



December 2023

Hi and welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter for volunteer involving groups in Northern Ireland.

In November we welcomed Martin J Cowling and Rob Jackson to Belfast City Hall to talk about the Power of Volunteering! The day took us on a journey of exploring our language, promotion of volunteering and finally into impact. Some of our key takeaways were in relation to the language that we use to promote our opportunities and since then in Volunteer Now we have been slowly changing some of our materials. Here are some examples:

- The call for new volunteers needs to be more individual - calling to someone's interests, passions and hopes
- The opportunity needs to be 'instagrammable'
- We need to be able to share the difference a volunteer is making - not just at the AGM but throughout the year
- Our organisations values, mission and aim should shine through the opportunity, materials and team members.

We would encourage you to also look at your information, not only on Be Collective, but on wider promotional materials. The team are here to help.

We hope you find the information below helpful and if you would like any further information/support please do not hesitate to contact us. Don't forget that you can get help at any time from ...

- The [Be Collective Guide for Groups](#) on our website
 - Be Collective Help Centre - a full selection of topics and help videos (the link to the Help Centre is at the bottom left corner when signed in to your Be Collective account)
 - Or contact Volunteer Now and one of our team can support you - just email info@volunteernow.co.uk for assistance
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Christmas Volunteering Opportunities

We always get a lot of enquiries from folk wanting to volunteer on the run up to Christmas (and indeed on Christmas Day itself). If you have any festive opportunities that you would welcome help with, please upload them to your Be Collective account and make sure you share them with Volunteer Now. Please use the word "Christmas" somewhere in your text as this is the filter volunteers will be using in their search.



We are also looking for Christmas opportunities suitable for groups so remember to tick the group box for *groups over 10 welcome*.

Don't forget, if you ever need any help uploading opportunities or using your Be Collective account, our team is always here to give you a hand!

Our theme for Christmas this year is *Give the Gift of Time* and we are looking for volunteers who would like to share what giving time means to them or what difference they make through giving time. We would love to hear their stories so if you have any volunteers who would like to share with us please get in touch. We're happy to do face to face interviews, videos etc or to receive them via WhatsApp or any other medium.

VOLT Networking Sessions

Do you want to network, learn and share with other volunteer involving organisations? [Volunteer Organisations Linking Together \(VOLT\)](#) are free sessions for those who want to focus on a volunteering issue with other like-minded individuals.



We will be joined for our next session on **Tuesday 5 December** by the Information Commissioner's Office Belfast Team to look at data protection issues for volunteer involving organisations.

We are also planning some Link, Lunch & Learn dates which will focus on key areas of volunteer involvement - dates and venues will be posted on our website when available.

[Click here](#) to find out more and how book your place.

And if you have something you think would make a good VOLT session please do let us know!

RISP Questionnaire

The Department for Communities is seeking views on draft proposals for future Infrastructure Support of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland. Public consultation is now open!

They have carried out a programme of extensive engagement to refresh their approach to supporting sector infrastructure and develop an [integrated policy framework](#) to underpin future funding programmes.

The Department for Communities are now keen to share what they have learned from engagement sessions and seek views on their proposed framework through a public consultation. The proposed framework and consultation documents can be found [here](#).

HAVE YOUR SAY

Views and responses on the proposed framework are welcomed through consultation events being hosted both in person and online throughout November and December 2023, and you are invited to sign up for one of our events below. The events will take the form of roundtable discussions and are an opportunity to share thoughts, ideas or comments.

When	Where	Eventbrite Booking Details
Tuesday 28 th November 11:00am – 12:30pm	The Junction, Dungannon	The Junction
Wednesday 29 th November 11:00am – 12:30pm	Holywell Trust, Derry-Londonderry	Holywell Trust
Thursday 30 th November 2:00pm – 3:30pm	Virtual (Microsoft Teams)	Virtual
Tuesday 12 th December 7:00pm – 8:30pm	Virtual (Microsoft Teams)	Virtual
Wednesday 13 th December 11:00am – 12:30pm	The Braid, Ballymena	The Braid
Thursday 14 th December 11:00am – 12:30pm	Duncairn Centre, Belfast	Duncairn Centre

(Please register your attendance through these Eventbrite links)

Views and responses on the proposed framework are also welcomed via the [online survey](#) or via email at vcsinfrastructure@communities-ni.gov.uk.

