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MAY 2025

International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development



Denise Hayward, CEO, Volunteer Now

2026 has been designated as the UN International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development. The key focus for the year is a global call to action to champion volunteering, to enable volunteering to make a difference and to see significant financial investment in volunteering. Almost 70 countries have already signed up. We know how important volunteering is to many people and the difference it makes, so we need to seize the opportunity to enhance the focus on it through the UN Year.

Volunteer Now will be engaging with members as part of our [conference](#) on 6 June to help shape the response to the Year across Northern Ireland. So please come along to make your voice heard and to hear from our keynote speaker Chris Wade.

We will also be establishing a small working group to help us plan the Year. If you would like to take part in the working group, please email me denise.hayward@volunteernow.co.uk to express interest.

In the meantime, if you can take a few minutes to complete the International Association for Volunteering Effort global survey to help shape the future of volunteering, then you can do so at the link [here](#).



- [Leading Volunteers: Dealing with Conflicts, Challenges & Problems](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Refresher Training](#)
- [VOLT: Youth Work Volunteering in Faith-Based Organisations](#)
- [The 3 R's: Recruit, Retain, Reward Volunteers](#)

[View Training Calendar](#)

VOLUNTEERS WEEK

VOLUNTEER NOW
Volunteers change lives

Call in to one of our sessions to share, network and talk about the importance of recognition and reward, and to collect some free Volunteer's Week merchandise!

A light lunch will be provided - let us know of any dietary requirements.

Antrim and Newtownabbey:

Tuesday 27 May 2025, 11am-1pm at Rathcoole Library.

Bangor:

Thursday 22 May 2025 12pm-2pm at Hamilton Road Hub

Belfast:

Tues 20 May, 12pm-2pm at Ulster Bank City Centre Branch

Dungannon:

Thurs 29 May 2025, 11am-1pm at Ranfurly House

Enniskillen:

Tues 27 May 2025, 10.30am-12.30pm at Enniskillen Townhall

Lisburn:

Tuesday 27 May 2025, 10am-12.30pm at Laganview

Newry:

Tuesday 20 May, 12m-2pm at World War II Hut in Meigh

Mid and East Antrim:

Thursday 29 May 12noon – 2pm at Carrickfergus Library.



Visit [Volunteer Now's website](#) for more details and to register



**Positive
Ageing
Month**
October

Positive Ageing Grants

Project supported by the PHA

For an application, email:

● aforbes@southwestagepartnership.co.uk
(Fermanagh and Omagh)

● info@bbhealthforum.org
(Strabane, Limavady, L'Derry)

Closing date for applications:
Friday 23 May 2025, 12pm

**Small
Grants
up to
£500**



Positive Ageing Small Grants Programme

The Positive Ageing Small Grant Programme is now open for applications - closing this Friday at noon!

Constituted, non-constituted, non-profit making community/voluntary sector organisations, groups supporting those aged 60+ can apply for grants of up to £500. Grants should be used to develop programmes for older people to be active and improve their physical activity while also providing opportunities for social connection.

Application Form



organisations engage young people (16-30) and how we can better support their involvement in civic and community development - particularly in creating pathways to paid employment, decision-making and leadership roles.

As part of this work, they have launched the Community Futures Survey to gather views on:

- How young people currently engage with community organisations;
- The leadership and paid career opportunities available;
- The skills, support and pathways needed to secure the sector's future.

The survey seeks input from **everyone involved in community organisations - including young people, staff, volunteers and senior leaders**. Capturing a wide range of perspectives is vital to building strategies that not only increase youth engagement, but also create clear pathways to leadership, employment and encourage the sustainability of the sector.

Complete Survey



Tak£500 Applications Now Open

Applications for the Tak£500+ project are now open and groups can receive up to an incredible £1,000 for a project to benefit their area!

This Participatory Budget Fund encourages local residents within the Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough to apply for funding for a project that they think will have a positive impact on their community. This is the fourth year of this fantastic project so, if you have an idea in mind of something that would bring value to your area and support your community, especially in these increasingly difficult times, look no further!

