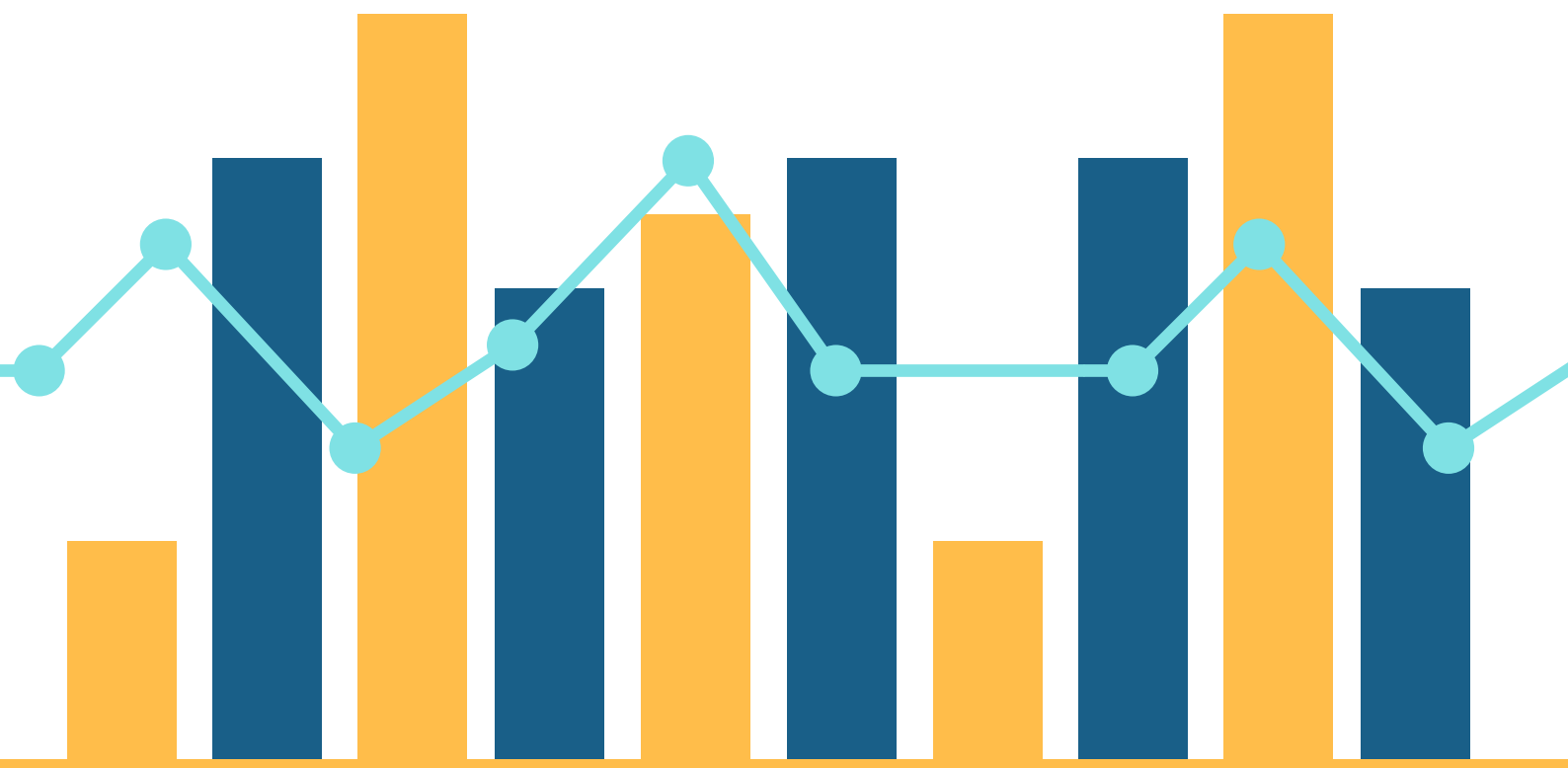


So What?

Volunteering Impact Measurement: Top Tips to Get You Started



Scottish
Volunteering
Forum



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

This guide was written by a sub-group of the Scottish Volunteering Forum.

