



THIRD SECTOR
Dumfries and Galloway

Volunteering Strategy

2020 – 2023
(Revised October 2020)



VOLUNTEER
Dumfries and Galloway

**“Making Dumfries and Galloway
a great place to Volunteer”**

Working together to put our sector first
Dumfries and Galloway's Third Sector Interface

Volunteer Dumfries and Galloway is part of Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway the operating name of Dumfries and Galloway Third Sector Interface. Scottish Charity Number SC043832.

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is the third sector?

Organisations which are neither public sector nor private sector can generally be considered as third sector. These organisations exist to improve the lives of people and communities e.g. social enterprises, co-operatives, credit unions, voluntary and community groups, registered charities etc.

1.2 What is Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway?

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway is a third sector interface, which exists to:

- be a central source of **knowledge** about the third sector locally
- ensure a strong third sector **voice** at a strategic level within local planning structures and nationally
- develop the **capacity** of volunteering, community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprise to achieve positive change
- provide **leadership**, vision and coordination to the local third sector to better respond to local priorities, including through partnership and collaboration

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway's vision is "to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in Dumfries and Galloway".

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway's overarching strategic objective in relation to volunteering is to inspire a diverse, accessible and meaningful range of volunteering opportunities and increase levels of volunteer participation amongst people of all ages and backgrounds across the region.¹

1.3 Why have a volunteering strategy?

The volunteering strategy will document how Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway can develop and support volunteering across the region, meeting the needs of its vision and strategic objectives as well as implementing outcomes from the Scottish Government frameworks for the third sector and volunteering.

¹ <http://thirdsectordumgal.org.uk/>

The strategy will:

- promote a culture of valuing volunteers and volunteering across the region
- encourage and share best practice in volunteering
- increase skill levels of volunteers and those managing volunteers
- acknowledge the community impact of volunteering.

The strategy has been developed with the assistance of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations from across Dumfries and Galloway.

1.4 National frameworks

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway must support the achievement of outcomes of various national frameworks. The relevant outcomes of these frameworks are reflected in the strategic objectives of this volunteering strategy and accompanying action plan.

Third Sector Interface Outcomes Framework (Scottish Government – September 2018) ²

Volunteering Outcomes Framework

- Third Sector Interfaces will play an important role in promoting and supporting volunteering at a local level, including through the ongoing delivery and promotion of Saltire Awards.

Volunteering for All (Scottish Government Framework – April 2019) ³

Third Sector Interfaces should:

- promote the value of volunteering for all principles and approaches, celebrating the contributions already being made and encouraging everyone who wants to take part
- provide practical guidance and support on “Volunteering for All”.

Volunteer Involving Organisations (public, private and third sector) should:

- adopt the principles of “Volunteering for All” in volunteer practice, reviewing their existing processes and guidelines
- consider ongoing opportunities to measure the impact of their work, on volunteers, beneficiaries, staff and the wider community

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/third-sector-interface-outcome-framework-september-2018/pages/2/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/volunteering-national-framework/>

- build links with and across communities, seeking opportunities to share resources and expertise
- prepare for future volunteer recruitment, being mindful of the changing contexts in which they operate.

Youth Volunteering Innovation Project Recommendations (Project Scotland and Young Scot– March 2019) ⁴

Commissioned by the Scottish Government, using a co-production model, Project Scotland, Young Scot and the Youth Volunteering Project team developed a plan to encourage more young people to volunteer and to improve their volunteering experiences. The 13 recommendations of the plan include:

- training for voluntary organisations on youth inclusion
- developing guidelines on supporting young volunteers
- youth volunteering champion schools
- creating a framework to support young people not in education, employment or training, to gain work-based skills and personal development through volunteering.

2 What is volunteering?

2.1 Definition

The Scottish Government defines volunteering as follows:

“Volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one’s own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary.”

Volunteering can be formal or informal. This strategy is aimed mainly at formal volunteering, where individuals undertake a role with a designated group, organisation or charity. Informal volunteering tends to happen on a more ad-hoc basis e.g. babysitting for a friend, getting shopping for a neighbour.

⁴ https://www.projectscotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/YouthVIP_Report.pdf

Volunteers are not a replacement for paid staff nor a means of providing activities which should be delivered by statutory bodies.