"Tak£500+ is an excellent opportunity to get funding for a project in your local community and really make a difference to those living in your area," commented Councillor Sarah Duffy, Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon.

"I've seen the difference that the Tak£500+ project has made to local communities and the incredible impact it has had across the borough. This project is now in its fourth year and

Both constituted and non-constituted groups can apply for funding to help bring an idea to life. Ideas can be based on the Take 5 Ways to Wellbeing - which are a great guide to helping you to look after yourself and others during these uncertain days, including keeping you connected to the people around you and encouraging communities to lean on each other. If you need more information or support, please contact a member of the PB Working Group who will be happy to help, email communityplanning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk.

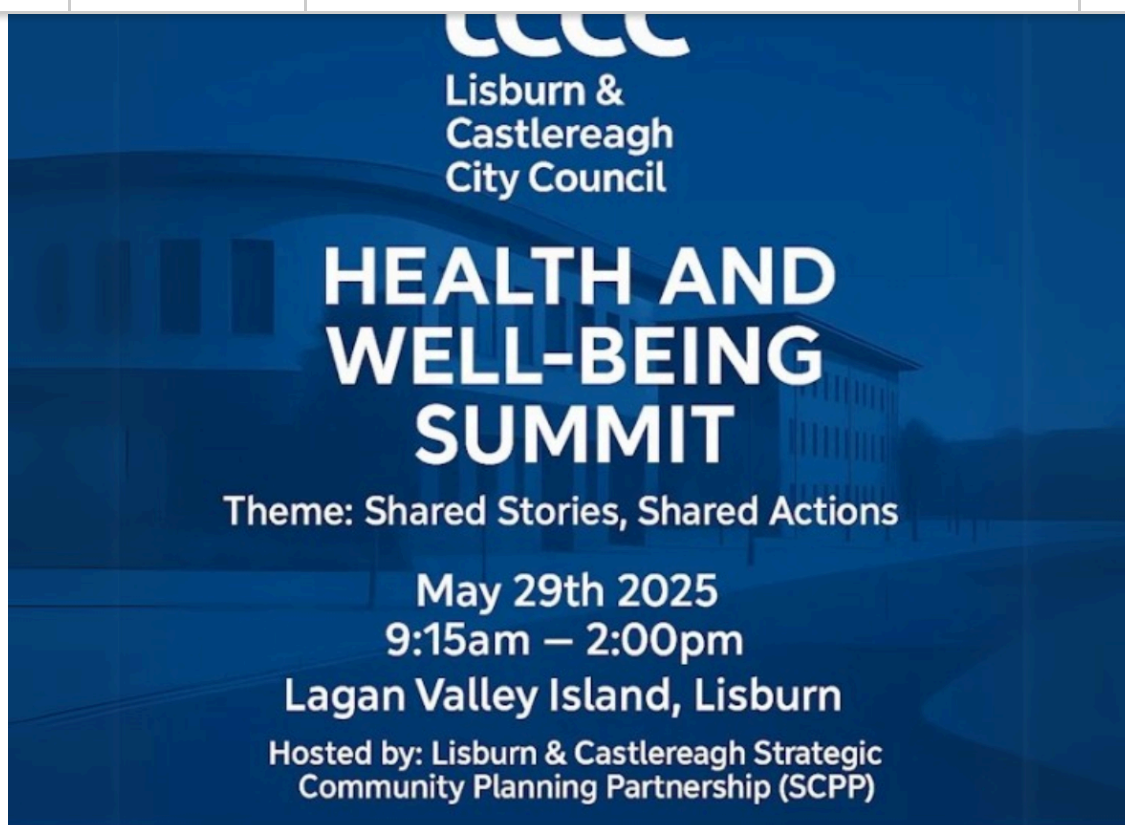
Find Out More & Apply

Good Relations Week: 13-19 October 2025

Plans are underway for Good Relations Week 2025! Last year, 244 inspiring events were organised by 135 organisations and over 600 pieces of social, print, online and broadcast media reached over 8m of an audience! It's therefore a Week not to be missed!

