



Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025

1. Introduction

Volunteering enables people to connect with each other, their communities and the causes they care about. Volunteers are at the heart of every community – volunteering is democracy in action and builds healthy and self-sustaining communities.

Volunteer Now exists to advance citizenship and community development by promoting and supporting volunteering. It is our role to build recognition for volunteering, to provide support to organisations and to promote the wide range of opportunities available to volunteer both formally and informally.

However, while in many contexts volunteering is thriving, there are some challenges, lives are busier and some people have lost connections with their community so they find it harder to know how to get involved. Many organisations are struggling to recruit and manage volunteers effectively and to rebuild post pandemic, especially in a digital environment which is changing very quickly. Evidence underpinning the development of this strategic plan is contained in the Trends in Volunteering Research published by Volunteer Now in 2018. The plan has been reviewed following the pandemic and the Learning from Today, Prepared for Tomorrow research has been a strong influence in the revised plan.

This new strategic plan takes an outcome focus and sets the direction of our work in the coming five years. It sets out the outcomes we seek to achieve and the priority actions we will take to bring these about. It will be underpinned each year by a detailed operational plan.

We look forward to continuing to work with our many partners and build new relationships which will enable us to deliver our strategic plan.

2. Definition of volunteering:

The commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment or individuals outside (or in addition to) one's immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.

(Volunteering Strategy & Action Plan for Northern Ireland - 2012) Department for Communities

3. Vision, Mission & Values

VISION

Building strong communities through volunteering.

MISSION

Enabling people to offer their skills and time to build stronger, more active communities.

VALUES

Excellence and Creativity - We strive for excellence and creativity in all that we do recognising that each person's contribution is valuable.

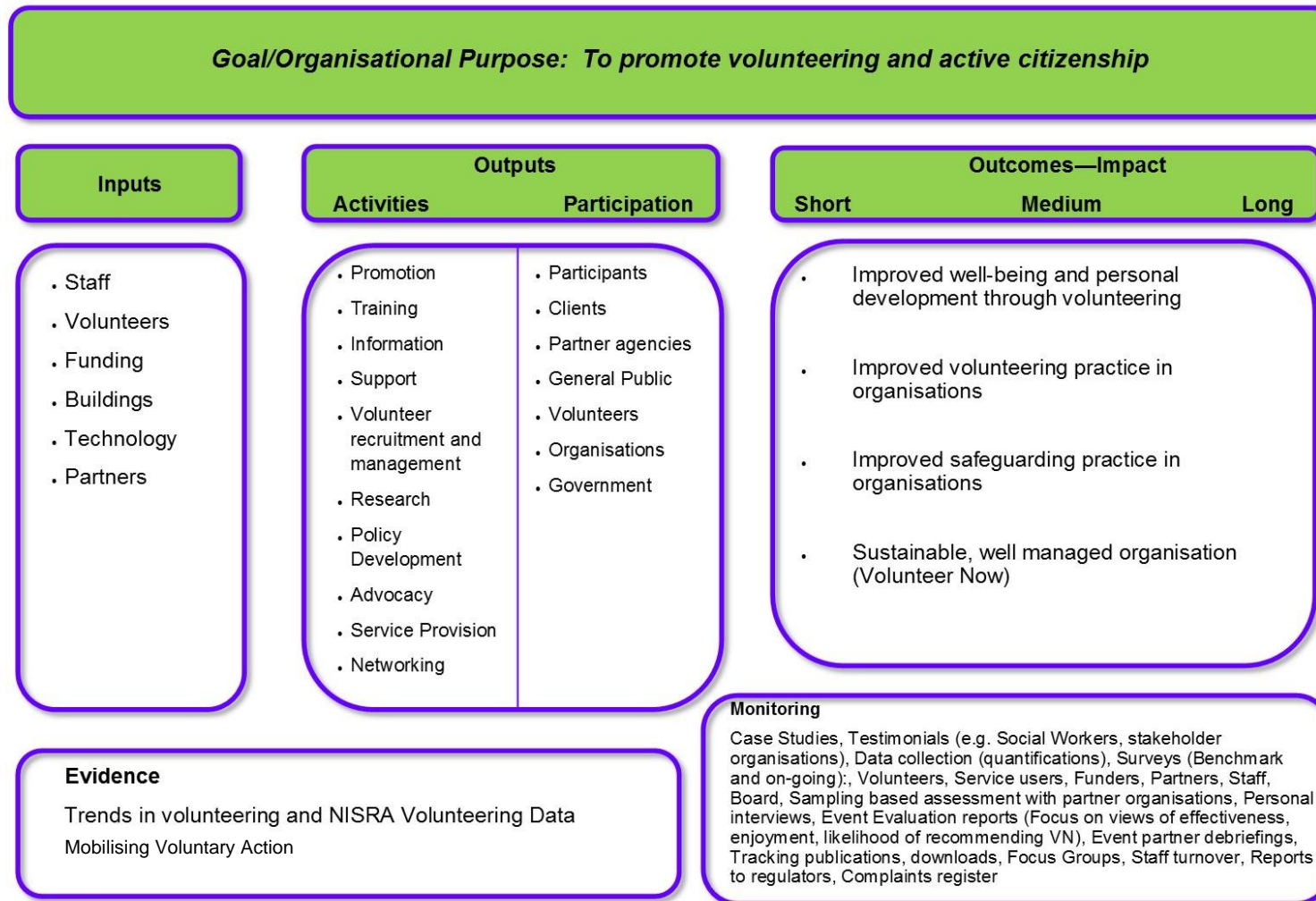
Collaboration and Teamwork – We value working with others, building and maintaining effective partnerships.