The Scottish Volunteering Forum is a non-constituted group of volunteer managers and other key stakeholders who are passionate about volunteering in Scotland. It has over 30 members and meets several times a year to discuss recent developments regarding volunteering, and to facilitate positive change. It also has several sub-groups that take forward activity around key priorities identified by the Forum. We all participate in the Forum on a voluntary basis.

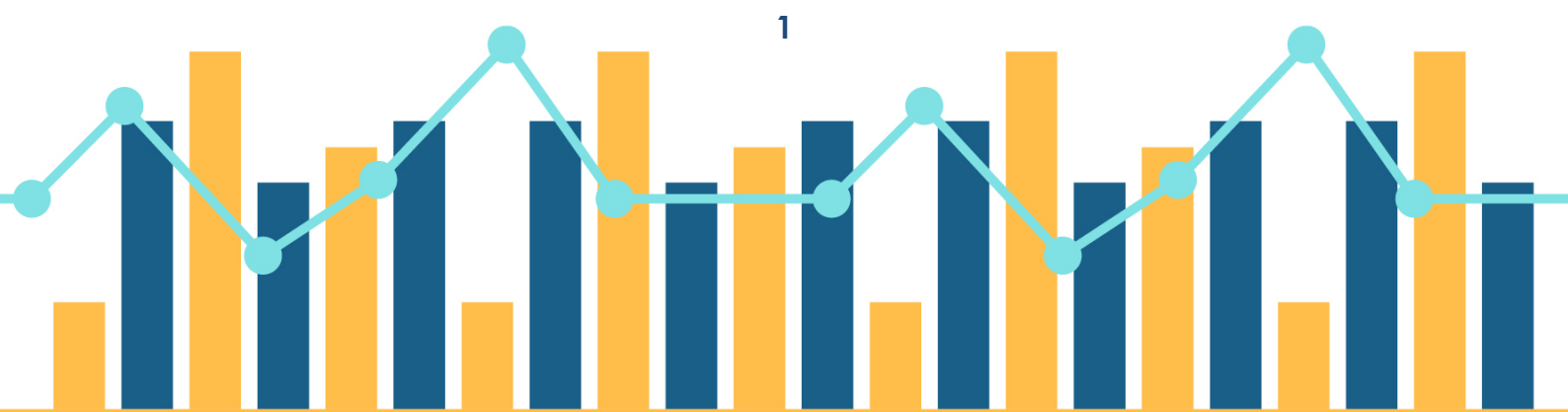
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Introduction

As volunteering professionals, we often lament that we're not listened to, our departments are not invested in and that volunteering is undervalued by our organisations. We need to get better at shouting about and sharing the incredible impact that we know volunteering has on our organisations. We need to showcase to our organisations, volunteers, stakeholders and the wider world that volunteering is crucial, not only to volunteer-involving organisations but to achieving the outcomes of a better Scotland. It makes sense and is worth investing in. In order to achieve that and to get the attention of senior leadership and funders, we need evidence. This guide contains top tips to help you to get started or improve your impact measurement practices, however small your resources may be.

Morven MacLean

Scottish Volunteering Forum



What is impact measurement?

We all involve volunteers because we want to make a difference; to our organisation, our cause, our volunteers themselves and to wider society. The difference we make is our impact.

Impact is the change that happens as a result of our different activities and projects. This change, or impact can be positive or negative, large or small, but regardless, we need to measure it.

