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SEPTEMBER 2025

What if everyone stopped volunteering?



Denise Hayward, CEO, Volunteer Now

In a new report by Works4u this question is considered in detail. It is something I know that people who understand the true level of volunteering have often reflected on. We are a society which is dependent on people gifting their time to others. However, I think that is not well understood - many people see volunteering as peripheral and something which can be safely taken for granted. This report shines a light on the strategic impact of volunteering and considers the vast range of activity which would simply stop if volunteers stopped and the wider impact that would have.

In the volunteering sector we know that things have changed since the pandemic and people are looking for greater flexibility and less formal volunteering options. However, people are still keen to volunteer and so we need to make sure we can welcome them into meaningful, flexible roles. What this report shows is the need to take support for volunteering seriously as a strategic, public policy issue and to recognise the risk to us all if volunteering is not well supported. [View the report here.](#)

- Leading Volunteers: Dealing with Conflicts, Challenges & Problems
- Attracting & Selecting Volunteers
- Keeping Adults Safe: Creating a Safe Environment
- VOLT Session: King's Award for Voluntary Service
- Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Refresher Training



[View Training Calendar](#)



Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Comes to Belfast!

We're thrilled to share that Belfast will host Fleadh Cheoil 2026 – and the countdown has officially begun! It will be coming to Belfast from 2– 9 August 2026. Fleadh Cheoil was established in 1951 and takes place every August, representing the world's biggest celebration of Irish music and culture.

As we prepare for this landmark event, the Volunteer Now Events Team are delighted to be working on the volunteer coordination, aiming to recruit over 1,000 passionate volunteers. This is a huge opportunity to showcase the warmth, talent, and community spirit in Belfast. Whether you're a long-time supporter or new to the Fleadh, there will be plenty of ways to get involved.

Stay tuned – at this stage, there are still things to be confirmed, but we are excited to begin our recruitment. If this is something you would be interested in chatting to us about further, please do reach out to the team- Events@volunteernow.co.uk



Positive Ageing Month

October is Positive Ageing Month, a month-long festival of events and activities for older people. It celebrates the contribution that older people make to the communities!

Events are taking place across local Council areas that welcome and encourage people age 50 and over to connect with others, particularly those who are vulnerable or who may be experiencing loneliness or disconnection.

Linking Generations NI have produced a handy [booklet](#) packed full of ideas and inspiration to support the development of activities during Positive Ageing Month - perfect for community groups, schools, care homes, early years and more!

Age Friendly Belfast have put together a Positive Ageing Month programme of free events and activities, full of events happening during October. You can find out more [here](#).

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Western Health & Social Care Trust and South West Age Partnership have produced a Positive Ageing Month [booklet](#) for the Fermanagh & Omagh area, full of a wide range of events and activities.

And don't forget our own Health Days for men and women age 55+ in Belfast! Find out more [here](#) and make sure you book your place in advance, as lunch will be provided.



ICO would like to hear from our sector

NICVA are excited to announce that they are starting a new project in partnership with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), to support The Voluntary and Community Sector in NI with their awareness and confidence levels when it comes to data protection.

The ICO would like to hear your views on your current levels of knowledge and confidence when it comes to data protection, and what in particular you'd like to learn more about. They will use this information to tailor future webinars and blogs so your response really will make a difference and shape the future of the project.

Click the button below to complete the short survey. Closing date is 3 October 2025 at 5pm.

NI Community & Voluntary Sector Survey

LINK, LUNCH & LEARN

You're invited to one of our
POSITIVE AGEING MONTH
VOLT Sessions

Meet, network, and enjoy a **FREE LUNCH**
with other volunteer organisations
in your local area.



Link, Lunch & Learn

Meet, network, and enjoy a **FREE LUNCH** with other volunteer organisations in your local area. It's a chance to share research, advice and information for attracting new older volunteers during October and beyond, while also celebrating the contributions of those we already work with.

Newry Mourne & Down: Tuesday 23 September 2025, 12-2pm at Clanrye Group, 2-4 St Patrick's Drive, Downpatrick, BT30 6NE. Book your place by contacting bronagh.demeillers@volunteernow.co.uk

North Down & Ards: Tuesday 23 September 2025, 12-2pm at Marquis Hall, Castle Park, 5 Abbey Street, Bangor BT20 4JE. Book your place by contacting David.Moore@volunteernow.co.uk

Armagh & Dungannon: Thursday 25 September 2025, 12-2pm at Dungannon Library. Book your place by contacting jamie.greer@volunteernow.co.uk

Belfast: Monday 29 September 2025, 12-2pm at Skainos Centre (Seaforde Room), 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast, Co. Antrim, BT4 1AF. Book your place by contacting aislinn.byrne@volunteernow.co.uk

Antrim & Newtownabbey: Monday 6 October 2025, 10:00am (lunch at 12:00pm) at Randalstown Memorial Orange Hall, Randalstown, BT41 3BH. Book your place by contacting wenda.gray@volunteernow.co.uk

Mid & East Antrim: Tuesday 7 October 2025, 11am-1pm at Larne Bowling & Tennis Club. Book your place by contacting wenda.gray@volunteernow.co.uk

8 October 2025
10-11.30am
Online



The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK. It is the MBE for volunteer groups and recognises volunteers who are making an outstanding and exceptional contribution in their communities. Join us for a FREE online information session where you will hear from Sandra Adair, the NI Representative on the National KAVS Committee, about the nomination and assessment process, as well as the benefits to all the volunteers in achieving this prestigious award.

