
Volunteering in Argyll and Bute – update

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the CPP Management Committee with an overview of the development to date of a strategic approach to the support and development of a volunteering strategy and plan in Argyll and Bute. The report proposes to update the 2020 local volunteering framework and develop a new local plan learning from work during the pandemic and making adaptations to address challenges arising from the cost-of-living crisis.

2.0 Recommendations

The CPP Management Committee are asked to:

- Note that a local Strategic Volunteering Framework was presented to CPP in March 2020¹ which arose out of the 2019 CLD inspection and the Scottish Government's Volunteering for All 2019 national framework².
- To note the publication of Scotland's volunteering action plan³ and the request to CPPs to develop local strategies and plans supported by the TSI and the local authority.
- To agree that the 2020 local framework be updated in the light of new circumstances and to produce a new local plan which will support the priorities of the new LOIP.
- To note interim measures taken by the TSI and CPP members to support volunteering.

3.0 Background and context

Scotland's Volunteering Action Plan, published in 2022, has four specific end goals. These are:-

- **Increase volunteering participation** by focusing on non-volunteers and lapsed volunteers, and especially those who'll gain most benefit.
- **Widen access to volunteering** by understanding and reducing the barriers to participation and supporting community-based, 'place-making' activities.
- **Listen to volunteers** by ensuring that the volunteer 'voice' is heard and that volunteers help make the decisions that affect them.

¹ https://www.argylltsi.org/uploads/1/2/3/3/123356694/volunteering_strategy.pdf

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/volunteering-national-framework/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-volunteering-action-plan/#:~:text=Scotland's%20volunteering%20action%20plan%20aims,and%20its%20impact%20on%20society.>

- **Provide great experiences** whereby volunteers feel supported, valued and recognised for their contribution.

Volunteering by its very nature is particularly difficult to map partly because a great deal of volunteering is informal in nature and as such is difficult to capture, measure and evaluate. However, there are clear themes demonstrating that the pandemic resulted in a massive increase in informal volunteering⁴ but that these volunteers have been hard to keep hold of as they returned to work post-pandemic. There is also concern within the third sector about the potential for job substitution as public sector cuts begin to take effect across the UK.

The implications for volunteering of the cost-of-living crisis are important to acknowledge particularly in terms of encouraging new volunteers from a wider range of backgrounds and experiences.

4.0 Detail

4.1 Volunteering conference 9th December 2022, Volunteering survey and health check

A volunteer conference was held in December 2022 and was attended by over 55 Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs), local partners and stakeholders with presentations from Volunteer Scotland and a volunteering provider with expertise in supporting volunteers through trauma.

Key findings from the volunteer survey are below:-

- Many VIOs are struggling to recruit to volunteering roles
- Volunteers are fatigued
- There was support for a single volunteering system to take the administrative burden out of managing and onboarding volunteers
- There was some support for exploring a local/regional incentive scheme similar to the bluelight scheme for health and social care workers
- There is a limited culture in Argyll and Bute about claiming volunteer expenses
- Most volunteers were female and of an older demographic
- The cost-of-living crisis has not had a huge impact on volunteers who responded but it has had an impact on their organisations and their families.

It should be noted that the sample size was small but supports feedback received at the conference and national research⁵. A fuller report will be made available on the TSI website (www.argylltsi.gov.uk) and will be published on 22nd March 2023.

Attendees were keen to meet twice a year to share experiences, knowledge and skills.

⁴ <https://scvo.scot/policy/research/evidence-library/2022-scottish-household-survey-2020-results-volunteer-scotland-summary-analysis>

⁵ <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Quarterly-bulletin-1.pdf>

4.2 A local volunteering strategy and plan

Given the changed landscape since the publication of the local 2020 Volunteering Strategy and Framework it is suggested that a coalition of interested partners work to produce a local action plan to support volunteering locally as envisioned in the national plan. The TSI will work together with the local authority's Community Development Team as well as through the Community Learning and Development Partnership, the NHS and the wider third and social enterprise sector. The aim being to develop a new strategy and plan for Q3/Q4 2023.

4.3 Current activity

Organisations and localities are in the meantime managing as best they can and an excellent example of local coordination took place in Helensburgh in February 2023 organised by the local secondary school and community council. A volunteer fair was held and was well attended by organisations to aid the cross pollination of surplus volunteers with unfilled roles. It is suggested that the local CLLD partnerships explore whether such a model could be replicated in their localities.

In addition, the TSI is exploring a volunteer support package for Volunteer Involving Organisations (not dissimilar to Employee Assistance Programmes) and is working to encourage uptake of the Team Kinetic volunteer management platform and is in active discussions with large users of volunteers to migrate to the system.

5.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	A new local strategy would seek to support the priorities of the new LOIP.
Consultations, Previous considerations	Volunteer conference December 2022 and ongoing work as a new plan is developed.
Resources	The council, LiveArgyll and the TSI have existing resources able to support the promotion of volunteering
Prevention	
Equalities	The cost of living crisis presents a challenge in being able to encourage a wide age and socio-economic demographic to enjoy volunteering opportunities. A new local plan will seek to address this.

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Links

Argyll and Bute Volunteer Strategy and Framework 2020 –

https://www.argylltsi.org/uploads/1/2/3/3/123356694/volunteering_strategy.pdf

Scotland's National Volunteer Framework 2019-

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/volunteering-national-framework/>

Scotland's Volunteering Action Plan 2022 –

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-volunteering-action-plan/#:~:text=Scotland's%20volunteering%20action%20plan%20aims,and%20its%20impact%20on%20society.>