

The VOLUNTEER BUZZ



VOLUNTEER
Dumfries and Galloway

Issue Two

Network forum

The next Volunteering Network Forum will focus on inclusion as a powerful way to attract new and retain current volunteers and will update on the forthcoming changes to the PVG scheme.

The Forum welcomes Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Service and Disclosure Scotland who will be providing information on the PVG changes.

Attendees will also hear from Scottish Refugee Council, Girlguiding, MOOL and be given an opportunity to network and update on their organisation's work.

To book a place, click here: [Volunteering Network Forum.](#)

Legislation

Managers of volunteers in regulated care services are recommended to familiarise themselves with legislation enacted on 1st April applying to some volunteer-involving organisations, particularly those that deliver regulated care services. [Click here.](#)

Recruiting volunteers: the challenges for organisations

Volunteering is an important part of everyday life and is often motivated by a desire to make a difference to your community or to meet new people and make friends, while doing something to help others.

But, the ability of many volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) to bring in new recruits has been hit in recent years.

COVID-19 brought a challenge to recruit volunteers and trustees, with shortages hitting lower-income non-profits, charities without paid staff, and even longer-established charities.

The cost-of-living crisis is now also having a negative impact with two thirds of organisations questioned in a task group survey indicating fewer people were coming forward to volunteer and more than half now aware that people had less time available to volunteer.

The Cost of Living Task Group feedback survey results showed the highest proportion of VIOs reporting recruitment challenges,

are amongst those in the areas of: Health, disability and wellbeing (43%); Local community or neighbourhood (31%); Youth or children's activities outside school (21%); Groups aimed at supporting older people (20%).

The survey results also showed:

- 76% of VIOs were experiencing challenges with volunteer recruitment:
- 31% to recruit young people to volunteer,
- 22% to recruit from ethnic minority groups,
- 19% to recruit from deprived communities
- 18% to recruit from rural areas
- 17% to recruit from older age groups
- 17% to recruit from working age groups

Proportionally more VIOs are experiencing volunteer recruitment issues within the following roles: Generally helping out as required (18%); Acting as a committee member or trustee (17%); Visiting, buddying or befriending (13%).



Take a fresh view on your volunteer programme

Before recruiting volunteers, check if your organisation has resources in place to support them on their journey.

This helps to build trust, a longer relationship with your organisation, and minimises the risks of using volunteers. These include:

- Volunteer policy – this serves as the base upon which all other volunteering components are built and explains why volunteers are involved.
- Volunteer agreement – a volunteer's expectations from the organisation and the organisation's expectations from a volunteer are explained in the agreement. It typically sits alongside the volunteer policy and a volunteer role description.
- Volunteer role description - a document that outlines what a volunteer will do, what skills are required, and what the volunteer will get out of the role.
- Volunteer Charter - outlining 10 essential principles for ensuring that volunteers work in fulfilling, suitable, and sustainable positions, and protecting against volunteers being used to replace or undermine paid roles. To view or download the Charter, click here: [Becoming a Charter Champion](#).
- Policies and procedures - relating to both the organisation's and volunteer's rights protection (e.g. Health and Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Expenses Policy). The list depends on the specific organisation's activity.
- Volunteer induction – a way to welcome a new volunteer into your organisation, making them feel part of the team and ensuring they get all the information they need to have a positive experience.
- “Problem-solving” process – understanding clearly how any issue or problem will be handled helps both an organisation and the volunteer have a positive experience.

Alongside these it is important to nurture positive volunteer and staff relationships.

Volunteers are likely to volunteer alongside paid staff so it is crucial that they are assisted, valued and welcomed.

It is also increasingly important that you measure the impact of volunteering to enable you to describe the difference that volunteering makes to volunteers, project staff, the beneficiaries or community.

Time to brainstorm



Understanding the barriers that volunteers could face helps you be proactive and increases the likelihood of bringing in new recruits. Let's look at barriers and consider ways to help.

Economic Barriers

Time

All volunteers require to donate their time, but spare time may now be more limited due to childcare, other obligations, or the necessity to work longer hours to make ends meet.

Q: What is the future potential for flexible volunteering opportunities?

Travel Expenses

Many volunteer positions require the use of transport to get to the required location, which can be excessively expensive.

Q: What practical support can your organisation provide to support volunteers with transport costs? If this is limited, how could it be fairly allocated? If it's not available, are there other flexible opportunities for volunteering?

Equipment expenses

Some roles require equipment (computers, wifi, uniforms, tools) to be undertaken.

Q: Is there a way of supporting access to equipment through pooling resources with other organisations or having an equipment bank? How could this information be made available to potential volunteers?

Disclosure costs

Certain volunteer positions include Disclosure checks, which can be costly and deter applicants with criminal records or homelessness histories.

Q: Can you use Volunteer Scotland's Disclosure Services? If not, is there an annual budget to support a volunteer's Disclosure costs? How could this be fairly allocated to potential volunteers?

