

21 April 2021

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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 - <https://bit.ly/3n4meB9>

### **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**

This month as we move into spring and there are more positive signs in relation to re-opening and the pandemic, I would like to draw your attention to plans for Volunteers' Week included in this edition of VConnect. It is more important than ever this year to say thank you to the huge number of volunteers who have supported people and delivered services which would not have happened otherwise during over the past year. We also need to begin to think about plans for reopening some services in line with guidance, and so we have updated some of our materials at <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/information-resources-related-to-covid-19/>. We will continue to update these in the coming weeks as restrictions change.

At the end of April, Volunteer Now is saying goodbye to a greatly valued colleague. Sandra Adair is stepping down after over 32 years working in the volunteering sector. Sandra, who was awarded the MBE in Autumn 2020 for her services to volunteering, has been a driving force in raising standards for volunteering in Northern Ireland. She has worked tirelessly to support organisations on volunteer management and safeguarding and her expertise will be greatly missed by her friends and colleagues in Volunteer Now and across the sector. I know you will join with me in wishing her all the very best for the future!

**Denise Hayward**

Chief Executive

### **Online Training**

JUST RELEASED - our new Training Schedule! New dates are now available for all our training courses, including some new ones! Just click on the name of the course you are interested in below to find out dates, times and to book your place online.

- [Befriending Training Workshop](#)
- [The New Environment: Volunteers & the Law](#)
- [The New Environment: Recruit, Retain, Reward Volunteers](#)
- [The New Environment: Assessing Risk When Developing Volunteer Roles](#)
- [NEW Leadership Series!](#)
  - Leadership & Why It Matters
  - Thinking of Myself as a Leader
  - Leadership & Working With Teams
  - Leadership & Dealing with Conflict
- [Volunteer Induction: The New Environment, The New Way!](#)
- [The New Environment: Support & Supervision of Volunteers](#)

View our [Full Training Calendar](#) here.

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### **NEW Leadership Series of Courses**

As part of our new Training Schedule, we have included a NEW Leadership Series of courses!

Some topics explored over the series are: leadership styles, communication styles, why leadership matters, conformity, how to get the best from your team, how to effectively manage change within an organisation, programme or project and much more.

To find out more, please click on a session title below:

- [Leadership & Why It Matters](#)  
6 May 2021 | 10am-1pm
- [Thinking of Myself as a Leader](#)  
10 May 2021 | 10am-1pm
- [Leadership & Working with Teams](#)  
18 May 2021 | 10am-1pm
- [Leadership & Dealing with Conflict](#)  
20 May 2021 | 10am-1pm

These four sessions can be taken individually, but they compliment each other, so why not think about attending all four?

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### **Launch of NEW Investing in Volunteers Standard**

Along with our UK Partners, Volunteer Now is pleased to announce the launch of a new Investing in Volunteers Standard consisting of 6 Quality Areas.

For those that don't know, Investing in Volunteers (IiV) is the UK quality standard for good practice in volunteer management. Achieving the standard shows your volunteers, and potential volunteers, how much they are valued and gives them confidence in your ability to provide an outstanding volunteer experience. It is a straightforward, supported, six-step process to achieve accreditation, but you can also download the standard for free and use it to benchmark your practice.

We have recently updated the standard to support greater flexibility for different organisations and types of volunteering, linking more to the organisation's wider activities including strategy, impact and equity, diversity and inclusion.

If you have never thought about IiV or you are up for renewal of your Award then now is a good time to get started. For full information on the new standard, renewals and more, head to the new IiV website at <https://investinginvolunteers.co.uk/>.

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### **Communicating Safely Online**

Watch our short video on how to communicate safely with children and young people online. It's useful for staff, volunteers, parents and carers – [Communicating Safely Online](#).

Further information on standards and training for working with children and young people can be found in the [Safeguarding](#) section of our website.

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### **Integrated Care Partnerships - Get Involved**

The Health & Social Care Board is looking for people who have experience of using health and social care services or experience as an unpaid carer to get involved on a voluntary basis with the work of Integrated Care Partnerships.

