



Volunteer Strategy

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1. Introduction

"Volunteering is the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, the environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one's own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary." (Scottish Government)

Voluntary effort is at the core of community empowerment and development. Sustaining thriving communities for the future will depend on harnessing the enthusiasm, creativity, skills and abilities of our local volunteers.

Volunteers contribute hugely to the wellbeing of Dumfries and Galloway as a great place to live and work. Volunteering in our region is well above the Scottish average and our clubs, community halls, museums, libraries, societies, community councils etc. all benefit hugely from the number of person hours which volunteers give.

Research has shown that volunteering not only has a positive impact on local communities by building a caring, safe and cohesive society of active citizens but also offers a range of other benefits, including the development of new skills, enhancing employability, generating feelings of motivation and achievement and opening up an exciting network of people and experiences. We want to provide an environment for volunteering to flourish.

Our Council acknowledges the importance of its enabling role in ensuring the sustainability of communities due to increasing budgetary restraints. It also acknowledges the contribution of other organisations, particularly our Interface, Third Sector, Dumfries and Galloway, in promoting, coordinating and celebrating volunteering.

Volunteers already express a high level of satisfaction in their work with the Council and the support they receive. However volunteers are diverse in their reasons for volunteering and one size does not fit all. So when working with volunteers it is important that our practice takes into account the individual needs of our volunteers and does not impose on them arrangements which do not suit their needs or circumstances. Our Strategy will ensure that we tailor our arrangements to get the very best arrangement in place across all our services and all our communities.

2. Principles

We have identified five principles that guide our approach to volunteering:

- People are our best assets and our Council will work with communities and individuals to maximise their voluntary contribution to our services and activities.
- Recognition and appreciation of volunteers is a fundamental aspect of our arrangements - volunteers will be treated with respect and regarded as a member of the team.
- Volunteer contributions are complementary to the responsibilities of our staff and Elected Members
- Volunteers are given appropriate support to enable them to fulfil their role within our Council
- Our Volunteer profile should reflect the population of our region in terms of our demographic profile, particularly in relation to Protected Characteristics minority communities

3.Context

3.1 National

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (CE(S)A) 2015 and associated Guidance and Regulation – this legislation aims to empower individuals and communities shifting the balance of power clearly towards communities from public sector providers through a number of different requirements including locality planning; community asset transfer and engagement.

Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services – this Commission, chaired by Campbell Christie, highlighted that if they are to be effective, public services must empower individuals and communities by involving them in both the design and delivery of services. It advocated a fundamental overhaul of the relationships between institutions responsible for delivering public services and the needs of individuals and communities

Volunteer Coordination - At national level, promotion and development of volunteering is undertaken by Volunteer Scotland (VS). It advertises and promotes volunteering opportunities through a variety of channels including face to face consultations, local radio and web promotion assisting potential volunteers and third sector organisations with all aspects of volunteering.

3.2 Regional

Dumfries and Galloway Community Learning and Development Partners' Strategic Plan 2015-18 – Outcome 6 –The capacity of the community learning and development sector has been increased through maximising joint training and development opportunities

Third Sector Interface – Third Sector, Dumfries and Galloway_- the need for a strategic approach to the development of volunteering in Dumfries and Galloway is recognised and our Council, along with the Scottish Government, funds the Third Sector, Dumfries and Galloway to provide leadership and co-ordination for the volunteering in our region.

The Dumfries and Galloway Third Sector Interface promotes and co-ordinates volunteering activities across the region and produces a Best- Value Toolkit for organisational policy development around volunteering. The Interface also advertises volunteering opportunities on its website and assists third sector organisations with all aspects of volunteering. As a key partner, the Interface has expertise in the promotion of volunteering opportunities and can advise on matching volunteers with opportunities

Volunteer Recruitment Forum. – there is a local forum which brings together organisations involved in volunteering to exchange ideas, co-ordinate activity and develop best practice.

NHSD&G - NHSD&G is currently reviewing its volunteer policy, particularly in relation to the new Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary..

3.3 Our Council

Priorities and Commitments – Priority Four; to be an inclusive Council' and a specific Commitment 'ensure that local people and communities are at the heart of our decision-making'

Communities Directorate – vision of the Directorate is ‘The vision for Communities Directorate in the Council is about: “enabling communities to take increased responsibility for the prioritisation, management and ownership of services and community assets”.

Reshape Programme – the Programme agreed by Full Council in December 2014 provided for a Service Review on Enabling Community Empowerment and its findings were reported to the Customer and Communities Committee in March 2016. The Delivery Plan is current being implemented.

Budget position - At a time of increasing fiscal restraints and increasing demands on public services the need to do things differently has never been so pressing. In common with other public services, the Council cannot continue to deliver services in the same way. The positive is that there have never been greater opportunities for Councils to work more closely with key partners in the public, private and third sector to ensure that our communities thrive and flourish.

4. Development of the Strategy

Our Strategy has been built on feedback from volunteers, communities, individuals and community groups about previous and current Council; benchmarking and experience from other councils; national and best practice advice; consultation with Elected Members, local partners and hard to reach groups; and Impact Assessment.