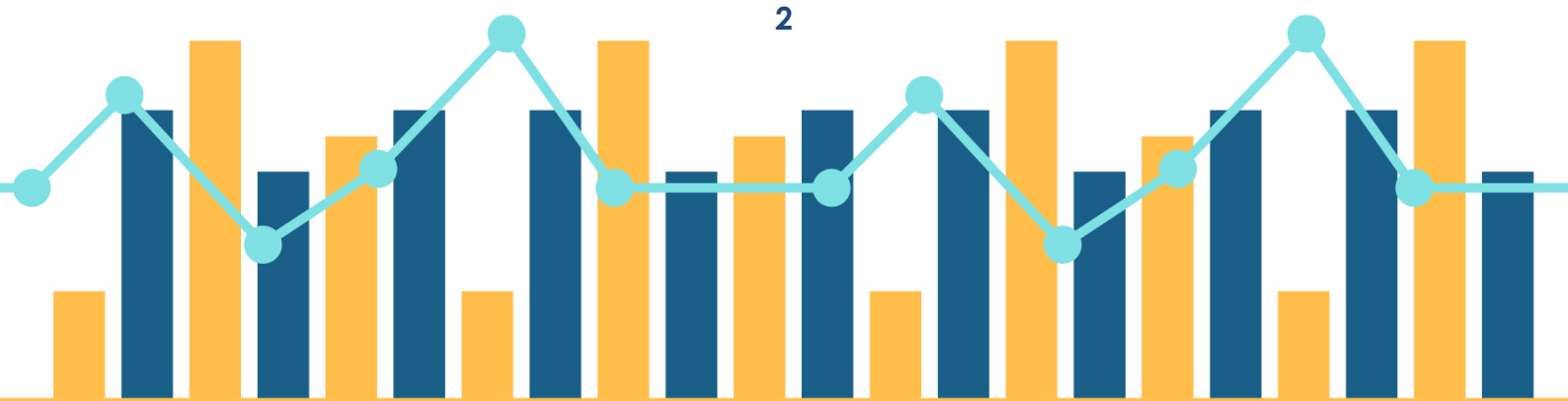
Volunteering impacts on the beneficiaries of the volunteering activity, volunteers themselves, the people around them, organisations, communities and wider society.

For example, volunteers in health and social care impact on patients and service users, providing social interaction and communication which reduces anxiety and frees up staff time to carry out their core duties.