VOLT Session: KAVS

Involving Refugees and Asylum Seekers as Volunteers

Are you an organisation that has suitable roles for refugees and asylum seekers? At Volunteer Now we have noticed an increase in enquiries for these roles from individuals and advocacy bodies, especially in the Belfast and Newtownabbey areas. It is known that many newcomers have special skills to share and are actively seeking to Integrate, meet new people and improve their English and give back. However, there can be barriers such as a need for cash expenses, Access NI, and level of English required for roles.



Please contact us with any suitable opportunities, and if already a member of Be Collective, let the Community Engagement Team know - info@volunteernow.co.uk Not on Be Collective yet? You can reach out to the team for support.

Need guidance on this topic? Click the button below.

Advice & Information for Volunteer Involving Organisations

YOUR VOICE MATTERS



**SAFEGUARDING BOARD NI AND BARNARDO'S
NI WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Speak up. Be heard. Help shape the future of child protection in Northern Ireland.

Join our sessions to share your views and influence SBNI's next 4-year Strategic Plan

We're tackling issues like domestic abuse, child exploitation, online safety, and emerging risks.
Your voice can drive real change.



Family-friendly
Activities



Refreshments
& Drinks



Travel
Reimbursement

Open to children, young people, parents,
carers, and community members - all welcome!

BARNARDO'S
NORTHERN
IRELAND

SBNI
Safeguarding Board
for Northern Ireland

Dates

Booking

& MORE INFO





Could you be our next Trustee?

We are keen to elect some new Trustees from our member organisations

We are looking for people who are strong supporters of volunteering, who are interested in good governance and who want to help to shape the services and support which Volunteer Now provides to volunteers and organisations.

Trustee's meetings are usually in the late afternoon once every 6 weeks for approx. 2 hours and if possible all Trustees get involved in at least one subcommittee.

If you think this role is of interest to you, please get in touch with our CEO Denise for a chat and more details at denise.hayward@volunteernow.co.uk or call on 07850 851814.

SIGN UP!

Membership of Disability Action Network

Disability Action is a growing network of organisations and individuals working together for inclusion and change. Membership is now **free of charge** everyone!

Benefits

- Advertising through DANI social media and website.
- Receive campaign support from DANI staff and the network.
- Being involved in shaping our policies and nominating our board.
- Informing staff on the issues people with disabilities face in NI, ensuring they're heard.
- One day's free use of DANI's accessible meeting rooms with a 30% discount on future bookings (excluding catering).
- Be the first to know about any upcoming information days and training sessions.
- Access to a members platform (in progress) to share news and find opportunities.
- Access to free video workshops later on in the year. (in progress)

Membership works both ways, we'll support you and you'll help us push for disabled people's rights in Northern Ireland!

If you're interested in joining, use the link or scan the QR code below!

<https://forms.office.com/e/YuevGjvgmvt>





Are you a group that operates in the Belfast City Council area? If so, we are delighted to offer you FREE online capacity building Volunteer Management training!

