



19 May 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

The pandemic has accelerated some of the changes we were beginning to see in volunteering, such as the increased use of technology and the reduction in formality and bureaucracy. Some organisations have had lots of volunteers active during this past year and others have not been able to involve volunteers at all. Volunteer Now would like to hear from members about the kinds of support you need as we emerge from this most recent lockdown.

As part of our celebration of Volunteers' Week this year, I am holding a series of one-to-one meetings with members between now and the end of June, this is an opportunity for me to hear directly from you about the challenges your organisation has faced in volunteering during the past year and to hear about the support you need from us. This will help us to deliver the services you really need in the years ahead. In order to arrange a meeting, please email sandra.faulkner@volunteernow.co.uk.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

Denise Hayward

Chief Executive

Online Training

With our new Training Schedule just released last month, we have plenty of courses on our calendar! Below are just a few of the sessions available. Or you can view our [Full Training Calendar](#) here.

- [Leadership & Dealing with Conflict | 20 May 2021 | 10am-1pm](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Refresher Training | 20 May 2021 | 10am-1pm](#)

- [Safe Communication Online with Children & Young People Webinar | 26 May 2021 | 11am-12pm](#)
 - [The New Environment: Recruit, Retain, Reward Volunteers | 1 June 2021 | 10.30am-12pm](#)
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Volunteers' Week 2021

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

With less than one month to go until Volunteers' Week 2021, taking place 1-7 June, charities around the UK are encouraged to take the time to say thank you to all volunteers.

Volunteers' Week is an annual campaign, entering its 37th year, which sees charities, voluntary groups, social organisations, and volunteers themselves come together to recognise the incredible impact that volunteering has in UK communities.

This year's theme is 'A time to say thanks' – recognising that during an exceptionally difficult year due to the coronavirus pandemic, 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 every day – just as they do every year.

Each day of Volunteers' Week 2021 will focus on a different theme of volunteering to ensure we recognise the impact that different types of volunteering have played in communities across the UK in the last 12 months. This will include themes such as youth volunteering, employer supported volunteering and environmental volunteering. Each day is a chance to take the time to say thank you to volunteers across the UK – and the coordinators are calling for all charities and volunteers to get involved.

Every year hundreds of events, both online and in-person, take place to celebrate Volunteers' Week and the huge range of ways in which volunteers give their time. This year will be no different. A wide variety of activities will be happening across the country including [The Big Lunch](#). This moveable feast is an opportunity for volunteers to come together online at their doorstep or in a park, guidelines permitting, to celebrate community connections and share volunteering experiences. You can find out more about how to get involved and get resources to plan your own thank-you on the [Volunteers' Week website](#) as well as Volunteer Now's [Volunteers' Week](#) page.

In communities, the pandemic response has seen volunteers coming together to support wherever they can – this can be seen in the over 750,000 people who signed up in just four days as NHS volunteers. Nationally, volunteering contributes positively to the UK economy, estimated at £18.2 billion – or almost 1% of GDP – in 2017-18.

Volunteers' Week is taking place during the #MonthOfCommunity. Running throughout June, the #MonthOfCommunity brings together some great organisations with a range of events including Volunteers' Week, The Big Lunch and Small Charity Week, and culminates in Thank You Day on 4 July. This collaborative month aims to encourage everyone to think about and join in with the wide variety of positive activities and initiatives happening in local communities across the UK.

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

The Big Lunch 2021

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

[The Big Lunch](#) is all about celebrating community connections and getting to know each other better. Join in with neighbourly acts of friendship where you live!

There are more reasons than ever to take part as The Big Lunch kicks off a [#MonthofCommunity](#). Starting with Volunteers' week at the start of June and running through to Thank You Day on 4 July, you can join in and recognise volunteers and key workers who make your community a better place to live and you can do your bit by reaching out to reconnect with neighbours too.

However small your action, please register and know that you are helping strengthen community spirit.

Helping hand

Everyone who registers their intentions to take part in #TheBigLunch will be entered into a draw to win one of 50 £25 vouchers which you can use to support your activity.

Taking part can be as simple as using your lunch time for neighbourly acts of friendship in your community and you do not need to be part of a group or organisation to apply.

- Step 1 – Register your interest at www.thebiglunch.com – select an immediate download pack or you can order a printed pack while stock lasts.
- Step 2 – Email gmcloskey@edenproject.com your name, area and what you plan to do.
- Step 3 – Visit The Big Lunch NI on Social media and tag saying: I'm taking part in #TheBigLunch2021 www.thebiglunch.com

People who are successful will be contacted on 29 May and sent their voucher by email that day.