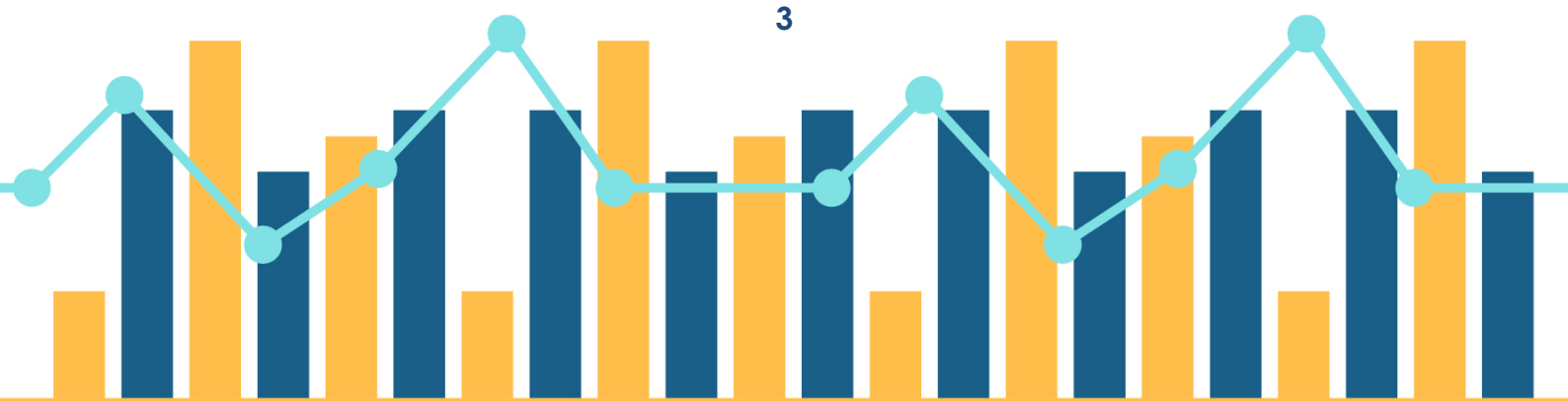
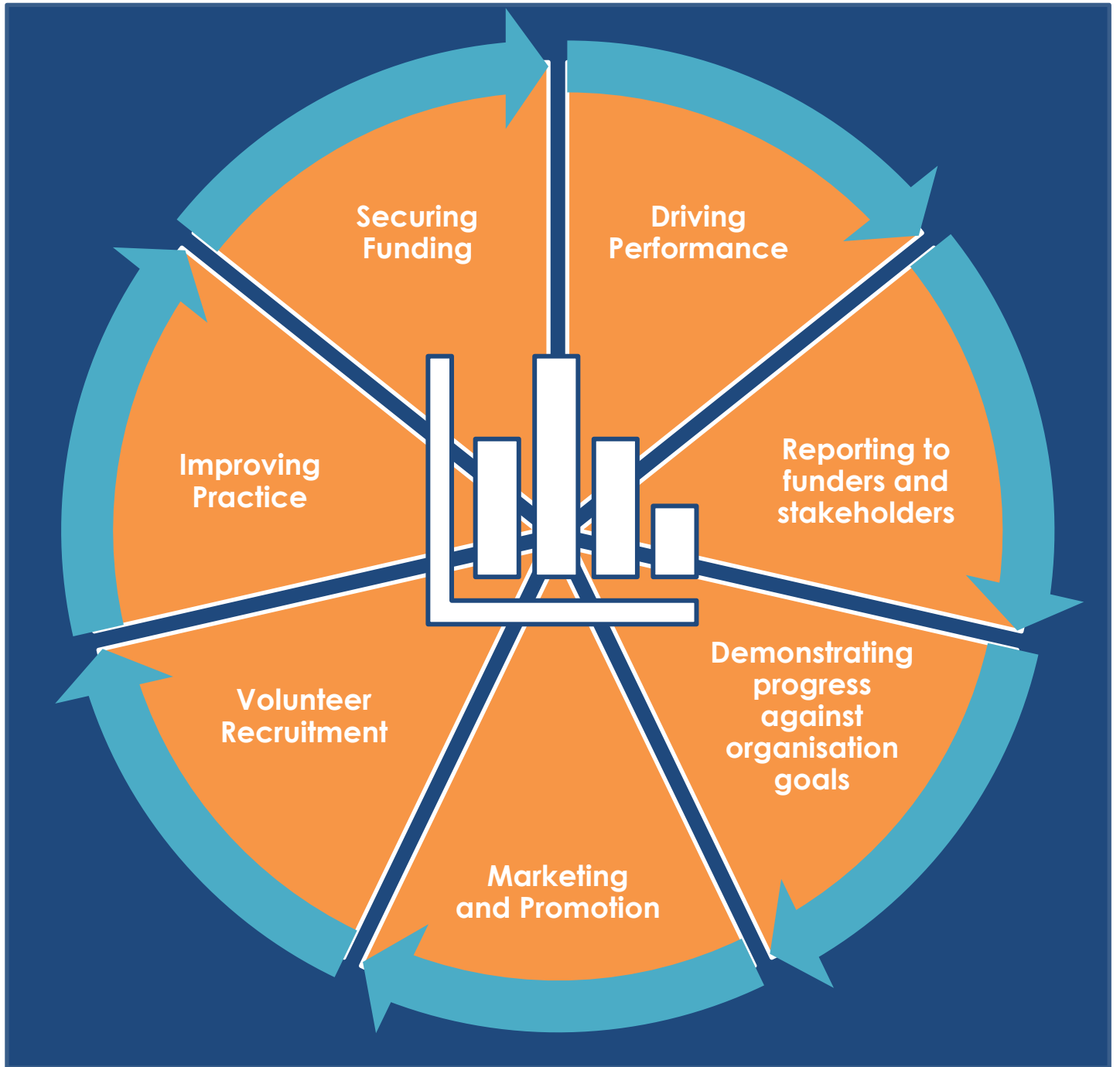
"Getting my diagnosis was the most isolating and terrifying thing I have ever experienced but my CHSS volunteer was there when I needed them most."

**Chest
Heart &
Stroke
Scotland**



Why should I spend time measuring and demonstrating impact?

There are many benefits to measuring the impact of volunteering:



How should I go about measuring the impact of volunteering?