Attracting & Selecting Volunteers | Thur 25 Sept | 10am-1pm

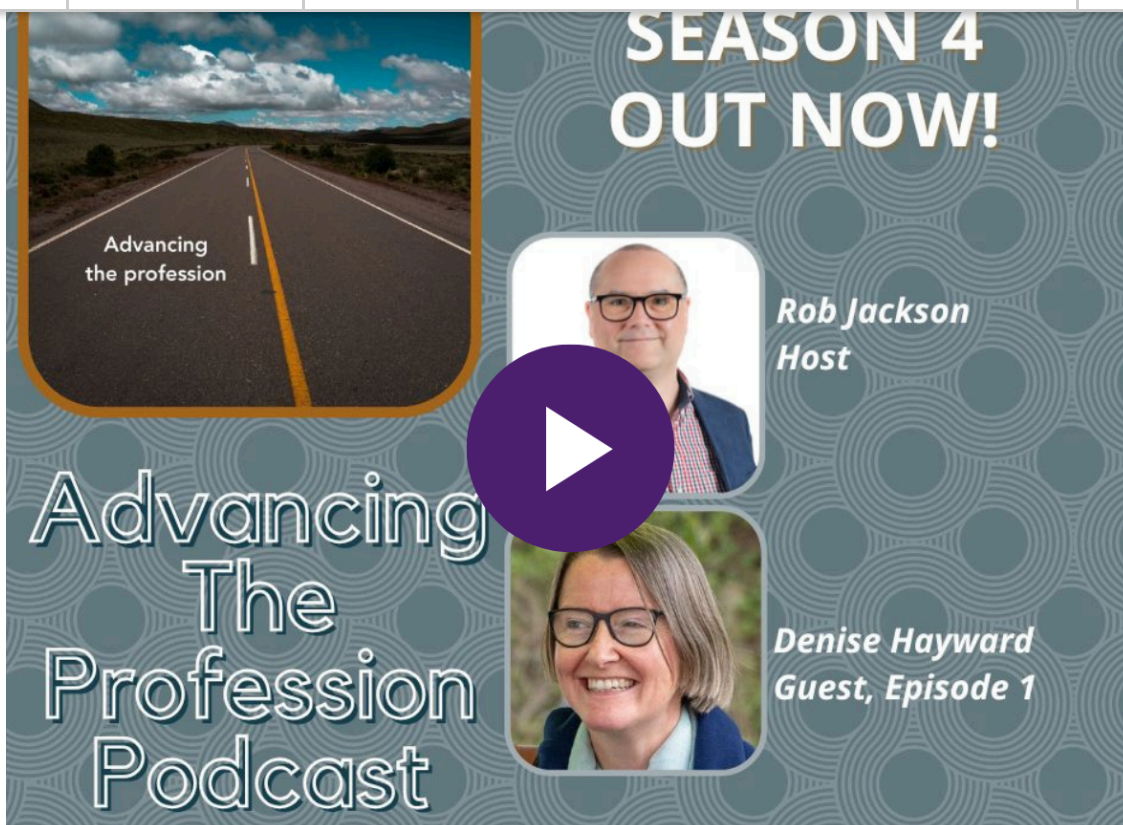
Managing & Motivating Volunteers | Wed 22 Oct | 10am-1pm

Measuring Impact in Volunteering | Thur 6 Nov | 10am-1pm

Succession Planning | Tue 11 Nov | 10am-12noon

Leading Volunteers: Dealing with Conflicts, Challenges
& Problems | Tue 16 Dec | 10am-1pm

Find Out More



Advancing the Profession Podcast

The new season of Advancing the Profession podcast has started and the first guest is our very own Denise Hayward! The series, by Rob Jackson, is all about advanced volunteer engagement practice. Going beyond the basics of working with volunteers, it explores a range of issues designed to help deepen and strengthen your practice as a professional leader of volunteer engagement.



Introducing: Bronagh Demeillers Volunteering Support Officer

Hi, I'm Bronagh and I'm the new Volunteering Support Officer for Newry, Mourne & Down.

I first started volunteering when i was 16 years old and I have kept going in a variety of ways since. Meeting new people and getting some experience were my motivations starting out, but now it is about making a difference and connecting with and supporting the community.

I have a greater appreciation of just how much of a difference volunteers can make to the organisation and to the wider community but also a greater awareness of the challenges many groups face.

to meet the dedicated volunteers who give their time, skills, experience and energy to causes that matter. And of course, to meeting the people who might be ready to have their first or next volunteering experience.

So, if you've ever thought about volunteering or would like to get back involved, there's never been a better time. There's a role out there for you— and even just a few hours of your time can make a big difference to people, projects, and communities. You'll get that feel good factor of doing some worthwhile. What are you waiting for? Get involved.

Contact Bronagh

Member Spotlight

Hourglass

Hourglass is the only UK-wide charity dedicated to calling time on the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people. With more than 25 years' experience and expertise, their mission is to listen, advise and support vulnerable older people and all those affected by abuse and neglect throughout the UK.



Hourglass



Publication of the Month:

Barriers to Volunteering

This document outlines some barriers (and solutions) people may face when considering volunteering. It is an important point of reference for any volunteer involving organisation. When considering recruitment procedures and materials, organisations should directly address potential barriers and alleviate any fears volunteers may have, e.g. communicate that opportunities allow volunteers to work in groups, as a method to alleviate any fear of working alone or in isolation.

By communicating these solutions head on, you can make your volunteer opportunities far more appealing and attractive to potential volunteers. This document gives some ideas and suggested solutions.

Barriers to Volunteering



New Members

Welcome to our newest organisational members: [Spinal Injury Association](#), [The School Uniform Bank](#), [Visiting Angels NI](#), [Flying Fields Farm CIC](#), [Royal Ulster Agricultural Society](#) and [Building It Better NI](#). This brings our organisational members total to 1226!

[Become A Member](#)

COURSES

All you need to know about volunteer management in 8 hours of learning!



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 8 - Nephrite, USPCA

Meet Nephrite, a dedicated charity store volunteer with USPCA 🐾💙

Driven by her love for animals, Nephrite has found a way to turn her passion into meaningful action. While the organisation works hands-on to relieve animal suffering, her role in sorting donations, supporting sales, and raising funds plays a vital part in their mission.

Volunteering has also helped Nephrite step out of her comfort zone, boosting her confidence and connecting her with others. Her journey shows that following your passion doesn't just open doors to making a difference—it also enables personal growth.

Nephrite challenges the perception that charity store volunteering is just for older

inclusive team.

Volunteers in Focus celebrates how your interests can lead you to a role that truly makes an impact. Stay tuned for more inspiring stories and get involved 🌟🦁

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