Volunteer & Belonging Together Toolkit

Volunteer Now is constantly developing products and services that are useful for you and that provide you with practical help as you manage volunteers. Over the last few months The Executive Office have supported us to produce an on-line resource for supporting the introduction of good relations work with volunteers – *A Volunteering and Belonging Together Toolkit*.

We are launching this Toolkit on **1 June 2021 at 12pm**, and we'd like you to join us. Hopefully the First Ministers will contribute to the launch as will some young people who have participated in TEO summer camp within the Together: Building a United Community strategy. We will also demonstrate aspects of the Toolkit including a short, fun good relations quiz.

Please register using the Eventbrite link below. We look forward to seeing you then.

[Launch of Volunteer Now Good Relations Toolkit Tickets, Tue 1 Jun 2021 at 12:00 | Eventbrite](#)

Investing in Volunteers Standard Congratulations

We are delighted to announce that [Air Ambulance NI](#) were awarded the Investing in Volunteers Award on Wednesday 28 April 2021!

Investing in Volunteers (IiV) is the UK quality standard for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work. A new IiV standard consisting of 6 Quality Areas was recently launched – you can read all about it [here](#). Or visit the new [Investing in Volunteers UK](#) website.

Communicating Safely Online

Are you communicating with children and young people online through your work or volunteering? If so, we have scheduled a FREE webinar that looks at the safeguarding issues your organisation need to consider. Click on the date that suits below to find out more and book your place online.

- [Wednesday 26 May 2021 | 11am-12pm](#)
- [Tuesday 15 June 2021 | 11am-12pm](#)

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.

Future Leaders Connect 2021

The British Council's global leadership programme, Future Leaders Connect has just opened. The programme is aimed at young people who have a high-level policy idea that could lead to significant change in the UK and have senior leadership potential.

The British Council are looking for ambitious individuals aged 25-35 for an advanced policy and leadership programme. Those who are selected for the programme will gain exclusive access to policy experts and training, discuss their policy ideas with UK Parliamentarians and Government and network with some of the world's most senior leaders.

The six-week programme will develop their skills, expand their networks and ultimately enable those who are on the programme to make a difference through policy making. Crucially, the programme will help to develop an action plan to take policy change forward, whilst learning about leadership styles and approaches, and the international networks needed to be an influential leader.

To find out more and to apply, please visit [Future Leaders Connect](#).

Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Congratulations

Congratulations to [The Conservation Volunteers NI](#) who were presented with their Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Award on 13 May 2021! They were presented the Award by the Lord Lieutenant for Belfast, Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle CBE.

The prestigious award is given for exceptional volunteer activity that is making an impact in the community. It is the highest civil Award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work done in their own communities. It is the MBE for volunteer groups. Any group doing volunteer work that provides a social, economic or environmental service to the local community can be nominated for the Award.

If you would like to find out more about The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, join us at our next [VOLT Session on Thursday 3 June 2021 at 2-3pm](#) where you can hear more about the Award, the nomination process and hear from those involved in promoting the Award and from others who have been through the process.

Alternatively, you can contact Sandra Adair who has recently been appointed the NI Representative for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and can be contacted at gavs-ni@adairi.plus.com.

Dealing With a Disclosure

With many face to face services for children and adults opening up again, it is vital that staff and volunteers are prepared for disclosures of abuse.

Are your staff and volunteers confident in how to respond to a disclosure? Do they know how to record and report the information? Watch this short video [here](#) which outlines some Dos and Don'ts. A summary factsheet is also available [here](#). Your organisation must have clear reporting procedures in place, and staff and volunteers must be aware of their responsibilities.

Have a look at our [publications page](#) for more support and guidance. And check out our [training calendar](#) for available courses!

New VOLT Sessions

We have two new VOLT Sessions coming up in June. To book your place, please click on the session below:

[VOLT: Queen's Award for Voluntary Service | Thursday 3 June 2021 | 2-3pm](#)

[VOLT: Maintaining The Mental Health & Wellbeing of Your Volunteers | Tuesday 22 June 2021 | 11am-12pm](#)

Publication of the Month

Family Volunteering Information Sheet (2021)

As we come out of lockdown and the better weather approaches, organisations might be beginning to think about creatively welcoming back new and existing volunteers. One of the main barriers to volunteering is a lack of time due to work and family commitments.

This information sheet provides guidance and key steps to be considered when designing roles for families. Involving families can also be a good way of improving the diversity of your volunteer pool!

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.

Submit your Article

If you have volunteering related news, events, publications etc. to share, email 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.

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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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