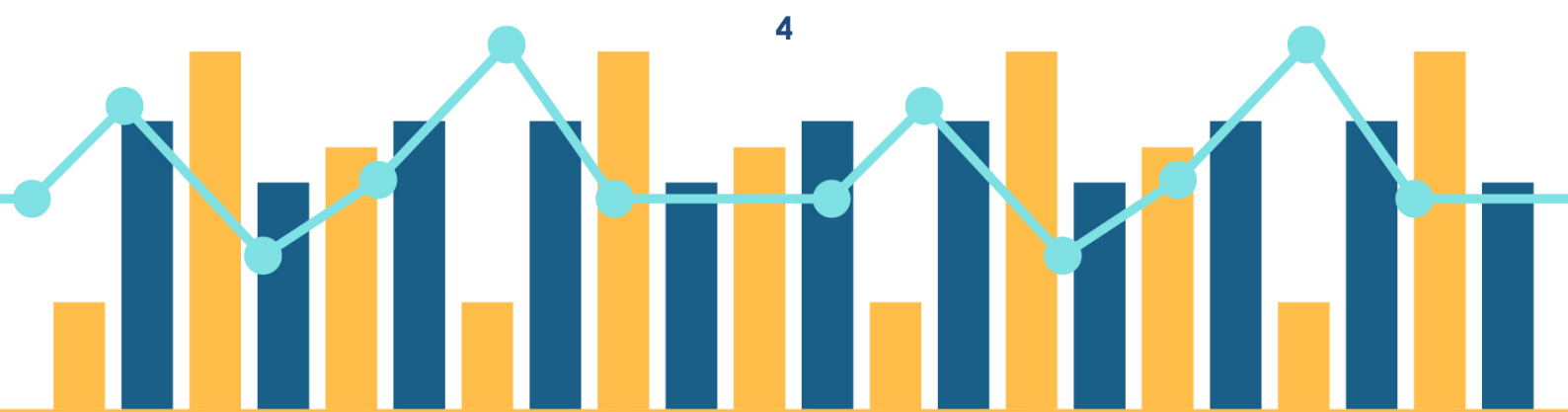
1) Getting started:

Don't wait to be asked for evidence of volunteer impact, from a funder or Chief Executive. Instead, be proactive – identify what you want your organisation and funders to know about the impact of volunteering, then measure it, and showcase it, both internally and externally.

Ask for feedback from volunteers. Then record and act on this feedback, reporting back to volunteers what has changed because of their comments. This should help to improve performance and morale, and build this cycle of improvement in to everyday practice.

Consider introducing an annual volunteer survey and an exit interview for volunteer leavers.

Record the number of hours donated by volunteers. You can then attribute a financial value, or hourly rate (try the Living Wage) to work out the economic value that volunteering brings to your organisation. You can also use those hours to demonstrate impact on the service and the economic value it provides to wider society.





In three hours, May serves 60 lunches to elderly people. This in turn means that 60 people enjoy a healthy home cooked meal and have the chance to enjoy the company of others, reducing social isolation and loneliness and promoting health and wellbeing. In those three hours, May's voluntary contribution equates to an annual contribution of £1221.48 (based on the living wage calculation). Further work can be undertaken to calculate the comparable cost that would be incurred by *not* having this service, i.e. without the social benefits and healthy food. The figures would clearly demonstrate the value of this service.

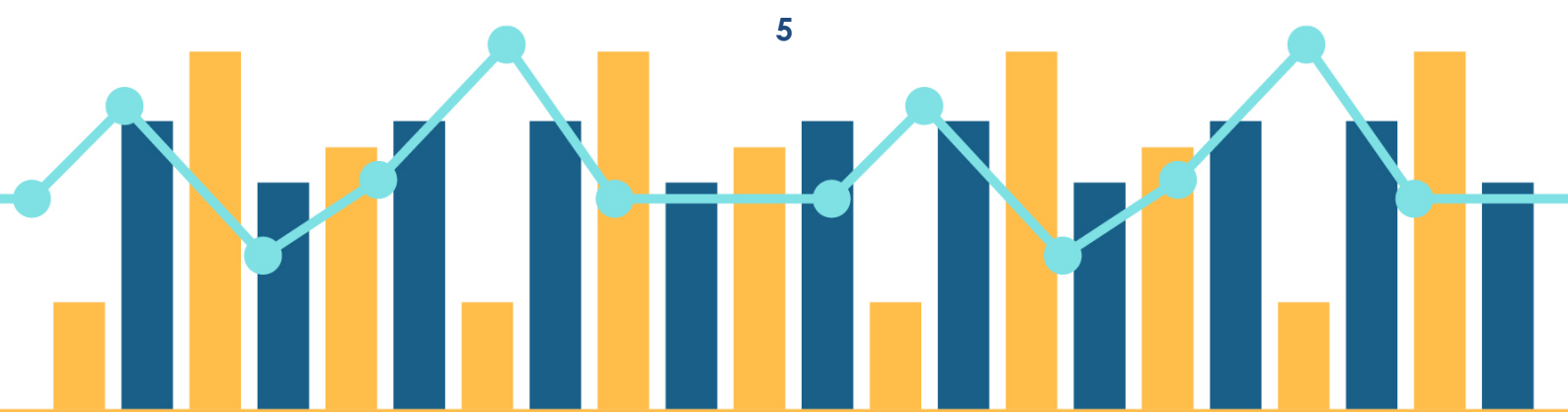
SNAP!

