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NOVEMBER 2024

World Volunteering Conference

Denise Hayward, CEO, Volunteer Now

The World Volunteering Conference was held in Busan, South Korea in October. Volunteer Now had submitted proposals for a range of sessions and were delighted that two of our papers were chosen. Lindsay Armstrong and I travelled to Busan where we delivered sessions profiling our older people's volunteering work and the impact on wellbeing as well as the cascade model we use for safeguarding training.

The conference was attended by people from 98 countries. It was opened by the President of Korea who related the role volunteers had played in Busan during the Korean war in supporting refugees. He explained that the reason the government had supported the conference in Busan was to recognize it as the birthplace of volunteering in Korea.

Key reflections for me are that across the developed world volunteering has changed post covid. Many countries have experienced a falling off in numbers of volunteers as well as hours given. However, some countries, including us are now seeing a recovery. The role of young people in less formal activism was explored at the event and this is seen as an important ingredient in driving long term recovery in volunteering.

The role of Employer Supported Volunteering was clear in many settings, and this is something that has not been particularly well developed in the UK in comparison to other countries. There is definitely scope to consider this further and there is a role for greater research to build understanding and explore what can sometimes be a mismatch between voluntary organisations and employers.

I attended an excellent presentation from Korea about the new national occupational standards for volunteer management which have been developed. This is very useful as we are revisiting these in the UK at present.

people in a schools setting was explored. In many countries this is compulsory and that means that all young people have opportunities to participate. In N Ireland there is evidence that young people from less well-off backgrounds are less likely to volunteer. Compulsory school volunteering may not be on the agenda here however it is clear that better promotion and greater opportunities in school are vital.

Overall, there was a real richness in the debate in the conference and an opportunity to build networks with people with similar roles from across the world.



ONLINE TRAINING

Click the button below to find out more!



Volunteer Management | Safeguarding | Volunteering | Governance

Online Training

- Keeping Children Safe: Training for Staff & Volunteers
- Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Training
- Keeping Adults Safe: Adult Safeguarding Champion & Appointed Person Refresher Training
- Recruit, Retain, Reward Volunteers

[View Training Calendar](#)



The King's Award for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

Congratulations!

Congratulations to 22 NI Volunteer Groups!

Congratulations to 22 volunteer groups in Northern Ireland that have been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service 2024!

The King's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest civil Award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work done in their own communities. 281 Awardees from across the UK have been recognised, reminding us of all the ways in which fantastic volunteers work to make life better for those around them.

We are very pleased that volunteers are getting recognition and we send our congratulations to:

- All About Us – ASD Teens
- Allegri
- Ashes to Gold
- Bovalley Community Association
- Bready Cricket Club
- Cathedral Youth & Community Hub
- Fermanagh BrightStarz
- Foyle Down Syndrome Trust
- Life After
- Monkstown Village Initiatives
- Parent Action
- Queenspark Women's Group
- Randalstown Ulster Scots Cultural Society
- St. Augustine's Church Volunteering Group
- Stewartstown & District Environmental Outreach
- SWELL (Supported We Live Life)
- Tamnamore Community Development Association
- The Breakaways
- Tullyally Women's Group
- Ulster Project Derry/Londonderry
- Ulster Tower Street Community Development Association
- Youth Sport Omagh

Find Out More

Mencap Healthier Me Survey

Mencap want to hear from people with a learning disability across NI, their families and carers on what they think about healthy lifestyles, and what their concerns are!

Scan the QR code for the Healthier Me survey which is open until **28 November 2024**. Please share this survey with people with a learning disability and their families / networks across NI.

If you would like a paper copy, please email Campaigns.NI@mencap.org.uk.

**Live Here Love Here Community Awards 2025**

In February 2025, Live Here Love Here will be celebrating another host of local community champions. These are the volunteers who green-up and clean-up their local areas and help all of us to love where we live.

Do you know a community volunteer group who deserves recognition for all their hard work?

Award Categories Include:

🌟 **Regional Champions Award:** For groups dedicated to tackling local environmental challenges and inspiring civic pride.

🌱 **Bright Future Award:** For up-and-coming groups making strides in community volunteering.

💛 **The Community Together Award**, supported by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, recognising significant efforts to overcome barriers of community division to promote community relations through practical environmental action.

