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JUNE 2024

Volunteering on Boards

Denise Hayward, CEO, Volunteer Now

Trustees are volunteers. They play a key role in the governance of the sector. For many years, the trustees of small organisations have struggled with the bureaucracy surrounding charity registration. The Department for Communities is consulting on the introduction of a registration threshold so that charities with an income of less than £20k per annum will not need to register. Find out more [here](#).

This is an important development to reduce the demands on smaller groups and their volunteers and it is vital that as many people as possible respond to the consultation. Volunteer Now and other members of the Developing Governance Group have inputted into the NICVA position paper on the response and you can read it [here](#).

If you would like any further support with the response, please do not to hesitate to contact info@volunteernow.co.uk.



Online Training

- Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Refresher Training
- Volunteer Induction, Support & Supervision
- Keeping Children Safe: Training for Staff & Volunteers Refresher
- Change Management

[View Training Calendar](#)

Volunteer's Week Thanks!

A huge thank you to everyone who supported Volunteers' Week this year. The wide range of events and media activity showed the importance of recognizing volunteers and saying thank you to people involved.

We reached over 127,500 people on social media, over 7,000 visited our website during the week with the Volunteers' Week 2024 page the most visited and over 700 publications were downloaded!



We know that volunteering is so beneficial for individuals and organisations and retaining active volunteers is vital at present. Times like Volunteers' Week provide focus for us all to say a public thank you to add to the regular individual thanks across the year. However, these moments are important as they help us all to feel part of something bigger. Thank you to everyone who took part.



Loneliness Awareness Week

Last week, during Loneliness Awareness Week, Antrim and Newtownabbey Loneliness Network held their celebration event in Corrs Corner Hotel. Four very well-deserved members of the network, nominated by their peers, were recognised as Loneliness Champions for the fabulous work they are doing to combat loneliness and isolation across the Borough.

We were delighted to have the Lord Mayor, Councillor Neil Kelly, present the Champions with their award and Hugh Nelson NHSCT join us for the celebrations. The four awardees are Karen Kerr (Listening Ear), Tracy Smyth (Praxis Care), Jacqueline Bingham (Libraries NI) and Stephen Gourley (Age NI).

Tribute was also paid to our former Chairperson, Valerie Adams, who recently passed away. Valerie chaired the Network from its inception in 2019 and was instrumental in the huge success the Network has achieved. She will be very much missed by all who knew her. Valerie would be delighted to know Noreen McClelland has taken up the reins as Chair and will continue to lead the good work already in place. The Loneliness Network was launched in 2019 to create coordinated action, raise awareness, share best practice and encourage learning and prevention in the borough.



For more information about the Loneliness Network contact our Volunteering Support Officer wenda.gray@volunteernow.co.uk.

Statement from Volunteer Now



Statement from Volunteer Now about National Service

Volunteer Now is concerned by the proposed National Service scheme set out by the Conservative party and the potential it has to damage the perception and long-term uptake of crucial community volunteering.

Volunteering is something you choose to do, freely, simply because you want to. Volunteer Now's membership principles state that volunteering is about freedom to choose. The National Service

coming into a sector where funding has been reduced and capacity to involve large numbers of people is curtailed.

There is a real danger that by removing their all-important freedom to choose, young people will be deterred from participating in real volunteering.

Statistically, people aged 16 – 25 years old make up 22% of the volunteering population in Northern Ireland, which is on a par with most other age groups. We do not sense that young people will not freely volunteer. However, there is a continual need to promote the benefits of volunteering consistently to all young people in order to secure a generation of volunteers now and in the future. Investment to do that would be incredibly valuable.

Surely there is a better way to inspire a lifelong love of volunteering than forcing young people to get involved in community service?



Department for Communities Consultation Events

Following on from Denise's introduction article, the Department for Communities will also be running a series of consultation events:

- Wed 19 June | 11am-12pm
[The Braid, Ballymena](#)
- Tues 25 June | 2.30-3.30pm
[Online event aimed at funders](#)
- Tues 25 June | 5-6pm
[Online event](#)
- Wed 26 June | 12-1pm
[Holywell Trust, Derry/L'Derry](#)

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2024

Saturday 15 June was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Let's raise awareness of the abuse of older people, let's prevent and stop it. It is unacceptable! Does your organisation provide services to older people? Are you doing all you can to keep them safe?

Volunteer Now provide safeguarding support & training - [click here](#).



Pictured is Denise Hayward, CEO of Volunteer Now signing the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Declaration with some of our safeguarding trainers.

See below for Ruth's video for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2024.



Volunteer Now Impact Awards

On the evening of Tuesday 4 June, we welcomed young people and organisations from across Northern Ireland to Belfast Castle. We celebrated their commitment to supporting others through volunteering, social action and activism.

We had representatives from 12 organisations and 120 young people who attended the event which was hosted by none other than Q Radio Drivetime host Ibe Sesay. Guest Speakers

about being involved in volunteering and social action.

