Scottish Volunteering Forum

Why Volunteering Matters

The Case for Change

@scotvolforum
#WhyVolunteeringMatters

Why do we need a **Case for Change**?

The rates of volunteering across the whole Scottish population have now been static for many years. All the evidence tells us that volunteering rates need to increase if we are going to make Scotland a happier, healthier and more prosperous place to live.

Currently approximately 1.3million adults in Scotland volunteer but some individuals and groups find it harder to access volunteering opportunities or just haven't even considered it as an option.

We believe volunteering should be accessible to all, regardless of backgrounds or perceived barriers. To increase the number of people realising the benefits of volunteering in Scotland, we need to change the paradigm. It needs to become a societal norm to volunteer, where opportunity or expectation is not limited by upbringing and social circumstance. This means there needs to be an entitlement to volunteer that gives equality of opportunity to all.

An entitlement of opportunity for everyone to volunteer would ensure that:

- **Everyone is encouraged and supported to contribute to their communities through volunteering**
- **Strategies and partners establish a culture of volunteering to have a positive impact on people's lives**
- **Everyone is able to contribute to their communities through volunteering**

Through delivering an entitlement to volunteer more individuals and communities across Scotland will be enabled and empowered to realise the benefits of volunteering.

The Scottish Volunteering Forum has produced this document as part of our continued work to:

- **Enable and encourage more people to get involved in volunteering to ensure equality of opportunity for all**
- **Support quality volunteering experiences, resulting in more people continuing to volunteer**
- **Lead and enable the realisation of the benefits of volunteering to individuals, organisations and Scottish society**
- **Gain consensus of the key strategic pillars that will support the overall aims including a commitment to complement each other**

What is volunteering and how is it changing?

There are lots of definitions of volunteering and views on how volunteering is changing. A recent Citizens Advice report, *Giving Back Going Forwards*, published in June 2015 explains both really well…

Volunteering involves people giving their time to help others outside of their household, without being motivated by money or mandated by the state. It is one of the most valuable forms of citizen contribution to society, and can take many forms: from shopping for an elderly neighbour, to helping at a homeless shelter over the holiday period, to serving as a Governor at a local school.

Many millions of people give their time freely for the good of others every year, and their voluntary action generates enormous value.

The volunteering landscape is changing. Demographic shifts, changes to people's working lives, the advent of new technology, and much else, means that volunteering over the next few decades is unlikely to look much like volunteering of the past.

Organisations that depend on volunteers need to understand the changing motivations and needs of volunteers, acknowledging and responding to competing pressures on their time against a changing backdrop of working, family and community life. Volunteering organisations need to ensure their offer to volunteers fits with people's real lives and is responsive to their motivations and needs, to ensure that volunteering remains a core part of our society.

In this document when we talk about volunteering we mean all people who give their time freely by choice – for the purpose of the Case for Change we are not segmenting people by their motivation for giving their time.

Why **Volunteering** Matters to Individuals

Research shows that volunteering can provide the following benefits...

Mental Health

- 94% mood improved
- 30% enhanced wellbeing
- Increased life satisfaction
- Improved coping skills
- Reduced anxiety & depression
- Sense of achievement & enjoyment
- Increased self-confidence & self-esteem

Physical Health

- 76% feel physically healthier
- 20% reduction in premature mortality
- Reduced symptoms of chronic pain
- Reduced risk of high blood pressure
- Reduced risk of heart disease
- Reduction in hospitalisation
- Improved pain management

Employability

- 80% of employers value on a CV
- 73% more likely to be recruited
- 70+% of employers say it increases chance of promotion
- 14% said volunteering helped achieve a higher salary

Life Skills

- 79% developed their interpersonal skills
- Improved team working
- Better communication
- More able to take responsibility
- Better understanding of others
- Development of leadership skills
- Increased self-confidence & self-esteem

Job Skills

- 23% of employers say helped staff improve team working
- 23% of employers say helped staff improve time management
- 21% say helped their staff improve communication skills
- Improved staff leadership and management

Sense of Belonging

- Meeting people with similar interests
- Enhanced personal support networks
- Increased networks in communities
- Decreased loneliness & isolation
- Enhanced sense of worth
- Making a difference
- Feeling valued by others
- Increased appreciation & understanding of other cultures

Why **Volunteering** Matters
to Communities

Research shows that volunteering can provide many benefits to communities...

Economic Benefits

- Individual and community benefits prevent costly social problems
- Increased employability & ability to spend wages in community
- NHS cost savings as healthier individuals
- Contributing to the prevention agenda

Thriving Communities

- Improved population health
- Reduced crime & antisocial behaviour
- Improved educational performance
- Greater life satisfaction & happiness
- Decreased loneliness & isolation
- Enhanced mental wellbeing

Crime Prevention

- Reduced anti-social behaviour
- Positive behavioural change
- Positive diversionary activity
- Supports reducing reoffending
- Increased understanding of others in community

Active Citizenship

- Increased social & civic participation
- Increased community cohesion
- Increased intergenerational & intercultural integration
- More empowered communities
- Increased community spirit & trust
- Increased civic commitment/ connection

Ask 1:

Be the Change

The ask	Prioritise volunteering and the needs of volunteers within strategic and operational planning	
What success looks like	Everyone is encouraged and supported to contribute to their communities through volunteering	
Who needs to do what	**Voluntary Sector**	▸ To identify, compile and champion exemplars of best practice ▸ Be pro-active at identifying issues and opportunities, listening to and acting on feedback so everyone can be supported in quality volunteering opportunities • For the sector to be the change we wish to see
	Scottish Government	▸ To champion the benefits of volunteering to individuals and organisations ▸ To prioritise volunteering in policy development and strategic planning
	All Partners	▸ Realise the benefits of volunteering to organisations and individuals through implementation of volunteer-friendly practices. ▸ Recognise that volunteer management is an essential activity and accept associated costs as reasonable expenditure within tenders and grant applications.

Ask 2:

A Culture of Volunteering for All

The ask	For every person to realise the benefits of volunteering	
What success looks like	Strategies and partners establish a culture of volunteering to have a positive impact on people's lives	
Who needs to do what	**Voluntary Sector**	▸ Provide the support and structure to enable anyone, whatever their circumstances to find a quality volunteer experience ▸ Have an open mind that any individual can contribute to any cause, and if you can't find them a suitable role then signpost on.
	Scottish Government	▸ To champion the benefits of volunteering to individuals and organisations ▸ To prioritise volunteering in policy development and strategic planning
	All Partners	▸ All organisations understand the positive benefits and proactively promote volunteering at all stages of life.

Ask 3:

Employer Supported Volunteering

The ask	For everyone to be supported as a volunteer	
What success looks like	Everyone is able to contribute to their communities through volunteering	
Who needs to do what	**Voluntary Sector**	▸ Lead and facilitate opportunities for all sectors to implement and champion regular Employer Supported Volunteering options for all staff as part of an ongoing commitment to support for the voluntary sector ▸ Make it easier and simpler to identify and access volunteering opportunities
	Scottish Government	▸ To champion, and to lead as an exemplar of best practice through providing regular Employer Supported Volunteering options for all staff as part of ongoing support for the voluntary sector
	All Partners	▸ Realise the benefits of volunteering to organisations and individuals through providing regular Employer Supported Volunteering options for all staff as part of ongoing support for the voluntary sector ▸ Ensure approach is meaningful and mutually beneficial.

Why Volunteering Matters – the Case for Change

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