

Cross-Party Group on Volunteering AGM

26th October 2023, 1-2pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Foysol Choudhury MSP
Jeremy Balfour MSP

Invited guests

Amanda Purdie, Amma Birth Companions
Jenny Block, Amma Birth Companions
Nikki Fyfe, Denis Law Legacy Trust

Non-MSP Group Members

Sarah Latto, Volunteer Scotland (Secretariat)
Margaret Starkie, Volunteer Scotland
Alan Stevenson, Volunteer Scotland
Debbie Maltman, Volunteer Scotland
Kelly Eagle, Volunteer Scotland
Ann Wilson, TAC
Heather Robertson
Wendy Diack, Cruse Scotland
Emma Kyles, YouthLink
Rebecca McDonald, Edinburgh Children's Hospital
Natalie Masterson, Stirling Voluntary Enterprise
Iona Wright, Centre Stage
Carolynn Malone, Housing Options Scotland
Mike Melvin, ACVO
Louise Bluett, Volunteer East Lothian
Caroline Johnstone, CVS Inverclyde
Sarah Murray, RVS
David Maxwell, Volunteer Glasgow
Emma Christie, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action
Sue Bowen, Dyslexia Scotland
Sarah Cleary, Volunteer Edinburgh
Douglas Smith, Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire
Caroline Fraser, Edinburgh Children's Hospital
Tracey Passway, NHS Tayside
Laura Maguire, Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire

Sarah Van Putten, Lifecare Edinburgh
Elizabeth Wigelsworth, CHSS
Susan Hunter, Befriending Networks
Jason Henderson, SCVO
Helen Fleming
Kirsteen McDonald
Tracey Brown, Marie Curie
Luthien Lark, Highland TSI
Stuart McIver
Beth Cowen, CVS Falkirk
Rob Murray, British Red Cross
Chris Ringland, Evangelical Alliance Scotland

Apologies

Ian McCall, Paths for All
Georgia Artus, Vintage Vibes
Karen Garrott-Russell, Stroke Association
Kiera Russell, Rowan Alba
Victoria McRae, CVS Falkirk
Abi Clarke, TSI Moray

Agenda Item 1: Minutes of Previous Meeting

Previous meeting was on the 29th March 2023.

The minutes were proposed by Jeremy Balfour MSP and seconded by Margaret Starkie

Agenda item 2: Election of Officer Bearers

Jeremy Balfour MSP was proposed as co-convenor by Foysol Choudhury MSP. This was seconded by Rob Murray

Foysol Choudhury MSP was proposed as co-convenor by Jeremy Balfour MSP. This was seconded by Susan Hunter.

Sarah Latto from Volunteer Scotland was proposed as the secretariat by Foysol Choudhury. This was seconded by Jeremy Balfour.

AGM business was concluded.

Agenda item 3: Volunteering and Human Rights

Sarah Latto from Volunteer Scotland shared a presentation exploring the relationship between volunteering and Human Rights legislation that is being proposed by the Scottish Government.

Sarah first explained what the Government is proposing to include in the Human Rights Bill. She then explored the links between volunteering and human rights, specifically that volunteers protect human rights of others through services that support access to human rights and services that promote and uphold human rights, and that participation in volunteering should be protected as a contributor to both the right to physical and mental health and the right to participate in cultural life.

Sarah then shared some examples of rights-based volunteer roles that support advice and advocacy, upholding dignity, participation/representation and access to culture. She shared feedback from the a recent Policy Champions Network meeting on this theme, then shared the recommendations from Volunteer Scotland's response to the Human Rights Bill consultation:

- Alignment with the Volunteering Action Plan in the Human Rights Bill.
- Reporting requirements on volunteer rights, in line with the Volunteer Charter.
- Resource addressing barriers to participation in both volunteering and decision-making.
- Additional resource for organisations delivering rights-based services.
- Commitment to Fair Funding principles.

There were no questions.

Agenda item 4: Rights Volunteering in Action

Emma O'Shea from Impact Funding Partners first shared an overview of the Volunteering Support Fund, including key stats about funded organisations.

Fiona Inglis from Impact Funding Partners then shared how the administration of the Volunteering Support Fund adopts a 'more than just money' approach by offering funded organisations training, network and skill sharing opportunities. She also shared further guidance they provide to organisation, including the principles of the Volunteer Charter.

Fiona then handed over to Amanda Purdie and Jenny Block from Amma Birth Companions who shared information about their volunteer programme. Volunteers support birthing people and parents in need of additional care. Many of their clients are refugees, asylum seekers or from marginalised communities. Volunteers are trained to deliver culturally safe support. They have over 100 volunteers, and constantly refine recruitment methods to ensure they are accessible, and have a range of measures planned, including the development of a Lived Experienced advisory group. Their VSF funding has allowed them to recruit a Volunteer Manager, bring in external training facilitators and provide volunteer expenses.

Nikki from Denis Law Legacy Trust then shared information about their volunteering programme. Through a range of Streetsport programmes, they empower young people to be confident citizens with a particular focus on Aberdeen's most deprived communities. They have also instigated the Granite City Speaks forum which empowers young people to influence decisions that affect them. They engage a range of volunteers, often international students, which promotes all parties experiencing

different cultures and backgrounds. The help they have had from Impact Funding Partners has been exceptional.

Foysol Choudhury commended the speakers and extended an offer to promote volunteering programmes in parliament or for groups to visit him in parliament.

Questions/Comments:

Chris Ringland from Evangelical Alliance UK extended an invitation to Amma Birthing Partners to link them up with other faith communities.

Susan Hunter from Befriending Networks said that it is great to see the approach of recruiting international students as volunteers by DLLT, and that it appears a really sustainable way with lots of benefits for everyone.

David Maxwell from Volunteer Glasgow asked about the total level of funding awarded through the Volunteering Support Fund, and how this has changed over time. Diane from Impact Funding Partners agreed to share this information so that Sarah Latto could circulate with the meeting notes and presentations.

Rob Murray from British Red Cross reflected on the question about funding, and asked what efforts are being made to make the Volunteering Support Fund available to more organisations that are currently not able to apply. Fiona agreed that this would be good but highlighted that the VSF is provided by the Scottish Government and they set fund restrictions. Sarah Latto said that Volunteer Scotland request addition dedicated funding for volunteering in much of their policy influence work, and Alan Stevenson from Volunteer Scotland highlighted ongoing work to develop a Funding Consortium as part of the implementation of the Volunteering Action Plan.

Tracey Passway from NHS Tayside commented that she wanted to acknowledge the health and wellbeing benefit of the project examples and then of course the health advantages of volunteering.

Luthien Lark asked Nikki from DLLT if there are any specific ways that she managed to reach those furthest from volunteering. Nikki said that most of their volunteers started as participants, and that this helps to build good relationships and push them towards volunteering as a positive pathway.

Agenda item 5: Next Steps and Close

Foysol confirmed that the next meeting of the CPG will likely be in January and that Sarah Latto will be in touch with a date soon.

Foysol then thanked all speakers and closed the session.