Integrated Care Partnerships are groups working to improve the health and well-being of their local communities and supporting a wide range of partners to work together to make things better.

There are 17 ICPs across Northern Ireland which means they can focus on work at a local level and understand what's important to the health and wellbeing of the local community.

ICPs across NI are seeking people who have experience of using health and social care services or experience as an unpaid carer to join their committees. These roles are open to anyone with experience of using health and social care services or experience as an unpaid carer.

Given the work that ICPs do the role is likely to appeal to people who have a broad range of areas of interest and who would like to be part of improving health & wellbeing in their own locality.

To find out more please visit the ICP pages on the Health and Social Care Boards website here - <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/icps/about-icps/>.

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### **Volunteers' Week 2021**

#### **1-7 June 2021 - A Time To Say Thanks!**

This Volunteers' Week we are encouraging everyone to take the time to say thank you to all volunteers! During an exceptionally difficult year, people from all walks of life around the UK have taken the time to volunteer and made a huge difference to people and their communities – just as they do every year.

Despite the restrictions coronavirus has placed on our daily lives, volunteers and charities have been active through lockdowns and new waves of restrictions to support people, their communities and local environments.

We want to recognise all of those who have continued delivering vital work as volunteers over the past 12 months but also all those who usually volunteer but have not been able to because of the pandemic.

Volunteers are always working at the heart of our community. They are behind many of the services we all rely on. Some are now volunteering online from home, others in person with a local charity or organisation. Their crucial work has not stopped, despite the uncertain times we find ourselves in, and will continue as an important part of our recovery.

The contribution of volunteers is often unseen and unrecognised by many, visible only through the incredible impact of their volunteering. However, the coronavirus pandemic has rightly raised the profile of volunteering and more people than ever are aware of the immense contribution being made every single day by volunteers. That is why, on this 37<sup>th</sup> annual #VolunteersWeek and during the #MonthofCommunity, it's time to say: thank you volunteers!

As part of the UK Volunteers Week a key focus and themes have been agreed:

**Focus of the Week:** A time to say thanks

**Themes:**

- Tue 1 Jun - Volunteers' Week launch – A time to say thanks
- Wed 2 Jun - The Power of Youth - iwill campaign
- Thu 3 Jun - Employer Supported and Skilled Volunteering
- Fri 4 Jun - Home Nation priorities – overarching theme
- Sat 5 Jun - Environment and conservation (World Environment Day)
- Sun 6 Jun - The Big Lunch (Eden Project Communities)
- Mon 7 Jun - Volunteers' Week close – A time to say thanks

More information and materials will follow on our website [here](#).

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### **Leadership & Good Governance Awards 2021**

This past year has provided many challenges! The Leadership and Good Governance Awards 2021 provides an opportunity to shine a light on the many Trustees in Northern Ireland who have given their time freely to ensure that good governance and leadership has been continuing during the pandemic.

The Leadership and Good Governance Awards, organised by [VSB Foundation](#) in partnership with [Volunteer Now](#) and [CO3](#), focus on charity boards and trustees. These awards have grown in profile during the past five years and celebrate voluntary organisations which are working hard to improve their governance. The winner in each of the three categories will be awarded £1,000 to support the governance in their organisation.

The three award categories are determined by organisational turnover and organisations should apply before noon on **Friday 30 April 2021**.

For more information on the awards please [click here](#).

Find out more on Good Governance on the [DIY Committee Guide](#) website and in the [Governance section](#) of our website.

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### **QAVS Nominations Now Open!**

Nominations for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2022 are now open! The prestigious award is given for exceptional volunteer activity that is making an impact in the community.

Do you know a group worthy of recognition? Sandra Adair is the recently appointed NI Representative for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and can be contacted at [qavs-ni@adairi.plus.com](mailto:qavs-ni@adairi.plus.com) for more information.

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### **Independent Review of Charity Regulation Engagement Meetings**

The Independent Review Panel of Charity Regulation seeks your views on how well the charities regulatory framework, which is administered by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, is working and what could work better.