2.2 Benefits

Benefits of volunteering to the volunteer include:

- an opportunity to meet new people, increase their social circle and develop new friendships, which in turn can help reduce loneliness and isolation
- the opportunity to feel included and become “part of something”
- an opportunity to improve their mental health, self-esteem, self-worth and to develop greater self-confidence
- the opportunity to learn new skills, to develop existing skills or to pass skills onto others
- improving job prospects and enhancing CVs through gaining experience and/or skills
- the feeling of making a difference by volunteering
- participating in a fun, enjoyable and, sometimes, social activity.

Volunteer involving organisations benefit from volunteers by:

- being able to deliver enhanced services
- having more community involvement
- having the opportunity to grow their organisation
- developing larger teams which may have additional specialist skills
- having more people to promote the work of the organisation
- being able to provide options for better or more flexible service delivery through offering adaptable, flexible volunteering opportunities.

3 Volunteering in Dumfries and Galloway

3.1 Background

During 2019 Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway undertook a series of surveys about volunteering. These surveys were conducted before the Coronavirus crisis and were the basis of the earlier version of this strategy.

The strategy has been updated in the light of our experience of working with the positive response from local communities to the needs of vulnerable and

isolated people during the crisis. The findings of the 2019 surveys are still considered to be relevant.

During August and September 2019 TSDG carried out three region-wide surveys:

- on-line survey of volunteer involving organisations (86 responses)
- on-line survey of individuals who currently volunteer (293 responses)
- face to face survey of individuals who have not volunteered within the last 12 months (122 responses).

Volunteer involving organisations

Although the size of the organisations who responded vary, two-thirds have between five and 50 volunteers. Two-thirds of responding organisations have volunteer vacancies, with 33% needing more than seven additional volunteers. Although more than half of these organisations have volunteers aged under 25, only 16% knew if these volunteers were involved in the Saltire Award scheme.⁵

Over half of the organisations that responded would like help recruiting volunteers; currently the main method of recruitment is word of mouth, followed by social media and websites.

When a new volunteer starts, one in five of the organisations that responded do not provide any form of induction and 16% of the organisations provide no training to their volunteers. Role-specific training is provided by 68% of the organisations. One in five organisations noted they would like support with managing volunteers and/or managing the relationship between staff and volunteers.

Of the organisations that responded, ten percent have achieved an Investing in Volunteers Award ⁶ and 8% have gained a Volunteer Friendly Award ⁷. Two-thirds of the organisations would like more information on how to achieve these best practice awards.

⁵ <https://saltireawards.org.uk/>

⁶ <https://iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk/inyourcountry/iiv-scotland>

⁷ <http://volunteerfriendly.org.uk/>

Individuals who currently volunteer

Survey results show that 74% of the volunteers who responded fall within the 46 to 75 years age group, and 7% were aged 25 and under.

Two-thirds of the volunteers who completed the survey volunteer on a weekly basis, with 43% volunteering for more than one organisation. Of those who are not currently volunteering, 59% agreed that they would consider undertaking voluntary roles in the future.

Across Dumfries and Galloway volunteers undertake many varied roles. The most common role, amongst survey respondents, is that of charity trustee or board/committee member.

Helping their local community was the most popular reason given for being a volunteer, followed by having fun and meeting other people. These were also the main reasons given for current non-volunteers considering volunteering in the future. Family and/or work commitments, general lack of time and ill health were cited as the main reasons preventing people from volunteering.

On the whole, the volunteers who responded feel valued by their organisations, however, 3% did not, stating that they were never thanked for their contribution or did not feel part of the organisation. One in ten of the volunteers responding would like more training and/or support from their organisation and a fifth would like more opportunities to socialise with other volunteers.

3.2 Themes

Focus groups were held to review the survey results. The focus groups were made up of volunteers and representatives of volunteer involving organisations, from a range of disciplines and from across the region. The focus groups were designed to test our analysis of the research and to discuss and refine the emerging themes.

From these discussions the following themes were agreed:

- recruiting and retaining volunteers
- overcoming barriers and making volunteering easier
- learning and development

- young people and volunteering
- trustees, boards and committee members
- accreditation

4 Strategic Objectives

The identified themes are the basis of the following strategic objectives:

4.1 Objective 1

To develop a volunteering culture across the region where everyone can have the opportunity to volunteer.

