

View this email in your browser



NOVEMBER 2025

Befriending Week & AGM



Denise Hayward, CEO, Volunteer Now

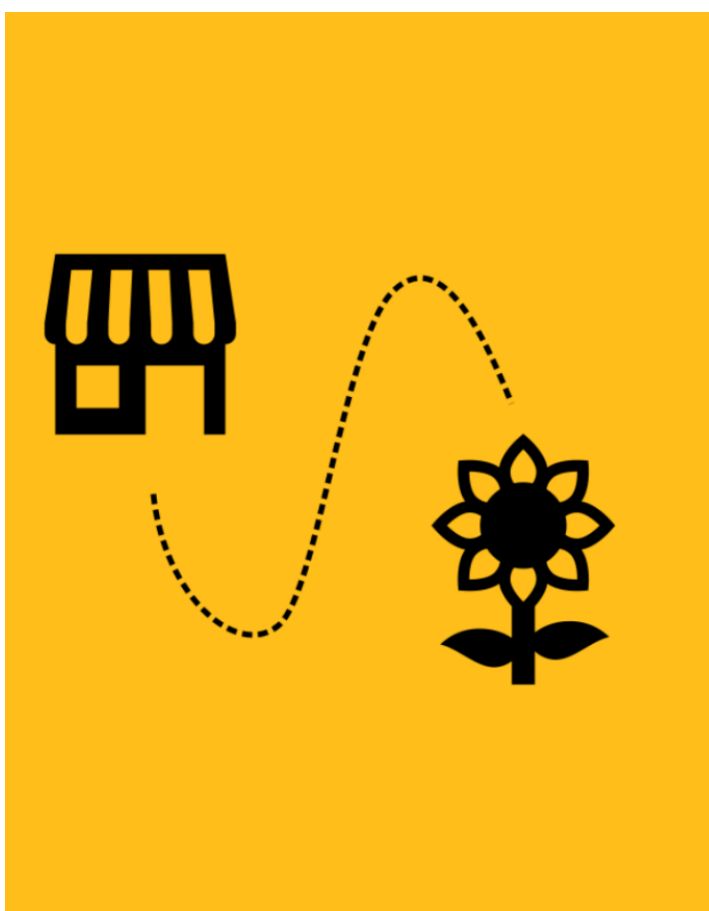
During Befriending Week in November, Volunteer Now published a report of a survey of organisations which are members of the Befriending Network in Northern Ireland. The findings of the report point to the huge impact befrienders are making in the lives of the people they support. However, it also highlighted the challenges these organisations are facing in recruiting volunteers and in particular the additional struggles they are facing with bureaucracy, particularly Access NI. Older people are finding the online Access NI system a particular challenge and it is evident that all organisations involving volunteers as befrienders need to consider how they support people through this process. To read the full report, [click here](#).

Volunteer Now held its 15th AGM on 13 November. We were pleased to be hosted by PwC in their offices in Belfast. Stephen Gray, Digital Transformation Manager at Mindwise gave an excellent presentation about AI for volunteer involving organisations. We said thank you to a number of great trustees who are stepping down and welcomed a wonderful group of new people who have stepped forward to serve on the board. The AGM approved the annual report and accounts, and a video overview can be seen [here](#).



- The UK's: Recruit, Retain, Reward Volunteers
- Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Workshop - Listen, Speak, Lead
- Induction, Support & Supervision of Volunteers
- Keeping Adults Safe: Implementing Standards for Good Practice
- Keeping Children Safe: Designated Officer Refresher Training

View Training Calendar



How it works:

1. A business posts an offer
2. You make a request
3. Your request is accepted
4. You collect the item(s)

To get started, visit
www.agoodthing.org.uk

www.agoodthing.org.uk

hello@agoodthing.org.uk

 [agoodthing_uk](#)

 [agoodthing.org.uk](#)



A Good Thing

A Good Thing is an award-winning non-profit online platform that matches wonderful UK charities with organisations that have things to donate: helping charities while providing organisations with an ethical means of disposing of unwanted goods.

We know what it's like to run a charity - money and resources are precious, but so is your time. And you need to focus on the core services you deliver.

Our aim is to make it easy for charities of all sizes to get hold of the right sorts of things to help them achieve their goals.

Whether it's laptops for staff, gifts for the people you're helping, furniture for the office or even a place to meet, A Good Thing will connect you to local businesses that can offer you what you're in need of.



Be part of the Fleadh

Celebrating Together **2-9 August**



Join the Volunteer Now Events Team

- Range of volunteer roles
- Training provided
- 4 hour shifts

 events@volunteernow.co.uk

 004428 90232020

Scan here and sign up to Volunteer



 **Comhaltas**
Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann
Belfast 2026



Calling all volunteers - Be the heartbeat of The Fleadh!

Working with Belfast City Council, Volunteer Now are seeking 1,000 plus volunteers to help with the smooth running of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Belfast.

Belfast will host the world's biggest celebration of Irish music and culture, from Sunday 2 August to Sunday 9 August 2026. Qualifying competitors from all over the world will showcase the very best of traditional music, song, dance and language in All-Ireland competitions.

know how to get around the city, where to find performance venues, access facilities and more. Volunteers will be instrumental in making the 8-day festival a success.

Every performance, smiling face and unforgettable moment will be made possible by those who give of their time, energy and support. A range of volunteering roles will be available including street ambassadors, team leaders and customer services. Every volunteer will receive specialist training from Volunteer Now.