Photos and comments from beneficiaries could be collected to demonstrate impact. For example, in the context of conservation volunteering, a before and after photo of woodland that has been tidied or cleared by volunteers would be ideal. Pictures and words can often tell a more powerful story than numbers on their own.



2) Going further:

Consider how you will use the evidence you have gathered externally. For example, can you use evidence of the impact of volunteering on volunteers to attract new talent? Adverts for new volunteers could include stats such as 80% of volunteer leavers have found work as a result of their volunteering. Or 90% of volunteers tell us they have made new friends through volunteering with us.



Consider asking new volunteers why they are volunteering and what they are hoping to get out of their volunteering. Then ask them six months later, and six months after that, to monitor how their motivations have changed and to understand the ongoing benefits of volunteering to volunteers. This could be done in a simple survey, or face-to-face in a 1:1 support meeting.

When setting up a new service, survey volunteers and beneficiaries before the service starts, and then three months into the service being delivered, and another three months after that etc. That will enable you to establish a baseline and then monitor change and impact.

Be consistent in what you are asking or measuring so that you can demonstrate trends.

Keep reflecting on why you are doing this. Don't lose sight of what you are trying to prove/demonstrate so that you remain focused throughout.

Planning Checklist

- WHY? – Why do you need to measure impact?
- WHAT? – What are the key questions you want to answer?
- WHO? – Who will use the information?
- HOW? – How will the information be used?
- WHEN? – When is the information required?



You should have clear answers to all of these questions before commencing any impact measurement work.



3) Sharing your evidence:

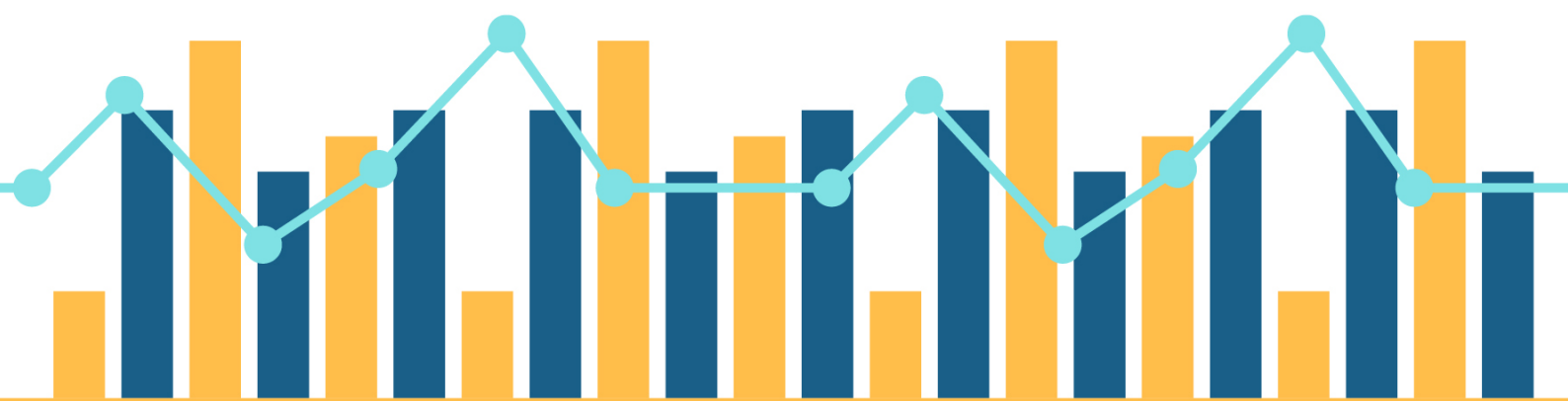
You're driving impact measurement within your organisation and influencing the strategic direction of the organisation. Now consider contributing to a wider audience. Share your findings with elected members, the Cross-Party Group on Volunteering, the Scottish Volunteering Forum, Scottish Government, your local TSI/Volunteer Centre and on social media. This will help to inform and shape the national volunteering landscape and inspire others to replicate your success.