This year Good Relations Week embraces '**Connect**' as its theme, recognising that the foundation of a better community is built on People, Planet and Prosperity - all connected by the goal of Peace. More information will come but put the dates in your diary!





Community Partnership Health & Wellbeing Summit

Statutory, community, and voluntary partners are invited to a one-day summit exploring health and wellbeing through the power of shared stories and collective action.

The day will include contributions from key leaders from health, local government, and the community and voluntary sector. Participants will take part in roundtable discussions, explore inspiring case studies, and visit a Marketplace of Practice where local initiatives are showcased.

A Living Library zone (a space where attendees can have informal one-to-one conversations with people who share personal or professional stories related to health and wellbeing) will offer a unique opportunity for deeper understanding. Creative elements, interactive reflections, and time for networking will all contribute to an engaging and impactful programme.

If you or your organisation would like to attend, host a stall, or take part as a Living Library contributor, please contact Heather.Bulfin@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk (Community Planning Officer).



Hi, I'm Ruth and I'm the Safeguarding Manager for Volunteer Now. I live in the Co Down area and have 3 young children. I've been working for Volunteer Now since 2004. I spent a few years within our Community Projects team, working with the local HSC Trusts to deliver support services to children and adults.

In 2008 I trained as a Keeping Safe trainer and moved to the Our Duty to Care Team. Within my role, I support groups and organisations across all sectors, to implement good practice in safeguarding. I respond to their queries, develop publications and provide guidance to help them develop their safeguarding policies and procedures, and deliver safeguarding training. I am a member of several safeguarding forums which strive to improve safeguarding standards across the region and create better outcomes for children and adults.

Contact Ruth

Member Spotlight

A Safe Space to be Me

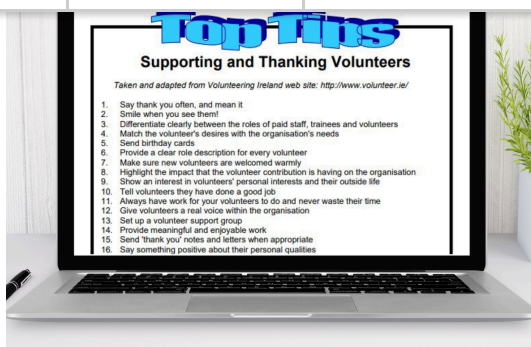
A Safe Space to be Me believe that everyone should be able to access the very best of mental health care, free in community settings. Because of this, we have established our free counselling service in both Antrim and Crumlin.

Our vision is to be able to provide a holistic and systemic approach to family and community support, building positive relationships. Within the community, we have begun the process of promoting togetherness and building bridges by the facilitation of workshops by local people for local people. With community development being at the heart of our plans for the future of the towns we work in.



A Safe Space to be Me

A Safe Space to be Me



Supporting & Thanking Volunteers

As we are on the countdown to Volunteers' Week 2025 (2-8 June 2025), this is the perfect time to recognise and appreciate all the effort your volunteers put in all year round. This document will give you some refreshing ideas on how you can thank you volunteers this year!

Supporting & Thanking Volunteers



New Members

Welcome to our newest organisational members: [The PMDD Project](#) and [The Workshop Ballynahinch CIC](#). This brings our organisational members total to 1195!

[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](#)



Volunteers in Focus: Episode 5 - Rea, ROC NI

Meet Rea, a compassionate volunteer with ROC NI, who supports their seasonal giving initiatives as a personal shopper for the School Uniform Project and upcoming Winter Coat Project 🧥 ✨

For Rea, volunteering is about more than just helping—it's about welcoming people with kindness and treating them with dignity during challenging times. She believes small gestures, like offering a warm cup of tea and assisting families in choosing essentials, go a long way in strengthening communities.

Rea finds it especially heartwarming to see the gratitude on the faces of those who leave with a smile. This fuels her passion to keep giving back and making a difference.

Volunteers in Focus highlights how acts of kindness can transform lives. Stay tuned for more inspiring stories and discover how you can make an impact ❤️ ✨

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