **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses** related to homeless services and trauma-informed care.
- **Probation Period:**
 - All volunteers will undergo a **three-month probation period**, during which their performance and commitment will be assessed.

8.2 Peer Support & Mentorship

A **peer support system** will be established to encourage collaboration and shared learning among volunteers. Examples include:

- **Mentorship Program:** Experienced volunteers mentor newcomers, guiding them through daily tasks and best practices.
- **Reflection Groups:** Monthly group discussions where volunteers share experiences and strategies for dealing with challenges.
- **Case Study Reviews:** Volunteers analyze real-life situations and discuss effective interventions.
- **Inter-Praesidium Collaboration:** Volunteers from different Praesidia exchange knowledge and strategies during joint meetings.
- **Pastoral Support:** Volunteers receive guidance from spiritual advisors to address emotional and ethical challenges.

8.3 Retention & Recognition

- **Recognition Events:** Volunteers will be invited to annual appreciation dinners and award ceremonies.
- **Personal Development:** The hostel will assist volunteers in accessing relevant career development opportunities.
- **Wellness Initiatives:** Indoor sisters will have access to **healing sessions with Catholic priests** and **gym programs** to support their well-being.

8.4 Feedback & Leadership Development

- **Volunteer Leadership Pathways:** Encouraging long-term volunteers to take on leadership roles within Praesidia.
- **Feedback System:**
 - Monthly **anonymous surveys** to gather insights on volunteer experiences.
 - Bi-annual **feedback meetings** where volunteers can voice concerns and suggest improvements.
 - A designated **Volunteer Liaison Officer** to handle feedback and implement changes.
- **Sustainability & Best Practices:**
 - Partnering with NGOs that provide **free professional counselling services** for volunteers.
 - Implementing **low-cost, high-impact volunteer retention strategies**, such as personal growth opportunities and skill-building workshops.
 - Strengthening **community partnerships** to support long-term sustainability in hostel operations.

This structured approach ensures that volunteers are **trained, supported, and retained**, leading to a **stronger, more effective service** for Regina Coeli Hostel.

9. Fundraising & Community Engagement

To ensure the sustainability of **Regina Coeli Hostel**, it is essential to establish clear fundraising rules, community partnerships, and public engagement strategies. Given that the **Legion of Mary does not accept government funding**, the hostel relies solely on **donations, partnerships, and fundraising activities** to continue providing essential services.

9.1 Rules for Fundraising Activities

- **Approval Process:** All fundraising activities must be **pre-approved** by the **Regina Coeli Praesidium meeting** to ensure they align with the values and mission of the hostel.
- **Detailed Project Plan:** Each fundraising initiative must have a **comprehensive proposal** outlining:
 - Objectives and expected outcomes.
 - Budget and financial planning.
 - Resources and volunteers required.
 - Timeline and implementation steps.
 - Risk assessment and contingency plans.
- **Financial Transparency:**
 - Detailed records of **income and expenditure** must be maintained for every fundraising event.
 - **Receipts and invoices** must be submitted to the finance committee.
 - Financial reports must be shared with the **Praesidium** to ensure accountability.
- **Ethical Fundraising:**
 - Fundraising activities must be conducted in a manner that respects the dignity of residents and the mission of the Legion of Mary.
 - The hostel **will not** engage in any fundraising that involves gambling or activities inconsistent with **Legion of Mary values**.

9.1.1 Compliance with Irish Fundraising Guidelines

- All fundraising must adhere to the **Charities Act 2009** and follow ethical standards outlined by the **Charities Regulator**.
- **Public Transparency:** Donors must be informed of how funds will be used, and financial statements must be made available upon request.

- **Record-Keeping:** All fundraising transactions must be recorded and reviewed by the finance committee. For more details, visit [Charities Regulator Fundraising Guidelines](#).

9.2 Community Partnerships

To expand its reach and ensure financial stability, **Regina Coeli Hostel** will actively seek partnerships with:

- **Local Businesses & Corporations:**
 - Establish sponsorship programs where companies can support specific needs (e.g., funding meals, supplying hygiene kits, or providing job training for residents).
 - Seek in-kind donations of essential goods.
- **Universities & Research Institutions:**
 - Develop **internship and volunteer programs** for students in **social work, psychology, healthcare, and nonprofit management**.
 - Collaborate on research projects that contribute to improved services for homeless women.
- **Church & Faith-Based Organizations:**
 - Engage local parishes to support fundraising efforts and recruit volunteers.
 - Organize faith-based events and spiritual retreats to strengthen community involvement.
- **NGOs & Charitable Foundations:**
 - Partner with like-minded NGOs to share resources, training, and best practices.
 - Apply for grants from **private foundations** that support homeless services and women's shelters.
- **Civic & Community Groups:**
 - Engage with Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and other local groups to support initiatives.
 - Host community events to educate the public about homelessness and encourage grassroots support.

