

CHARITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY CALLS ON CFR GROUPS TO RESPOND

Community First Responder groups are being urged to register with the Charities Regulatory Authority, as part of the CRA-CFR Group Governance Scheme. The Authority's Eamon O'Halloran, who is leading the establishment of a Public Register of Charities, told delegates at RESPOND 2019 they need to register sooner rather than later. Report by Grace Heneghan.

The Charities Regulatory Authority's Eamon O'Halloran, who is currently overseeing the establishment of a Public Register of Charities, said that one of the questions frequently asked is if there's a need to be registered with the CRA.

"The answer is 'Yes, You Do! It is a legal requirement under the Charities Act 2009 to register as a charitable organisation with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA)," he said. "Some of the basic requirements include operating within the Republic of Ireland, having a charitable purpose only, and the promotion

of health and the relief of sickness and the provision of a public benefit. If you tick all boxes then you need to apply for registration.

"The board or management of each association or group who makes the decisions (i.e. the charitable trustees) are the ones who need to make the application online to the CRA."

CHARITIES GOVERNANCE CODE

The Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) is putting a lot of work into the Charities Governance Code over the next 12 months, by providing the training and toolkits to help people run their organisations as efficiently and effectively as possible, according to O'Halloran, who is the CRA's Head of Registration and Projects.

"There is a huge amount of information on our website, such as the requirements to qualify as a charity, registration guidelines, conflict of interest and also the importance of checking to see other voluntary organisations in your communities registered as charities," he told community first responders at this year's RESPOND conference.

The Charities Governance Code explains the minimum standards you should meet to effectively manage and control



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BENEFITS OF BEING A REGISTERED CHARITY

Becoming a registered charity does not only mean that you will comply with the law. You will also need to:

- *Demonstrate that you operate to high standards of governance and administration.*
- *Highlight your commitment to transparency and accountability.*
- *Be in a better position to retain and attract statutory funding and contracts.*
- *Provide a sound basis for donors and volunteers to support you.*
- *Find it easier to secure permits for on-street collections.*
- *Be able to apply to the Revenue Commissioners for charitable tax exempt status and associated benefits.*
- *Play your part in rebuilding trust and confidence in the charities sector*

your charity. Good governance involves putting in place systems and processes to ensure that your charity achieves its charitable objectives with integrity and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way.

Key Dates Relating to the Code:

The Charities Governance Code Toolkit provides guidance notes and templates to assist charities and charity trustees to meet all of the core standards outlined in the Code.

2019 – learning and preparation for charities.

2020 – first year that registered charities are expected to comply with the Code.

2021 – first year that registered charities are expected to report on their compliance with the Code.



Eamon O'Halloran, CRA's Head of Registration and Projects, is leading the establishment and maintenance of a Public Register of Charities including annual reporting, to underpin trust and confidence in charities.

TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

The Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) was established in 2014 on foot of the Charities Act of 2009, and the main function is to increase trust and confidence in charities through the establishment of a public register of charitable organisations operating in Ireland and ensure their compliance with the Charities Acts.

The Authority also engages in the provision of services to charities, including authorising appointments of new charitable

RECORD NUMBER OF CFR GROUPS AT RESPOND 2019!

CFR Ireland offered another unique mix of informative speakers, hands-on workshops, exhibitors and networking opportunities at RESPOND 2019, which returned to the Mullingar Park Hotel.

This year's event on 6 April was held in association with the National Ambulance Service (NAS), Dublin Fire Brigade, Irish Heart Foundation, Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council, HSE Ireland, in addition to CFR and voluntary groups from all around the country!

Now in its fifth year, the 2019 conference was another sell-out event and Dr David Menzies, co-chair of CFR Ireland, told 'Emergency Services Ireland' that the only number to remember was 553 – a record attendance CFRs from all parts of Ireland since the first RESPOND was held in 2014.

EireMed – the premium sponsor for Respond 2019 – is Ireland's largest supplier of pre-hospital emergency medical supplies, and was the first company in Ireland to provide training in the use of AEDs outside of the statutory health services.

For further details and updates email info@cfr.ie or visit www.cfr.ie



trustees, the framing of schemes of incorporation, authorisation of Cy-Près schemes and disposition of lands held upon charitable trusts.

“The same goes for charitable organisations such as CFR groups around Ireland. If people donate money they need to be assured that it’s going to the right cause, and our role is to protect charitable organisations and their assets. At the heart of this is the transparency and a commitment to do something that is worthwhile, believe in what you do and to provide information to the public on what you do and the services you provide,” he added.

Whilst the Charities Regulator promotes clients and their duties, and ensures accountability to both the donors and their beneficiaries, O’Halloran said that on occasion the Authority will undertake investigations and can enforce strong powers if people raise concerns about a particular charitable organisation.

“With approximately 10,000 registered charities, part of our remit is to also focus on potentially bad behaviour by a small number of charities or those high risk groups. We have a very dedicated team at the CRA, and they have dealt with community first responders so we know what to look for and what guidance to provide. So, please do engage with us as, and

finally please do it sooner rather than later!

For further information:

CFR groups can sign up to the Authority’s e-newsletter ‘Charities Regulator News’ online via the website www.charitiesregulator.ie, For further information email info@charitiesregulator.ie or follow the CRA on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

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