

16 September 2020

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### **Would you like to volunteer?**

Check out our website to see thousands of volunteering opportunities. New opportunities added daily!

### **Looking for volunteers?**

Register your organisations volunteering opportunities FREE of charge. Check out our guide - <https://bit.ly/2ZG7cXH>

### **Events**

Discover events from across the sector, from one-off events to longer term.

### **Anything you want to add?**

Think about what you might want to hear more about in VConnect or anything you want to see on our Training Calendar and [let us know](#).

### **Chief Executive's Comments**

Volunteer Now is pleased to be working with partners across the UK to launch the Investing in Volunteers Essentials tool. This will help organisations make sure their volunteers are having a good experience and that everyone gets the best from volunteering. Read the full article below.

### **Denise Hayward**

Chief Executive

### **liV Essentials**

#### ***A new, free online tool for groups to help ensure that volunteers have the best possible experience***

A new free tool is being made available to help ensure that your volunteers have the best possible experience and can make the biggest difference. liV Essentials has been developed by volunteers and the staff who support them from across the UK. Volunteer Now (alongside NCVO, Volunteer Scotland and WCVA) are launching this tool to help those of you who want to get started on improving the volunteer journey at your organisation.

Volunteering is one of the most rewarding things people can do; helping people, contributing to the community and changing the world around us. It can be truly transformative – both for the people that volunteer, and the organisations that benefit from their time and experience. It is incredibly powerful when the relationship works well for both the individual and the organisation.

Denise Hayward, CEO Volunteer Now recognises why this new tool may be particularly useful at this time:

“Volunteer involving organisations are taking a good hard look at how they deliver volunteering programmes in the

current climate and reconsidering how they involve volunteers across a range of service areas. liV Essentials is an introduction to the Investing in Volunteers quality standard for good practice in volunteer management– it's a simple and easy way to get started on enhancing volunteer involvement in your organisation”.

Focussing on six core areas, you will be guided through a series of questions that will help you define how you support and engage your volunteers, how they contribute to your mission and how they enhance your services for the people who use them. It is a perfect first step for those groups who want to think about using the full Investing in Volunteers quality standard in the future.

An liV Essentials user involved in the piloting of the new tool shared that:

“The tool has been useful to not only consider the processes and background support that is in place to support volunteers in their roles, but also to consider it from the other side of how the volunteers might experience their roles and what improvements we could make to encourage more engagement and fulfilment.”

If your organisation would like to use the tool, you can find out more about liV Essentials [here](#).

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## Online Training

### Volunteer Induction: The New Environment, The New Way!

- [22 September 2020](#), 10am-11am, £5 +VAT
- [15 October 2020](#), 10am-11am, £5 +VAT

### The New Environment: Recruit, Retain, Reward Volunteers

- [23 September 2020](#), 10.30am-12pm, £5 +VAT
- [14 October 2020](#), 10.30am-12pm, £5 +VAT

### Creating Pathways to Wellbeing For Leaders of Volunteer Engagement

- [19 & 26 November 2020](#), 10am-1pm, £60 +VAT

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## Follow-Up VOLT Sessions: How Are Things Going?

**Volunteering in Environment & Heritage** - Thursday 17 September 2020 at 11am-12pm

**Volunteering in Youth Groups** - Thursday 24 September 2020 at 2-3pm

If you are interested in attending, please contact [sandra.faulkner@volunteernow.co.uk](mailto:sandra.faulkner@volunteernow.co.uk) to book a place, stating clearly the session(s) you want to attend.

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## European Solidarity Corps

The European Volunteering Scheme provides over 60 volunteering placements in Northern Ireland each year and the organisations involving these young volunteers greatly value their input. These volunteering placements have now moved across from Erasmus + to the European Solidarity Corps Programme. Unfortunately, it appears that the UK Government have taken the disappointing decision not to be part of the European Solidarity Corps Programme after the Transition Period ends. Any project receiving approval for funding before the end of 2020 can be completed, but no new funding can be sought from 2021.

Over the past weeks a number of the European Solidarity Corps Hosting Organisations have begun to explore the possibility of cross-border cooperation and whether there could be any way that Northern Ireland organisations could continue to be part of the European Solidarity Corps Programme via the Irish National Agency in Dublin.

The organisations involved would like to make you aware of the [briefing paper](#) and they would like to ask for support from the wider sector. For further details, please contact Stephen Woods at [tools.belfast@myphone.coop](mailto:tools.belfast@myphone.coop).

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## Immigration Health Surcharge Amendment Committee Stage

The UK Government's Command Paper (CP 258) focusing on the proposed points-based immigration system appears to confirm that those seeking to apply to work in the UK as international volunteers, including in health and social care settings, will be liable to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge. This will be a significant amount of money (rising to £624 on 1 October 2020 for most visas), particularly if it will apply to the young people who come from other countries to volunteer in the UK for a year. We believe this is grossly unfair, and will have an adverse impact upon the ability of charities across the UK to recruit international volunteers.

Baroness Jolly's Amendment No.65 seeks to clarify whether or not the UK Government's recent announcement that health and social care workers from other countries will be exempt from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge will extend to international volunteers working in health and social care, and in other settings, for charities. The alliance of organisations are also hoping that the debate on the Amendment will help to clarify future visa arrangements for international volunteers who wish to volunteer for charities in the UK. To read the debate (14 September 2020), [click here](#).