9.3 Public Relations & Volunteer Recruitment

To attract new volunteers and raise awareness about the work of **Regina Coeli Hostel**, a structured PR and marketing strategy will be implemented.

9.3.1 Raising Awareness

- **Social Media Engagement:**
 - Create and maintain active **Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn** pages.
 - Share success stories, updates, and volunteer testimonials.
 - Promote upcoming events and fundraising campaigns.
- **Website & Blog:**
 - Regularly update the **Regina Coeli Hostel** website with news, impact reports, and volunteer opportunities.
 - Publish blog posts on topics related to **homelessness, faith-based social work, and volunteer experiences**.
- **Traditional Media Outreach:**
 - Engage with local newspapers, radio stations, and community bulletins.
 - Issue press releases for major events and initiatives.

9.3.2 Expanding the Volunteer Network

- **University Outreach:**
 - Develop partnerships with **student organizations, faith groups, and academic departments** to recruit volunteers.
 - Offer structured volunteer programs with **certificates of participation** to enhance students' CVs.
- **Corporate Volunteering Programs:**
 - Encourage businesses to allow employees to volunteer during work hours.
 - Organize team-building activities where employees assist in hostel projects.
- **Community Engagement Events:**
 - Organize open days and information sessions for potential volunteers.
 - Conduct **volunteer appreciation events** to retain and motivate existing volunteers.
- **Referral Program:**
 - Encourage current volunteers to **invite friends and family** to get involved.
 - Offer mentorship programs where experienced volunteers guide newcomers.

9.4 Sustainability & Future Growth

To ensure long-term stability, **Regina Coeli Hostel** will adopt best practices in nonprofit sustainability, including:

- **Diversified Fundraising:** Expanding revenue streams through **recurring donations, corporate sponsorships, legacy giving, and merchandise sales.**
- **Eco-Friendly Practices:** Implementing **waste reduction programs, energy-efficient solutions, and responsible sourcing of goods.**
- **Social Enterprise Initiatives:** Exploring sustainable income-generating activities such as **thrift shops, skills training programs, and community-run cafes.**
- **Long-Term Volunteer Engagement:** Establishing clear leadership pathways to encourage committed volunteers to take on **mentorship and administrative roles.**
- **Regular Impact Assessments:** Conduct **annual evaluations** of fundraising effectiveness and community engagement efforts to ensure continuous improvement.

By implementing these strategies, **Regina Coeli Hostel** will **strengthen its financial sustainability, expand its community impact, and secure a steady flow of dedicated volunteers,** ensuring the long-term success of its mission.

10. Review & Updates

To ensure that the policies and procedures of **Regina Coeli Hostel** remain relevant, compliant, and effective, regular reviews and updates will be conducted.

10.1 Compliance & Legislative Updates

To ensure **ongoing legal compliance**, Regina Coeli Hostel will conduct an **annual policy review** in line with updates to Irish legislation, including:

- **The Charities (Amendment) Act 2024**
- **Mental Health Policy Updates**
- **Fundraising & Data Protection (GDPR) Laws**

The **Policy Review Committee** will track changes in legislation and implement necessary adjustments in a timely manner.

10.2 Periodic Policy Reviews

- A **Policy Review Committee** will be responsible for conducting **annual policy reviews** to:
 - Ensure compliance with **updated Irish legislation** related to homeless services, safeguarding, health & safety, and data protection.
 - Assess alignment with **best practices** in volunteer management, social responsibility, and sustainability.
 - Incorporate **feedback from volunteers, residents, and stakeholders** to improve operations.
- The **Policy Review Committee** will be composed of **at least three members** and will be open to additional interested individuals.
- If a **significant change** in legislation, safety, or operations occurs, an **urgent policy review** will be conducted.

10.3 Process for Amendments

- **Proposing Changes:**
 - Any **volunteer, resident, or stakeholder** may propose an amendment by submitting a written request to the **Policy Review Committee**.
- **Approval Process:**

- The proposed changes will be **discussed and evaluated** at the **Regina Coeli Praesidium meeting**, which will take place **within two weeks** of the proposal submission.
- If the amendment affects **legal compliance, financial policies, or safeguarding measures**, consultation with **legal advisors or regulatory bodies** may be required.
- **Implementation:**
 - Approved amendments will be **documented, communicated, and integrated** into the official policy document.
 - All volunteers and relevant staff will receive **training or briefings** on significant updates.
- **Record-Keeping:**
 - Previous versions of the policy will be **archived** to maintain a historical record of changes.

This structured review process ensures that **Regina Coeli Hostel remains adaptable, compliant, and aligned with its mission** while upholding the highest standards in service delivery and volunteer engagement.

Official Approval – Regina Coeli Hostel Policy Document

Date of Approval: ____/____/____

Prepared by:

Name: Sabrina Letieri

Position: Manager, Regina Coeli Hostel

Signature: _____

Final Approval by:

Name: Sile Ni Chochlan

Position: President, Regina Coeli Praesidium

Signature: _____

On behalf of: Regina Coeli Praesidium Meeting