Why volunteer?

There's such a feel-good factor to volunteering and becoming a Fleadh volunteer offers the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills and be part of a community. It's also a chance to experience the energy of this special event from the inside.

Want to find out more?

To complete an expression of interest and begin your volunteer journey, click the image above or the button below.

Be Part of the Fleadh

Community Investment Programme 2026-2029

Mid Ulster District Council has launched a redesigned Community Investment Programme to support and strengthen the community and voluntary sector across the district.

Formerly the Council's Community & Voluntary Sector Grant Aid Programme, this programme will open earlier on Monday 24 November 2025 to allow groups additional time to prepare their strongest possible application. Closing date: **12noon, Friday 20 February 2026.**



Cathairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Community Investment Programme

2026 - 2029



midulstercouncil.org/communityinvestment

Community Investment Programme



Good Relations Awards 2026

Northern Ireland's premier Awards for peacebuilding will spotlight "The Power of Everyday Peace" in transforming local communities.

The Good Relations Awards 2026 are now open for nominations, inviting the public to shine a light on the dedicated individuals, groups, and projects working tirelessly to build lasting peace throughout the region.

Delivered by the Community Relations Council (CRC) in partnership with The Executive Office (TEO), the Awards are the premier platform for recognising the vital role that grassroots efforts play in fostering understanding, respect and cultural diversity here. This year's focus is on "The Power of Everyday Peace", celebrating the consistent, tireless efforts that bridge divides.

Seven Categories to Honour Community Impact

The Awards feature seven categories designed to recognise diverse aspects of good relations work:

1. The Community Relations Council Exceptional Achievement Award
2. Good Relations Volunteer of the Year Award
3. Good Relations Community Champion Award
4. Good Relations Youth Award (Under 25)
5. Good Relations Connecting Communities Project of the Year Award
6. Good Relations 'Housing for All' Award
7. Sport for Good Award.

The Awards celebrate those who go above and beyond to bridge divides and champion inclusivity. Winners in each category will receive a commemorative trophy in recognition of their exceptional commitment.

If you know a local individual, group, or organisation in the region that deserves recognition for their outstanding commitment to peacebuilding, nominate them today. The closing date for nominations is **12noon, Friday 19 December 2025**.

Nominate Today

ABC Funding Opportunities

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council is offering financial assistance to eligible groups in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector for the period **1 April 2026 - 31 March 2027** for:-

- Running costs (for eligible organisations)
- Programmes
- Events

Funding is available through the following grant programmes:

- Community Grants
- Arts, Culture and Events Grants
- Good Relations Grants
- International Linkages Grant

Applications are open at 9.00am on Monday 3 November to 12 noon Friday 28 November 2025.



armaghibanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk



Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council



**The King's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups

Congratulations!

16 Volunteer Groups in NI Receive the King's Award for Voluntary Service!

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. 231 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 in Northern Ireland are getting recognition and we send our congratulations to:

- Ballymacash Sports Academy Ltd
- Care for Cancer
- Clarendon Development Association
- Community Relations Forum
- Culmore Community Partnership Ltd
- Downpatrick and County Down Railway Society Ltd
- Foyle Sailability
- Good Morning Ballymena
- Live Life Well-Being Centre & Social Enterprises
- Mallusk Community Action Group
- Mid Ulster Victims Empowerment (MUVE)
- Omagh Gardening Society
- Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers
- Sensory Kids
- St. Columb's Cathedral Volunteers
- The Mid Ulster Talking Newspaper Association

Do you involve volunteers? Are they making an exceptional impact on a local community? You could be awarded a King's Award for Voluntary Service - nominations for the 2026 award are open and will close on 1 December 2025. Click below for full details on how to nominate.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service



Member Spotlight

Dunlewey Addiction Services

At Dunlewey Addiction Services, our primary goal is to offer exceptional support and care to individuals and families grappling with addiction issue and concerns. Our mission statement, "Unlocking the door to personal growth, learning and change" underscores our conviction that every individual possesses the potential for positive change within themselves.

Dunlewey Addiction Services

Befriending Network Survey

Befriending Week ran from 1-7 November and Volunteer Now are delighted to be able to share the following report, which investigated the challenges and successes of befriending schemes across Northern Ireland. The purpose of the report is to show the role that befriending plays, but to also highlight to coordinators that there is commonality in the strategic and operational challenges being faced.



Befriending remains a crucial volunteer role within communities, providing companionship to people who might be experiencing loneliness. Huge numbers of people from all different backgrounds experience some form of loneliness and as a result, schemes across Northern Ireland are in place to help anybody! It is clear that these organisations need more support if they are going to continue to grow, develop and thrive.

Please feel free to take some time to read the short report and learn a little bit more about the impact befriending can make.

Befriending Network Survey



New Members

Welcome to our newest organisational members: [VIEW Digital](#), [American Museum & Gardens](#), Simon Community (Portadown) & Steering Positive Minds CIC. This brings our organisational members total to 1232!

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



Volunteer Now's 2024/25 Wrapped is here!

Find out what we got up to in 2024/25.

Copyright © 2025 Volunteer Now, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#) from this list.



This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Volunteer Now · Skainos Ctr · 239 Newtownards Road · Belfast, County Antrim BT4 1AF · United Kingdom