Look for opportunities to speak at national conferences, share case studies of what you have done and share the good practice you have pioneered in your organisation as well as any lessons learned.

The Scottish Volunteering Forum volunteering impact measurement sub-group would welcome any feedback you have on this publication to help us improve future editions. Please contact the Scottish Volunteering Forum (see contact details at the end of this document).

Top Tips!

- Be clear on why you are measuring impact.
- Specify the questions you want answered
- Ask yourself 'so what?' at every point.
- Understand your audiences
- Co-opt support internally and externally
- Plan!
- Less is more
- Use your findings
- 'Just do it'



Useful Contacts:

Scottish Volunteering Forum	Co-Chairs – Sarah Latto – sarah_latto@shelter.org.uk ; Paul Okroj – paul.okroj@chss.org.uk
Volunteer Scotland	www.volunteerscotland.net ; 01786 479 593
SCVO	www.scvo.org.uk ; 0131 474 8000
Evaluation Support Scotland	www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk ; 0131 243 2770
Local Third Sector Interfaces	For the most up to date contact details, visit here: https://beta.gov.scot/publications/third-sector-interfaces-contact-details/

Useful Resources:

Training

Measuring the Impact of Volunteering – Volunteer Scotland's 1 day training course, including logic modelling and practical course work.

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/training-courses/volunteer-management-leadership-training/measuring-the-impact-of-volunteering/>

Evaluation Support Scotland Workshops – their Core Workshops' Programme for Third Sector Organisations: What are my outcomes? Collecting information to report on outcomes; Using creative approaches to evaluate your project; Telling my story – analysing and reporting on outcomes.

<http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/how-can-we-help/workshop-and-events/course-courses-voluntary-organisations/>

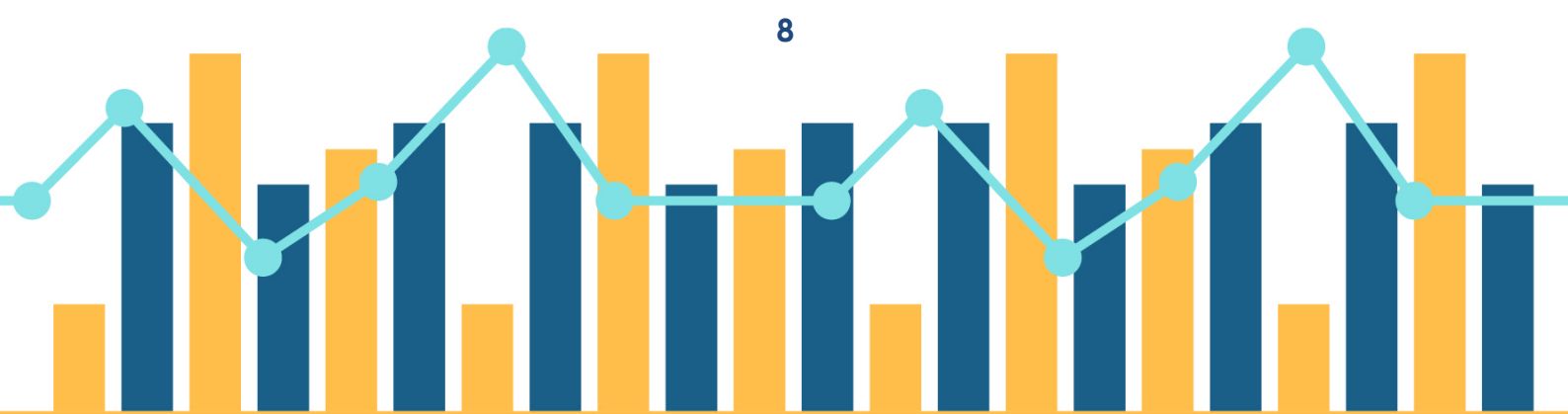
Toolkits

Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit – Volunteer Scotland has been licensed by NCVO and IVR to promote and sell this very helpful toolkit. The hardcopy manual is supplemented by an online suite of questionnaire templates.