View the [briefing paper](#) for more information and how your organisation can get involved in the campaign, they are currently collating information about the number of volunteers affected. For more information, please contact: [Robert@camphillscotland.org.uk](mailto:Robert@camphillscotland.org.uk).

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## Volunteers - Key to Sector Response During COVID

Community Places has launched a report ([here](#)) about representation of community and voluntary groups in Community Planning. It outlines a range of models which are used across five jurisdictions. Work on the paper was prompted by needs and issues articulated within the community planning environment in Northern Ireland during the first year (2019) of the co-production support package and was completed during the COVID crisis lockdown period.

It highlighted that the community spirit and the will of the people, who just got stuck in to make life better, was a huge factor in the success. It reports that "this pandemic has brought out the best of communities working together to ensure all those families and residents within our communities who were in critical need of support were able to access it."

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## From Coronavirus to Community Wealth

One year on from the publication of the DTNI charter for change and in the midst of a generational crisis, there is a pressing need to reflect on and refresh how we build inclusive local economies in Northern Ireland.

[DTNI](#) and [Centre for Local Economic Strategies](#) launched From Coronavirus to Community Wealth, a new report that provides practical and policy recommendations for the rebuilding of the post-COVID NI economy.

The infrastructure for CWB already exists – community development organisations across the region have for a long time been acquiring assets, developing business opportunities and leading on physical regeneration, and so establishing themselves as wealth-building anchors of their localities.

It is time to harness this energy and expertise by creating a compact between government and the community, voluntary & social enterprise sector to frame a new approach to economic development.

If we want 'build back better' to be more than a slogan, NI's recovery from coronavirus should be shaped by the principles and driven by the practice of community wealth building.

Download [From Coronavirus to Community Wealth: Building back better in Northern Ireland](#) here.

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## Communities and COVID - Stories of People, Support & Mobilisation Across NI Communities

Communities and COVID is a project capturing moving and uplifting accounts of how grassroots groups in Northern Ireland

responded to the impact of COVID-19.

When the pandemic broke out, the organisations involved were taking part in peacebuilding and social justice programmes supported by SCI, the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI) and the St. Stephen's Green Trust (SSGT).

Their response to the pandemic is captured in 25 stories reflecting their shared experiences of loss, isolation and fear. The stories also recount the ways in which communities came together to help those in need of basic day-to-day essentials, to support services, and provide human connection, care and solidarity.

The collection includes a diverse range of voices including those working in inner-city settings, supporting rural communities, addressing the needs of LGBT communities, former prisoners, those addressing the pandemic's impact on women, migrant voices, and much more.

The stories offer a snapshot of the extent of community activity and the important role it played in society's response to the pandemic, collaborating across community boundaries, with public bodies and businesses. This grassroots activity mobilised and supported people within and across communities and sectors.

The stories also capture important learning and point to the need to find better ways of dealing with the residual post-COVID issues including mental health and wellbeing, social isolation, financial hardship and unemployment.

As we think about Building Back Better, it is clear that a vibrant and properly resourced community sector is one of the key building blocks required to complement strong and effective public services shaped by local community need.

Find out more [here](#).

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### Youth Restart Update

Further to the Minister for Education's release of the [New School Day](#) guidance issued on 13th August and followed by his recent announcement regarding the use of face coverings in post-primary schools, the Education Authority Youth Service has updated the [Youth Restart](#) guidance to reflect these new changes. They have highlighted within the Youth Restart Guidance the updated sections/information as denoted by an update icon.

Moving forward if there are additional changes to the guidance (either based on information from the Department of Education or the Public Health Agency), the Education Authority Youth Service will provide updates to the Youth Restart guidance. These will be highlighted to you by email and available online at:

EA Website: <https://www.eani.org.uk/youth-services-support>

Youth Online Website: <https://www.youthonline.org.uk/restart/>

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### Virtual Community Camp

Eden Project Communities Community Camps are normally residential experiences held at the Eden Project in Cornwall, but like many things, they will be a little different this year.

October will see the start of their very first Virtual Community Camp - an immersive learning experience offering a mix of practical activities, workshop sessions and networking opportunities for people from across the UK.

You can apply to attend Virtual Community Camp, [here](#).

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### Grants

- **Rural Micro Capital Grants Scheme:** Micro capital grants from County Down Rural Community Network) available to rural community-led, voluntary organisations in Newry, Mourne and Down, Ards, North Down, Lisburn and Castlereagh.

Between £200-£1,500 available. More info: [www.countydownrcn.com](http://www.countydownrcn.com) **Closing date:** Friday 2 October 2020.

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### Membership

Membership of Volunteer Now is open to all organisations and individuals with an interest in volunteering. There is no fee. By becoming a member you add your voice to support volunteering. Sign up for FREE membership at [www.volunteernow.co.uk/members](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/members).

### Submit your Article

If you have volunteering related news, events, publications etc. to share, email [training@volunteernow.co.uk](mailto:training@volunteernow.co.uk).

### VTraining

Volunteer Now also publish a free enewsletter called VTraining that includes all Volunteer Now training courses and workshops. To subscribe, please email [training@volunteernow.co.uk](mailto:training@volunteernow.co.uk).

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Supported by the Northern Ireland Executive through the Department for Communities.

Volunteer Now delivers services across Northern Ireland. We have offices in Belfast, Antrim, Enniskillen and Newry.

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