🌳 **Lasting Contribution Award:** For groups showing outstanding, long-term commitment to environmental stewardship in their community.

Deadline for nominations: Sunday 1 December 2024.



NI Rural Grants Scheme

Grants are available for rural community-led, voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland to support projects that address issues of local poverty and social isolation, and to implement energy efficiency measures or environmental improvements.

Grants can be used to purchase capital equipment, improve an asset, or extend the usable life of a capital asset.

Funding can also be used by organisations to implement energy efficiency measures and/or environmental improvements to their premises.

All projects must be completed and claims for grants submitted by 25 March 2025.

How To Apply

The deadline for applications to the second 2024/25 funding round is 5 December 2024 (noon). Applications must be completed online through the Rural Micro Capital Scheme portal. Applicants are advised to contact their local Rural Support Network for further information.

[Find Out More](#)

Experience of Volunteering by Adults in Northern Ireland

Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2023/24



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency
Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde



Department for
Communities
An Roinn
Pobal

Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk



Experience of Volunteering by Adults in NI

This year's Continuous Household Survey (CHS) data is now available and has provided some valuable insights into volunteering in Northern Ireland. In 2023, the set of questions focusing on volunteering in the CHS were reviewed, with some additional questions being added. This was very welcome and ensures our data is more comparable with the rest of the UK and provides greater insight into informal volunteering. However, it is important to caveat that the change of language and new structure of some questions means the findings cannot be directly compared with that of previous years. This said, we will provide some insights into the key findings below.

Firstly, there are indications that formal volunteering numbers are returning to pre-pandemic levels (28%). However, we are aware that some organisations are not feeling this. Therefore, we are going to request further analysis to determine why this may be the case. For example, the average number of volunteer hours may have decreased when compared with pre-pandemic levels. The other reason groups may be still feeling that they do not have enough volunteers is that the new people they have recruited are not as experienced as the volunteers they lost through the pandemic. This is certainly a topic for further consideration.

The inclusion of a question focusing on 'informal volunteering' is an addition to this year's survey, highlighting that 37% of individuals have helped out informally (with a total of 47% volunteering formally or informally). This is in line with levels in Scotland and is reflective of neighbourliness and informal support and care in our community.

When looking at the breakdown by age, it does appear that the 16-24 (38%) and 25-34 (43%) age groups engage in volunteering less than their older counterparts.

Finally, there are some interesting insights when it comes to methods to encourage volunteering. The top ways to encourage volunteering appeared as follows:

- If I was directly asked to volunteer (25%)
- If a need arose in my community (20%)
- If there was flexibility on when and how I could get involved (10%)
- If I received time off from my employer (8%)

There are more trends and information available within the full report, accessed by clicking the button below.

Find Out More

Our Stories Festival

Join speakers from Belfast 2024 projects and Belfast Stories with Belfast's luminaries and international creatives to explore the themes of Our People, Our Place, Our Planet and reflect on our time celebrating creativity as we look forward to the next chapter for Belfast.

Including a special Belfast 2024 legacy gift from Oliver Jeffers and the Eden Project, a limited edition Power Plants Wildflower Pack to plant in Spring 2025. We invite the people of the city to sow their own wildflower gardens and to feel inspired by the power of plants to make a difference in your community.



Find Out More



Crowdfunder

Crowdfunder offers exciting match funding opportunities to organisations in Northern Ireland through partnerships with the **Aviva Community Fund**, **BA Better World Community Fund**, and **Sport Northern Ireland**. These funds can significantly boost your crowdfunding campaign, helping you reach your financial goals faster. Whether you're supporting a local sports team, a community project, or an environmental initiative, match funding can double the impact of donations made by your supporters.

For more details and to apply for match funding, check out [Aviva Community Fund](#), [BA Community Fund](#), and [Sport Northern Ireland](#).

Matched crowdfunding is a great opportunity to reach a wide audience of supporters, through donations or offering rewards. Really effective rewards will resonate with your audience—exclusive experiences, branded merchandise, or shout-outs in return for their contribution.