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/guidance/building-on-success/measuring-impact/volunteer-impact-assessment-toolkit/>

Volunteer Investment and Value Audit (VIVA) – This tool enables you to work out the ratio for every £1 you invest in volunteering, how much volunteers bring back to the organisation.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/352352437/VIVA-The-volunteer-investment-and-value-audit-A-self-help-guide>



Economic value of volunteering toolkit – being able to demonstrate the value of volunteering to a funder is a helpful way to attract funding, particularly where it can be demonstrated that each £X invested in volunteering generates an economic value of £Y. This Volunteer Scotland toolkit provides a simple step-by-step guide.

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/data-and-graphs/economic-value-of-volunteering/>

Invest for Success: The Real Value of Volunteering – a resource created by the Scottish Volunteering Forum providing guidance to funders and fundraisers on ensuring that volunteering is adequately represented in funding bids and reporting documents.

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/guidance/building-on-success/building-on-success-guidance-and-templates/>

Research Resources

Jargon Buster website – this link provides a clear definition of some of the different terms used in evaluation and impact assessment. <https://www.inspiringimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Inspiring-Impact-glossary.pdf>

Monitoring volunteers: a guide to collecting and using data – this helpful guide produced by IVR talks you through the key steps involving in setting up an effective monitoring system.

<https://www.volunteeringkingston.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Monitoring-Volunteer-Data-Guide-IVR.pdf>

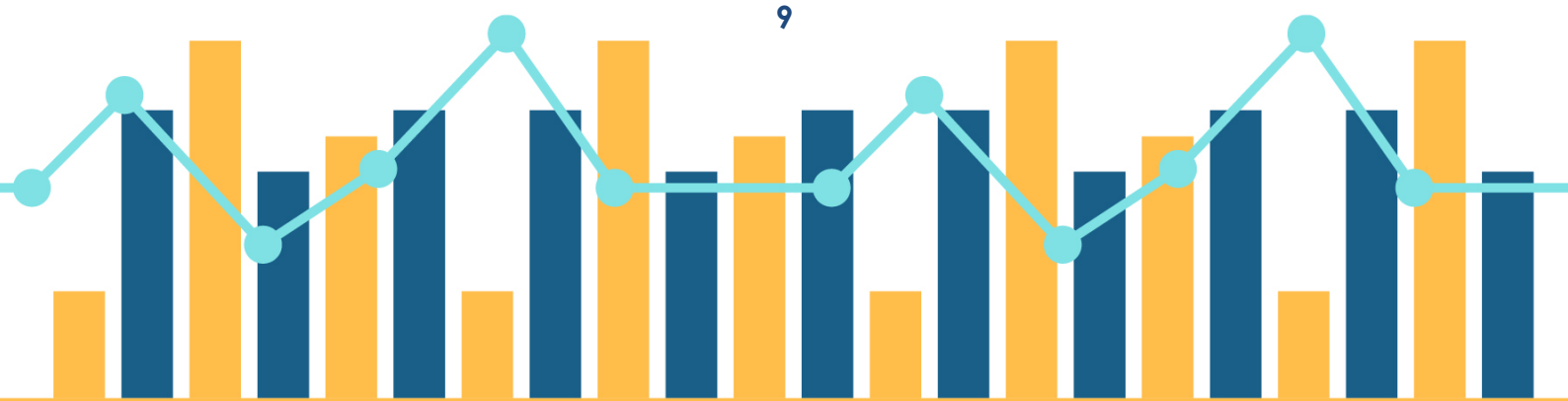
Evidence for Success – the guide to getting evidence and using it – Part 1 of the document provides useful guidance on the generation of evidence. Part 2 gives guidance on the use of evidence and its 'Top Ten Tips'. Part 3 lists additional resources including weblinks.

<http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/media/uploads/resources/ess-evidenceforsuccess-weblinked.pdf>

Evidence from Elsewhere: Gathering, analysing and using other people's evidence – this document provides easy to follow, step-by-step guidance and resources to support third sector organisations to gather and use evidence which has been produced by others.

http://scottishmsa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/evidencefromelsewhere-printcolour-reduced_size.pdf

Volunteer Wiki – a useful resource hosted by Volunteer Edinburgh which contains a wealth of information populated by volunteering experts. www.volunteerwiki.org.uk



Acknowledgements

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