Benefits and Rights to Work

Some people who receive UK State benefits or who are seeking asylum may not be aware that volunteering will not affect their benefits or status and may be nervous about volunteering.

Q: Do you have the knowledge and skills in your organisation to offer basic information or be able to signpost to support anyone in this position?

Childcare

Some volunteers may have childcare responsibilities, and need to pay for childcare cover whilst they volunteer.

Q: What practical support can your organisation provide to support volunteers with childcare costs? If this is limited, how could it be fairly allocated? If it's not available, are there other flexible opportunities for volunteering? Is it possible to learn from best practice in the past or from other organisations?

Social and Cultural Barriers

Belonging

Opportunities may encourage everyone to apply but assumptions about what a typical volunteer looks like, and prior experiences may limit people from getting involved.

Q: Who is considered the 'typical volunteer' within your sector or organisation? What can you do to challenge that assumption?

Examining barriers

Potential volunteers may face these social and cultural barriers to volunteering with your organisation: experiences of structural discrimination; lack of confidence; preconceptions among staff.

Q: If you have tried to diversify the profile of volunteers in your organisation, has it worked? If you haven't tried an inclusion and diversity initiative, are there one or two things your

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Time for you to brainstorm

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Physical Barriers

Access

Physical barriers can prevent potential volunteers from entering your office or base and can include limited parking, kerbs, paving, steps and doors. Internal barriers can also prohibit people from moving around, having their basic needs met or engaging with the volunteer role. These can include stairways, doors, toilet and washing facilities, lighting and ventilation, lifts and escalators, floor coverings and signs.

Q: What could you change to improve accessibility? If you don't have the budget to change all inaccessible elements, how do you prioritise what to change first? If you can't alter certain elements of your site because of planning or structural restrictions, can you offer adapted roles that can be completed online or elsewhere?



Food Train

Location: Annan, Dumfries, Castle Douglas, Newton Stewart, Stranraer
Contact Information: everything@thefoodtrain.co.uk

Food Train is a volunteer-led organisation supporting older people at home across Dumfries and Galloway. Shopping, Befriending, At Home, and Mealmakers services are delivered by a large group of dedicated and caring volunteers.

Currently there are 300 plus across the region, supported by a staff team of 12, many of whom first joined Food Train as volunteers.

Our Board of Directors are also volunteers, so the entire organisation is shaped by people generously donating their time and effort to support others in their community. Food Train wouldn't exist without volunteers and we're proud to have been awarded the Investing in Volunteers accreditation, recognising the high standards we maintain in looking after them.

In the last year, Dumfries and Galloway Food Train volunteers gave 30,000 plus hours of their time, including 3,000 plus hours of befriending visits, 40 group outings for members, and shopping and delivering nearly 20,000 weekly shops. These are incredible numbers, but they don't tell the story of all the friendships made and maintained, the camaraderie, the comfort and social contact brought into the homes of hundreds of local older people.

When it comes to volunteer recruitment, we leave no stone unturned. We've been around for nearly 30 years and built up a strong local profile over that time, so when any of our branches puts out a plea for volunteers the response is almost always swift and positive.

What's worked for us over the years? We keep volunteering
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Your stories

At Girlguiding Scotland, we open up a world of possibilities to girls from four to 18 – one where they can do anything. This wouldn't be possible without our 9,000 amazing volunteers bringing youth work opportunities to more than 35,000 young people across Scotland from Stromness to Selkirk and everywhere in between.

Since 2022, we've been working with jobcentres and back to work groups across Scotland. These spaces already advocate for volunteering as a valuable way to build community, confidence and develop your CV, and through these partnerships we've reached new groups of people who bring amazing experiences and skills to our volunteering community.



Girlguiding Scotland

Location: Scotland-wide

Contact Information: reann@girlguiding-scot.org.uk

In return, we help people develop skills like leadership and communication, try new things like social media and youth work, and even earn qualifications such as first aid. All while empowering girls and

young women in their local community.

There are always challenges to overcome, and speaking to the jobcentre staff has been the

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opportunities listed on the Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway volunteering database, staff and volunteers attend recruitment fairs and other public events, organise local fundraisers, give talks at a wide range of clubs and organisations, put up posters on notice boards and post regularly on our Facebook page. It's all about building and maintaining profile. People have got to know you're there, have a reasonable idea of what you do, and be aware that you need volunteers.

The importance of word of mouth from existing and former volunteers can't be overstated. Chit-chat can make or break a voluntary organisation, so it's at least as important to ensure your volunteers have a positive experience as it is to get them signed up in the first place.

We always welcome feedback from volunteers, on an informal daily basis with

branch staff and in a more structured way through the annual anonymous Volunteers' Survey, which all volunteers are invited to complete. Here are some things they had to say on our most recent survey:

"I feel supported in my role and benefit from working for an organisation that is flexible and responsive to others' needs."