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 is being reviewed and your views are important to the Independent Review Panel ('the Panel'). The Panel invites you to attend a virtual community meeting to discuss charity regulation in Northern Ireland and to share your views on whether it could work better. This will include short presentations from the Independent Review Panel on the issues within the Review's scope, and we will seek your feedback through questions and answers, and small group discussions.

[Click here](#) to find out dates, time and to view a video which provides more information on the review and how you can get involved.

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### **Publication of the Month**

#### **[Volunteering During the Pandemic and Beyond \(2021\)](#)**

The document highlights the findings from our latest research study. This study was commissioned to assess the impact of Covid-19 on volunteer participation across the sector, highlighting the future appetite and intentions to continue volunteering in the future. Similar studies were undertaken in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, so this report underlines some interesting similarities and differences between the nations as well.

You can look at a graphic which presents a few of the main findings from the report [here](#).

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### **Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme**

The Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme is an incredible opportunity for local communities to apply for a grant between £500 to £3000 to improve their environment and promote a cleaner, greener and safer place to live.

Launched by 10 of the 11 Local Councils, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the Small Grants Scheme provides support to volunteer projects that:

- Contribute to the development of civic pride within a community with a focus on environmental improvement.
- Encourage actions and projects that enable Pollution Solutions, Biodiversity Recovery and Climate Action.
- Enhance the environmental management of a local area.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of communities whilst helping to improve and/or maintain public spaces.
- Improve the quality of their local environment by reducing littering and dog fouling through community Action.
- Support environmentally focused actions that help support people impacted through reduced contact with society.
- Community food growing initiatives.

Closing Date **Monday 10th May 2021 at 12 Noon**. Apply online and read the guidance notes at [www.livehereandlovehere.org](http://www.livehereandlovehere.org)

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### **Afternoon Tea Boxes Initiative**

Members of the Mid and East Antrim Loneliness Network, Volunteer Now and Larne Community Development Project joined together to secure funding from the Northern Trust's Activity Programme to provide 'Afternoon Tea Boxes' to 25 individuals deemed lonely and isolated living within the Larne area.

A small Larne based business was approached and agreed to provide these boxes. Referrals came from the NHSCT and within the Loneliness Network for those individuals living in rural areas that potentially miss out on community support. The Lord Mayor, Mr Pete Johnston, launched the initiative on Friday 19 March and members of the Network helped deliver the tea boxes to 25 individuals who were not only delighted to receive them but really appreciated the doorstep chat. This also provided us with the opportunity to connect with each one and see how we could provide future help/support. A big thank you to the Northern Trust for the funding.

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### **The Big Lunch 2021**

#### **Make a big date to celebrate and give thanks to our neighbours and communities**

The Big Lunch is the UK's annual celebration to give thanks and get to know our neighbours and communities. This year, there are more reasons than ever to get together as The Big Lunch kicks off a summer of community, friendship and fun.

The Big Lunch has teamed up with good causes across the UK to celebrate summer 2021 with a whole Month of Community. You can join in with a Big Lunch when it works for you and your community, whether that's to say cheers to volunteers, connect with your neighbours or simply to say thank you.

Reconnecting with people in our communities will be great, however a survey conducted for The Big Lunch by OnePoll has revealed that over 20 million people in the UK are suffering with re-entry anxiety.

Around 55% of the UK's population are still wary about socialising without restrictions, while around 10 million people have said that they have forgotten how to have a proper conversation. Despite the apprehension, there are over 25 million people who ARE relieved about the prospect of socialising without restrictions, so The Big Lunch aims to help those who aren't build up their social fitness and feel confident about getting back out into their communities.

Join in and set your own big date to celebrate the #MonthOfCommunity with The Big Lunch from 5 June. Online, on your doorstep or over the fence. It's on.

Find out more and order your Free Big Lunch pack at [thebiglunch.com](http://thebiglunch.com).

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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).

### Privacy Policy

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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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