Many organisations need to attract new volunteers from a wide cross section of society. The value of volunteering needs to be recognised by both individuals and employers across the region.

Conclusions

- Everyone can volunteer.
- Volunteers are not a replacement for paid staff, nor are they cheap labour. Volunteers should complement the work done by staff and enhance the services of an organisation.
- The needs of the volunteer are as important as the needs of the organisation. Volunteers should not only feel part of the team they work with but part of the organisation as a whole.
- Employers (from all sectors) should be encouraged to actively support volunteering and acknowledge the experience and skills which can be gained by staff who volunteer. Employer supported volunteering, either through policies which enable staff to volunteer during work time or through offering flexible working to enable volunteering, should be encouraged.
- The outdated perception of volunteering and volunteers,⁸ should be challenged and modern volunteering models used to suit the needs of both volunteers and organisations.
- Volunteer involving organisations should identify the volunteering opportunities available in their organisation and the skills (if any) that volunteers will require to undertake them. Volunteer roles should be

⁸ "Little old lady working in a charity shop"

clearly and simply documented helping individuals identify roles that would suit them.

- Organisations should use a variety of methods to attract new volunteers.
- The benefits of volunteering should be promoted to young people (under 25s) using language that engages with this age group.
- Awards such as the Saltire Award should be promoted to young people as opportunities to enhance job applications or further education entry forms.

4.2 Objective 2

To develop a network of well supported volunteer involving organisations who recognise the value of volunteers, of all ages, both to their organisation and to the region.

All volunteers should have a positive volunteering experience where they feel valued and supported throughout their time with an organisation.

Conclusions

- Volunteer involving organisations should have a system in place to welcome new volunteers and ensure they understand their role and how they fit within the organisation.
- Volunteer involving organisations should be encouraged to develop volunteer pathways, including volunteering as part of the employability pathway, ensuring that the right volunteer is in the right role and is supported in the right way.
- There should be good channels of communication between volunteers and their volunteer involving organisation. Volunteers should have an identified person as a line manager – this can be either a member of staff or another volunteer.
- Volunteers should feel part of the organisation and included in the life of the organisation e.g. receiving the organisation's newsletter.
- Volunteer involving organisations should celebrate volunteer successes and encourage good working relationships between volunteers and staff.
- Networking opportunities for volunteer involving organisations and volunteers should be developed to provide a support mechanism and to help the sharing of good practice.

4.3 Objective 3

To promote flexible, inclusive volunteering and support for those new to volunteering.

Many potential volunteers are discouraged from becoming volunteers due to perceived barriers and obstacles.

Conclusions

- Volunteer involving organisations should be encouraged to look at ways of making their volunteering roles, if possible, flexible and accessible to all.
- Volunteer involving organisations should develop good working relationships between staff and volunteers including setting clear boundaries as to where roles and responsibilities differ.
- A variety of volunteering models should be encouraged to help potential volunteers find ways of volunteering. Prospective volunteers who may never have volunteered before may need help with “getting ready to volunteer”.
- Volunteers who cannot commit to regular volunteering with a single organisation may be willing to become part of a “volunteering bank” who support organisations as and when necessary.

4.4 Objective 4

To promote training and learning opportunities for all volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, including the importance of giving volunteers a good start to their volunteering.

It is important to ensure that new volunteers receive appropriate information about their volunteering and the organisation from the beginning. All volunteers should have the opportunity to undertake suitable learning to help them with their volunteering. Some volunteer involving organisations are interested in offering volunteer placements as part of their commitment to the employability pathway which may involve training towards positive outcomes such as employment or further training. Volunteer involving organisations should recognise the benefits to volunteers of participating in recognised award schemes.

Conclusions

- Training, and other resources should be developed to support both volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.

- Where appropriate, support should be available to third sector volunteer involving organisations to participate in employability schemes.
- The importance of good induction and appropriate training should be promoted. Volunteer involving organisations should ensure that volunteers are given access to appropriate learning for their role.
- Raise awareness of SQA and other volunteering qualifications amongst volunteer involving organisations, volunteers and employers.⁹
- Employers across Dumfries and Galloway should be encouraged to acknowledge the benefits of volunteering undertaken by both their staff and applicants applying for jobs within their organisation.