"I enjoy the company of other volunteers and helping people when I am volunteering with the organisation."

"Enjoy the time I spend volunteering with my fellow volunteers and all the office staff. Always made to feel really appreciated. Love it!"

"What we do is important, it matters, I have seen it make a real difference."

"A wonderful meaningful experience. I always look forward to my weekly shift. Great people and staff."

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best way to overcome this. We can clearly explain who we are as an organisation and what exactly our volunteering roles look like, so they only recommend people who would be a good fit.

It also gives us a chance to share the benefits of being a volunteer – it goes far beyond “just working with children” – which immediately gets people on board.

Meeting people at job fairs has also been important, giving us that chance to have a face-to-face conversation and answer any questions someone might have. None of this would be possible without our existing volunteers, whose support has been vital.

Open communication and clear expectations of what roles they would like filled ensures that everyone benefits. Since starting to join forces with jobcentres, the number of people signing up to volunteer with us has clearly increased compared to previous years – in some cases, we’ve had double the amount of people register their interest.

In six months, we’ve generated 50 enquiries just from job fairs, not accounting for the ongoing enquiries generated from jobcentre staff or job fair attendees who took promotional material away with them. We’ve been able to utilise daytime networking opportunities that our volunteers can’t attend, and effectively raised our profile in these spaces.



This has often led to word-of-mouth recommendations between staff across jobcentre clusters, opening up even more opportunities.

One of our new volunteers through this pathway said her volunteering role has encouraged her to move forward to take on brand new challenges:

“Girlguiding has given me a lot of confidence to pursue something I’m not used to [...] while looking to build my

career. It allowed me to continue working on my soft skills I gained from previous experiences and learning how another organisation runs.”

Supporting people in the employability pipeline in Dumfries and Galloway has been really rewarding, with a huge thanks to the jobcentre staff, and we’re excited to see where this work will take us next. Don’t underestimate the impact of one conversation, or one volunteer – you never know what might happen.

Growing Better Youth Work

This new Youth Scotland project is delivered by Dumfries and Galloway Area Development Workers, Amy and Jill.

The overarching aim is to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people, working alongside groups and organisations to provide support with both the practical and paperwork elements of youth work: resources; support with funding; staff and volunteer training; networking events; accredited youth awards; and delivering sessions with young people.

To find out more information, please contact :
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amy-dee.watson@youthscotland.org.uk | 07763 200299
dumfriesandgalloway@youthscotland.org.uk



Two ways to showcase your volunteers

VOLUNTEERS' WEEK
40th Anniversary



Get Involved

3rd - 9th June

volunteersweek.org

#VolunteersWeek



Introducing Katia

Welcome to Katia Mackley, Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway's new Volunteer for Employment Development Officer.

Katia's role will be to develop opportunities to support people not in education, employment or training, to gain work-based skills and personal development through volunteering and give them the opportunity to learn new skills, to develop existing skills, improve job prospects and enhance CVs through gaining experience and/or skills.

The project will:

- Support volunteer-involving organisations across the region to identify the volunteering opportunities available in their organisation that could support an individual to gain employment skills.
- Map and document volunteer for employment roles, helping individuals identify roles that would suit them.
- Promote the benefits of volunteering for employment.
- Raise awareness of volunteering qualifications amongst volunteer involving organisations, volunteers and employers.
- Demonstrate the breadth of opportunities within the third sector which people could participate in.
- Work with support services that can offer mentoring and any other support required by the volunteers.

If you would like to know more about this project, then please email sharee.donoghue@tsdg.org.uk in the first instance.

Say thank you to your amazing volunteers

Volunteers' Week celebrates the amazing contributions volunteers make to communities across the UK.

The celebration starts on the first Monday in June and it's a chance to recognise, celebrate and thank the incredible volunteers for all they contribute to our local communities, the voluntary sector, and society as a whole.

Volunteers' Week is this year celebrating its 40th anniversary, from Monday 3 to Sunday 9 June.

So, how can you get involved? Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway would like to hear from you. You can send us pictures, videos and details about your volunteers - whether it is just one or two or a larger group. We will then share these across our channels to spotlight their fantastic achievements.

It's easy to get involved, just email everything to alan.hall@tsdg.org.uk. Please make sure you have everyone's permission to share their details and pictures and for those to be shared across social media, bulletins, and websites. Deadline for submission is Tuesday May 28.

We are also inviting volunteer involving organisations to be part of future issues. We want to hear from you, sharing your news and showcasing the remarkable impact that volunteers have on your work. Whether it's an achievement, a touching story, or a unique perspective, we welcome your contributions. This is your platform, so let's shine a spotlight on the incredible efforts of your volunteers.



How to get involved:
Please get in touch with us at volunteering@tsdg.org.uk, and let us know about the amazing work your organisation and volunteers are doing.