Check your information on Be Collective!

It's good practice to routinely check your details are all correct on the Be Collective platform.

- Are you approaching the closing date for your opportunity and need to extend it?
- Have you uploaded a logo and header image? *This will help with the algorithm on Be Collective and can make your opportunities more visible.*
- Is the contact person for your opportunities still correct?
- Have you given people enough time to apply for your opportunity? - *don't have your closing date too tight!*

If you need any assistance updating your details, have a look at our [Step-by-Step guide](#) or feel free to give us a shout on info@volunteernow.co.uk **If needed, Volunteer Now can join your group as an additional Admin to give a hand.**

Messaging on Be Collective

The platform allows users to message the volunteer manager, group or message an individual. If a member uses the 'message to group' function the message will go to everyone! Be Collective have multiple Help Centre articles on messaging, but have also created a help centre article on 'how to avoid messaging the entire group when you only want to message one person' and 'how to know if a message has been sent to just you or many'. [Click here](#) to view the help centre article on messaging options.

Free defibrillators from British Heart Foundation

Find out if your community group is eligible for a free, BHF-funded defibrillator. Having a defibrillator and knowing how to do CPR will give members of your community a better chance at surviving a cardiac arrest. **Applications will close on 15 March 2024.**

All eligible UK-based community groups can apply. Each organisation can only apply for one award package. Find out more [here](#).

Health Checks and Training

Open to Be Collective users! Would you like one of the team to offer you

Health

Open to Be Collective users!! would you like one of the team to offer you a good practice 'health check'? We talk through your policies and procedures checking them against the Investing in Volunteers standard.

Check

Please email Jane: jane.gribbin@volunteernow.co.uk letting her know what area you cover and we will ask your Volunteering Support Officer to get in touch.

Volunteer Friendly



Volunteer Now is excited to bring Volunteer Friendly to Northern Ireland from Scotland with support from the Department for Communities! Volunteer Friendly Award is a quality standard and development tool that is user-friendly, to support, develop, recognise and reward groups/organisations who are good at involving volunteers.

Volunteer Friendly will be a key award and development tool in the quality pipeline. Volunteer Friendly is based on the national UK standard Investing in Volunteers (IiV), designed for small groups/organisations who may not be ready to undertake IiV.

[Visit our website](#) for more details and pricing structure ... if your group has an income of under £100,00 per year it's absolutely free!

Recognise your volunteers through the Volunteer Now Impact Awards



Created and designed in partnership with our youth forum, this Awards programme works in partnership with our online platform, ensuring that all young volunteers have the ability to be recognised for their volunteering commitment.

For further information and support relating to youth volunteering and the Impact Awards, check out the [Youth section](#) of our website or contact youth@volunteernow.co.uk

Training

Check out our training calendar for a full selection of training Volunteer Now can offer - some of these are free and others from as little as £10 per person! <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/training/courses-scheduled/>



We can also provide tailored training specific to your organisation - <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/training/tailored-training/> - just send us a message through the web contact form and we'll get back to you with more details.

Keep Informed!

Volunteer Now have other newsletters that you might find useful..

- **VConnect** - a roundup of general information useful to volunteer involving groups
- **VTraining** - details of training sessions offered by Volunteer Now

You can sign up for both newsletters either at the bottom of any page [on our website](#) or sign up as a [member](#) and you'll receive both too.

If you just want VTraining – email training@volunteernow.co.uk with your details and we'll add you to the mailing list.

Get social with us!

We love it when you interact with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)!

www.volunteernow.co.uk



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