Respect and Inclusion – We celebrate diversity and promote inclusion to build a culture based on due regard for others.

Beneficiaries and Safeguarding - We focus on the achievement of positive outcomes for everyone involved in volunteering and apply recognised safeguarding principles to our work.

4. Outcomes - 2020 to 2025

- Improved community well-being and personal development through volunteering
- Improved volunteering practice in organisations
- Improved safeguarding practice in organisations
- Sustainable, well managed organisation (Volunteer Now)



Outcome 1: Improved community well-being and personal development through volunteering

Priorities and Actions

Promote volunteering in order to increase the number and diversity of volunteers

- Enable volunteering to be inclusive of everyone.
- Develop volunteering opportunities for groups, families and individuals.
- Provide a comprehensive digital recruitment resource.
- Increase the number and diversity of opportunities for people to volunteer.
- Develop youth volunteering and social action.
- Extend volunteering opportunities for under 16s.
- Support informal volunteering
- Support and recognise older people to volunteer
- Carry out a range of volunteering promotional events
- Provide support with raising funds for volunteering
- Support wellbeing of volunteers

Increase the understanding of and recognition for volunteering

- Provide and communicate a strategic understanding of volunteering in Northern Ireland and its links to the public policy context.
- Work with partners to recognise volunteering in both formal and informal settings.
- Provide evidence of the impact of volunteering for individuals and communities.
- Increase recognition for young peoples' volunteering
- Provide recognition scheme for volunteers of all ages

Offer high quality volunteering opportunities

- Effective recruitment and support of volunteers for Volunteer Now projects.
- Support event volunteering
- Support employer supported volunteering opportunities.

Performance Measures

How much are we doing

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of volunteers/new volunteers measured through Be Collective • Volunteer Hours • Diversity of volunteers • Number of opportunities • Number of opportunities for under 16s • Number of opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees • Number of Volunteer Impact Awards • Media coverage for volunteering • Number of returning volunteers • Number of people attending training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new friends/contacts • Driving services delivered • Befriending hours delivered • Capacity building support delivered • No of pieces of research completed |
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How well did we do?

- Feedback on experience, likelihood of recommending, advocating
- Feedback on efficiency and effectiveness of VN delivery
- Partner organisation viewpoints
- Extent of referrals/advocacy
- Client feedback.

Is anyone better off?