4.5 Objective 5

To encourage and promote volunteering amongst young people.

The benefits of volunteering should be promoted to young people, to encourage wider participation across the region.

Conclusions

- Engage with young people using language and communication methods that they can relate to.
- Encourage young people to see that volunteering can bring personal benefits including developing new skills or improving existing ones and could enhance their educational or employment prospects.
- Demonstrate the breadth of opportunities within the third sector which young people could participate in.
- Secondary schools and further education establishments should be encouraged to promote the benefits of volunteering to their students. In addition, they should be encouraged to offer the opportunity for students under 25 to participate Awards which celebrate volunteering, including Saltire, Duke of Edinburgh and Discovery Awards should be promoted across the region.^{10 11 12}

⁹ <https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/index.php?categoryid=145>

¹⁰ <https://saltireawards.org.uk/>

¹¹ <https://www.dofe.org/>

¹² <https://www.discoveryaward.org.uk/>

4.6 Objective 6

To develop strong boards, committees and trustees by providing support, promoting good practice and providing training opportunities.

It is essential that all volunteer involving organisations have trustees (board or committee members) who have appropriate skills and understand their roles and responsibilities.

Conclusions

- Volunteer boards and committees should be encouraged to be inclusive in their recruitment.
- It is important that new trustees have a full induction at the start of their term.
- The benefits and skills which can be learned through being a board/committee member should be promoted, to help attract volunteers to the role. Employers should be encouraged to see this activity as a good developmental opportunity for employees.
- Board and committee development opportunities, including skills audits, succession planning and trustee training, should be encouraged, and appropriate training developed.
- Boards and committees should review their methods of working to ensure best practice, including reviewing the timing of meetings to ensure that they are inclusive.
- Good working relationships between staff and board/committee members should be nurtured.

4.7 Objective 7

To celebrate volunteering in Dumfries and Galloway.

The amount of time given by volunteers across the region should be celebrated, along with the significant contributions of individual volunteers.

Conclusions

- The contributions of volunteer involving organisations and individual volunteers should be celebrated, for example, through celebration events, thank you certificates and promotional activities to showcase success.
- Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway should continue to champion volunteering with an annual awards event. Volunteer involving organisations should be encouraged to organise their own events.

4.8 Objective 8

To raise the standards of volunteering for both organisations and volunteers locally and regionally.

Sharing best practice can develop skills within both established and new volunteer involving organisations. Volunteer involving organisations can celebrate best practice through accreditation schemes, including Investing in Volunteers or the Volunteer Friendly Award.

Conclusions

- To enable volunteer involving organisations to work together to share skills, best practice and to work collaboratively, networking forums should be developed, helping to encourage volunteering across the region and ultimately to enable more people to take part.
- Links should be developed between similar interest groups to enable peer support amongst volunteers and organisations.
- Volunteer involving organisations should be encouraged to work towards recognised standards in volunteering practice. Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway could consider re-instating their own volunteering standards award.

4.9 Objective 9

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway will become the “go to” place for volunteering, both for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.

Through implementing this strategy Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway will work to become a centre of excellence where volunteers and volunteer involving organisations can access advice and help with volunteering. Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway will be an example of good practice with high standards of volunteer management.

4.10 Objective 10

To establish Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway as the co-ordinating organisation for crisis volunteering.

A crisis (eg flooding, pandemic, severe weather conditions) may occur at any time and necessitate the recruitment and management of volunteers. Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway will be the main contact point to support volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and public sector partners in the recruitment and support of volunteers.

Conclusions

- Links with Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway to be maintained to support crisis volunteering.
- Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway will support Dumfries and Galloway Council to maintain and develop resilience groups who respond to a crisis locally.
- Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway will support volunteer involving organisations during a crisis.

5 Conclusion

Using the themes identified from the surveys and focus groups an action plan will be created to deliver the strategic objectives outlined in this strategy, to help make Dumfries and Galloway a great place to volunteer.

The action plan will be a live document which will be reviewed and updated regularly and reported on annually to the Board of Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway.

The strategy will be reviewed and updated at least every three years, or sooner should legislation or a change in relevant frameworks require to be implemented.