Impact Award certificates presented on the night ranged from 10 to 1000 hours of time given to support causes through volunteering, social action and activism. A total of 23,310 voluntary hours were recognised and celebrated on the night.

During the event, organisation who have shown their commitment to supporting young people to engage in volunteering, social action and activism were also celebrated and presented with a plaque to show our appreciation for the work they do.

A great night and a massive thank you to all of the young people, organisations, parents, speakers who attended and to the staff of Belfast Castle.

To check out all the pictures from the Impact Awards event last week head over to our Facebook page Volunteer Now Youth - link to the album below.

Impact Awards Photo Album



Small Charity Week: 24-28 June

Small Charity Week amplifies, supports and connects small charities right across the UK. Join in to empower your team, access practical support and make new connections – so you can make an even bigger impact.

- [Explore the Small Charity Week events calendar](#)
- [Advertise your own Small Charity Week event](#)
- [Access information and resources to help you mark the week](#)

Small Charity Week

Closing the Gaps: Collaborating on Voluntary & Community Sector Research in NI

The Voluntary Sector Studies Network, Volunteer Now, NICVA, ARK, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University are delighted to jointly host a symposium to explore pathways to collaborating on voluntary and community sector (VCS) research in Northern Ireland.

Date: **25 June 2024**

Time: **10am-3.45pm**

Venue: **NICVA, 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GB**

The conference event will begin by setting the scene to understand why it is important to bring together the breadth of key players engaging in voluntary and community sector centred research in Northern Ireland. Attendees will hear about the breadth of collaborative research between the sector and academia already happening in Northern Ireland.

The afternoons session will include the opportunity to learn about how such research might be funded and resourced in the future and to attend a panel session on key lessons for strengthening such collaborative research. This will be followed by the opportunity to learn about the range of voluntary sector research partnerships in other parts of the UK, and to forge plans for future developments of collaborative working.

The event is part of a series of day events organised by the [VSSN – Voluntary Sector Studies Network](#) to build and strengthen national voluntary and community sector research networks.

This is a Free Event, however online registration is required. Registration closes at 12pm on Friday 21 June 2024.

Book Your FREE Place

Civic Initiative Public Call for Written Evidence

Following 39 grassroots sessions, the Civic Initiative is now seeking further evidence on three key areas: housing, healthcare and education. The attached document outlines the scope of specific questions for a written submission. We would be delighted if you have capacity to submit evidence or information on any of the questions.

Do you have views on
**Housing? Healthcare?
Education?**

Take part in the
**civic initiative
ONLINE SURVEY**
and **play your part** in
informing a Northern Ireland
Citizens' Forum



People's Forum. Submissions will be published. The deadline for submitting written evidence is 23.59 on 1 July.

In addition to a written submission, there is an option to answer a short survey, available [here](#).

Outline Document



Introducing: Kate Jackson

Digital Media Assistant

Hi! I'm Kate, the new Digital Media Assistant. My background is in history and politics, and I recently graduated from a master's in Media and Broadcast Production. My role involves supporting the creation, management, and distribution of digital content across various platforms. I have a personal interest in using digital storytelling to explore lived experience by humanizing narratives for deeper understanding and connection across audiences. With this being particularly relevant for effectively showcasing work in the third sector, I'm excited to use multimedia production and social media outreach to promote access to volunteering opportunities throughout Northern Ireland and highlight the impactful work that our volunteers do.

Contact Kate

Member Spotlight

South West Age Partnership

South West Age Partnership is a network in the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council area for older people's groups and individual older people. Anyone aged 60+ can join. They provide funding, activities, governance support, signpost to relevant services, provide a platform for the voices of local older people & so much more.

Tel: 028 8225 1824 **Office:** 54 Gortview Close, Omagh, BT79 7WU

South West



Email South West Age Partnership



Publication of the Month:

Inclusion in Volunteer Programmes Toolkit

This toolkit has been designed to support volunteer involving organisations in Northern Ireland & the Republic of Ireland, to make their volunteer programmes more inclusive.

It was designed based on data collected from individual interviews and a focus group carried out with voluntary organisations North & South. It was part of an all-Ireland research project carried out by Volunteer Ireland, Volunteer Now in collaboration with Dublin City University & Queens University Belfast.

Inclusion in Volunteer Programmes Toolkit



New Members

Welcome to our newest organisational members: [Youth First](#), [Jubilee Farm](#), [Funk Soul Media CIC](#), [Millverne Care Home](#), [Tara Centre](#), Ards Gateway Club, [Little Green Pig](#), [Willow & Lore @ TGHF](#), Carrickmore Thursday Afternoon Club, [The Outdoor Partnership](#), [ME Support NI](#), [Wee Chick's Fitness CIC](#), National Trust, Education Authority, [Dialogue for Diversity](#) and Mcauleys Kids Club. This brings our organisational members total to 1120!

[Become A Member](#)



Flexible, accessible training

Did you know you can learn all you need to know about volunteer management in just 8 hours with our on demand courses? You can complete these anytime, anywhere & on any device! Click below to find out more.

[Find Out More](#)



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