4.1 Feedback from communities, individuals and community councils:

- Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Research with community groups, community councils, representative groups of minority communities; staff focus groups; and individual interviews – October 2015

4.2 Benchmarking and experience of other organisations

- Analysis of Strategies and discussions with a wide range of other organisations in Scotland, particularly Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dundee and East Ayrshire Councils; and LGBT Youth Scotland.

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4.3 National and best practice advice

Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations, Volunteer Network Scotland and Voluntary Action Scotland

4.4 Consultation with Elected Members

- Briefing and discussion session – February 2017

4.5 Consultation with local partners

- Community Learning and Development Partners' Strategy Policy Group; and Trades Unions – discussions – February 2017

4.6 Consultation with the Community Planning Equality and Diversity Group

- Representative organisations for Protected Characteristics particularly age, disability, gender, race, sexuality and religion – facilitated discussion – February 2017

4.7 Stakeholder Impact Assessment

9 positive impacts; 4 neutral; 0 negative – February 2017

4.8 Feedback from our volunteers told us:

- Clarity of the advertising of opportunities; it's not always obvious how to volunteer with the Council or what opportunities are available
- Induction for volunteers requires clarity and consistency
- Volunteers value knowing who their supervisor is and what the arrangements are for supervision and support
- Volunteers want to know their obligations and responsibilities
- Volunteers want to be safe - insurance, PVGs and Health and Safety are important to them

- Day to day management issues such as training, access to resources, expenses are important. Not all volunteers want access to training but many value it.
- Many volunteers value a thanks and recognition and some would like to see consistency in how the Council recognises and rewards its volunteers. Some volunteers see their volunteering as a route to employment and greatly value opportunities to attain local and national awards.

5. Our Objectives

In order to achieve the policy intent of the Strategy we have identified five specific Objectives which will shape the detailed activity we undertake:

Objective 1: To enhance the range of volunteering opportunities with Dumfries and Galloway Council

Objective 2: To improve the recruitment, management and development of our volunteers

Objective 3: To endeavor to have our volunteer base reflects the population profile of our region

Objective 4: To recognise, reward and celebrate our volunteers

Objective 5 To co-ordinate our volunteer arrangements with other public and third sector partners at local and national level

6.Delivering and Monitoring the Impact of the Strategy

Delivering the Strategy

- We develop and finalise Guidance with the full involvement of stakeholders – Council managers, volunteers themselves and national bodies to ensure that we achieve a consistent approach across all Council Services to the contents of a Volunteer Agreement; payment; access to Council equipment and systems management, recording; and reporting.
- Training and development
 - We will develop training for officers who are supervising volunteers
 - Officers will be trained in measuring the impact of volunteering through Volunteer Scotland and in liaison with our Third Sector Interface
- Maximising technology
Getting the right balance of security of our Council's ICT network while ensuring volunteers have access to the systems and information they need is already under discussion.

Monitoring the Strategy

- Business Plans –there is already an Indicator in the Communities and Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning Business Plans about volunteer support for the delivery of Council services – at present this covers leisure and support; youth work, adult learning, museums and arts. The refreshed Business Plans will enhance that performance information for other aspects of our activity. This ensures that there will be six monthly reports to Committees. In addition the Communities Business Plan will include specific Projects about celebrating the contribution of volunteers and the impact of this Strategy
- The Equality Monitoring Form which has been adopted by local partners will be used to monitor the profile of our volunteers and enable us to identify and take positive action for any under-represented groups. This will form part of our Council's Equality Mainstreaming Report.

6. Evaluating the Impact of the Strategy

There is a range of tools available to measure the impact of volunteering – on the individuals themselves and the contribution they make to their community and organisations.

The Volunteer Action Toolkit 'Measuring Impact of Volunteering Good Practice Guide' will be applied and in association with local partners, officers will be trained in appropriate techniques and an evaluation programme will be developed and reported on over the lifetime of the Strategy.

Appendix 1

Strategies and Plans that link to the Volunteer Strategy

Dumfries and Galloway Council Anti-Poverty Strategy

Dumfries and Galloway Community Learning and Development Partners' Strategic Plan 2015-18

Dumfries and Galloway Council Digital and ICT Strategy

Dumfries and Galloway Council Community Participation and Engagement Strategy

Dumfries and Galloway Council Community Asset Transfer Strategy

Dumfries and Galloway Council Equality Outcomes Action Plan

Volunteer Strategy Action Plan

| Action | Link to Objective(s) | timescale | lead |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Finalise and publish new Guidance for volunteering with Dumfries and Galloway | 1,2,3 and 4 | 30 September 2017 | CD&EM |
| Training for officers in supervising volunteers | 1, 2 and 4 | 30 November 2017 | CD&EM/All Directorates |
| Membership and Chartermark of Volunteer Scotland | 2,4 and 5 | 31 March 2018 | CD&EM |
| Establish information security arrangements | 2 | 30 September 2017 | B&TSM |
| Develop performance information for new Business Plans | 5 | 30 November 2017 | CD&EM/BIM |
| Celebration of Volunteer contributions | 2, 4 and 5 | 31 March 2018 | CD&EM |

CD&EM – Community Development and Empowerment Manager

B&TSM – Business and Technology Solutions Manager

BIM – Business Improvement Manager