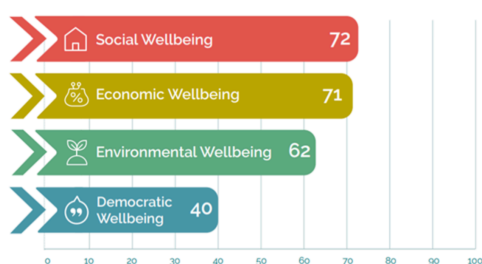
To help you learn more Crowdfunder offers a range of support, including regular webinars and drop in sessions, click the button below to see their Knowledge Hub and find out more.



Life in the UK Wellbeing Index

Carnegie UK's Life in the UK wellbeing index measures collective wellbeing across the UK. It is based on what people in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland tell us about their lives, and was collected for the first time in 2023. The measure is worked out of a possible score of **100** and in 2023, it was **61**.

The UK's collective wellbeing in 2024 was just 61. This number is unchanged, suggesting that **collective wellbeing of people in the UK is stagnant**. This continuity in living standards is driven by persistent inequality and wellbeing cannot flourish when there is inequality between people and communities. As evidence suggests, volunteering is just one thing people can do to boost health and wellbeing, whether it be through improving social connectedness, or providing internal satisfaction.



The collective measure is broken down into 4 separate measures of wellbeing: social, economic, environmental and democratic wellbeing.

The full report is available to download using the link below and provides some extremely interesting insights on these wellbeing measures, along with how different variables (age, disability, gender) affect these measures across the UK.

[Download Report](#)



Listening to the voices of women in Northern Ireland



Women's Health Survey

The Women's Health Survey for Northern Ireland, part funded by the Department of Health, is the first phase of a public listening exercise with Northern Ireland women.

It is being carried out by the School of Nursing & Midwifery at Queen's University, Belfast, in partnership with Derry Well Women. Its purpose is to hear directly from women about their specific health needs and experiences to help shape planning for women's health services.

The survey will collect anonymous data on a range of topics including women's priorities for their health, barriers to accessing health services and how women's voices are integrated into the planning and delivery of healthcare services.

Women aged 16 and over are encouraged to participate, ensuring that their voices are heard and that the realities of women's health across Northern Ireland are fully represented.

The survey will close on 31 January 2025 and is available online by clicking below or a paper copy can be accessed by contacting the research team at womenshealthni@qub.ac.uk.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete, and all responses are anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes.

Women's Health Survey



Hi I'm Wenda Gray I live in the Co Antrim area, have 4 children and 6 grandchildren. I have been working for Volunteer Now since 2009 first in an administrative role and more recently as the Volunteering Support Officer for the Mid & East Antrim and Antrim & Newtownabbey areas.

My role is to support volunteer involving organisations with good practice in volunteer management such as volunteer recruitment, promoting their volunteering opportunities, provision of training and access to a wide range of publications. If you are a group that needs my help or an individual looking for a volunteering opportunity then please give me a call on 07850 851811 or drop me an email by clicking the button below.

[Contact Wenda](#)

Member Spotlight

Family Fund NI

Family Fund provides a wide range of grants to families living in Northern Ireland raising a disabled or seriously ill child, or young adult, on a low income.

Whether you need a kitchen appliance like a fridge, cooker or washing machine; clothing and bedding; sensory or play equipment; technology for your child, or a much-needed family break, we are here to help.

Apply for items that will help meet your child's additional support needs, and make life easier.



[Family Fund NI](#)



Be Collective: User Manual & Supporting Information

For this month, we are sharing the resources we have to assist you with Be Collective. Be Collective allows you to promote your volunteering opportunities, communicate with your volunteers, and much more! It is a useful tool to promote yourselves and is equally useful for people interested in volunteering to see what is available.

There are a range of different support guides, available from the link above. Support guides are available for organisations and for individuals hoping to get involved.

Be Collective: User Manual & Supporting Information



New Members

Welcome to our newest organisational members: [Classic Bike Festival Ireland](#), [United Response](#), [Agewell Partnership](#), [Say Aphasia](#), [Bangor Academy & 6th Form College](#), [Royal Voluntary Service](#), [Sensory Kids](#) & [Sustrans](#). This brings our organisational members total to 1151!

[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](#)

Annual Report 2023/4

See what we've been up to



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Volunteers change lives



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