- Enjoyable and useful volunteering experience.
- Improved physical well-being.
- Improved sense of mental well-being, purpose, confidence, self-esteem, pride, identity.
- Improved inclusiveness and reduced social isolation.
- Employment (as appropriate).
- Clear link between volunteering and public policy.

Outcome 2: Improved volunteering practice in organisations

Priorities and Actions

Develop and promote best practice in volunteer management to all volunteer involving organisations

- Develop and deliver high quality training and information based on recognised standards and most up to date research.
- Build recognition for the profession of Volunteer Management
- Develop pathways to support for informal organisations.
- Support development of diversity and inclusion in volunteering.
- Support the measurement of the impact of volunteering for individuals and communities.
- Develop partnerships and collaborative working with relevant organisations

Develop and promote best practice in Governance

- Provide good practice and support on governance
- Support the recruitment and development of trustees

Develop and promote best practice in Befriending

- Support the development of good practice in befriending.

Performance Measures

How much are we doing

Numbers of:

- Health checks
- 1 to 1 support provided by VN
- Publications downloaded
- Visitors to volunteer management sections of website
- DIY Committee Guide users
- Attendees at VOLT sessions
- Jump On Board – numbers downloaded/distributed
- Training attendees – Volunteer Management, Governance, Social Action
- Volunteer Programme Reviews
- Queries
- Investing in Volunteers
- Membership and attendance at befriending network and other strategic groups

How well did we do?

- Accredited qualifications
- Feedback on Volunteer Now service

Is anyone better off?

- Longer term change in policy or practice
- More robust organisational systems and processes
- Improved skills in volunteers and volunteer managers across the sector
- Improved practice in befriending.
- Improved skills among trustees

Outcome 3: Improved safeguarding practice in organisations

Priority and Actions

Develop and Promote best practice in safeguarding vulnerable groups

Actions:

- Develop and deliver high quality training and information based on recognised standards and legislation
- Provision of information and guidance on Access NI process and deliver Access NI Umbrella Service.
- Develop partnerships and collaborative working with relevant organisations

Performance Measures

<u>How much are we doing</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training (Nos. of courses, participants, organisations supported, accredited & non accredited) • Policy reviews • Access NI checks • Publications downloaded • Visitors to safeguarding pages of website • Numbers of Queries • Membership and attendance at strategic groups and partnerships 	
<u>How well did we do?</u>	<u>Is anyone better off?</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with services provided • Feedback about contribution to safeguarding initiatives and partnerships • Accredited Trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved safeguarding processes in organisations and with service users

Outcome 4: Sustainable, well managed organisation (Volunteer Now)

Priorities and Actions

Ensure effective governance

- Robust Governance arrangements in place
- Support for Board and sub- committee structures
- Effective review and implementation of organisational policies
- Ensure Volunteer Now is an inclusive organisation.
- Robust risk management in place.

Ensure Effective use of Resources

- Timely robust and transparent financial planning and monitoring.
- Effective use of resources to build sustainability.
- Income base that ensures effective delivery of services and development of appropriate level of unrestricted reserves.
- Effective financial systems and reporting
- Effective recruitment, management, development and retention of staff.
- Implementation of Fundraising Strategy and creative development of new services.
- Implementation of Investment Policy
- Robust management and delivery of internal and external IT systems.
- Effective facilities and resource Management.
- Development of Environmental Policy and review of sustainability.

Ensure effective capture and management of data

- Effective, safe and secure, Data Management Processes
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of organisational outcomes

Performance Measures

<u>How much are we doing</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of recruitment exercises • Sickness absence and staff turnover • Reports to Board (Charity and VNE) • No of Cybersecurity issues • No of data breaches • Timely payments and financial reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of complaints • No of reports to regulators and funders • Learning and development of staff • Diversity of board and staff
<u>How well did we do?</u>	<u>Is anyone better off?</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction levels of staff, trustees and VNE Board • Satisfaction levels of funders • Solvency and financial and regulatory compliance • Adherence to Vision, Mission, Values • Maintaining IIP accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating public benefit • Satisfaction of regulators and funders • Effective Governance • Effective Risk Management • Effective Human Resource Management • Effective Internal communications • Effective ICT

