

Cross-Party Group on Volunteering

Wednesday 27th March 2024, 1.00 – 2.00 pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Foysol Choudhury MSP

Jeremy Balfour MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Margaret Starkie – Volunteer Scotland – Secretariat

Fraser Clark - Youth VIP

Lauren Alexandra Arthur – Youth VIP

Georgia Artus – Vintage Vibes

Helen Fleming – Helen Fleming Freelancing

Emma Kyles – Youthlink Scotland

Barri Millar – St Johns Scotland

Kirsten Worsely – The Breastfeeding Network

Amanda Simpson – University of West of Scotland

Annalise Gillian - University of West of Scotland

Magdalena Clark – Volunteer Midlothian

Kiera Mar Russell – Rowan Alba

Ruth Hutton – Scottish Government

Wendy Diack – CRUSE Scotland Bereavement Support

Valerie Ewan – NHS Tayside

Tracey Passway – Marie Curie

Tracey Brown – NHS Tayside

Sue Bowen – Dyslexia Scotland

Sharon Duncan

Scott Coyne – Epilepsy Connections

Sarah Van Putten - Lifecare

Sarah Murray - RVS

Nibal Saleh – Scottish Parliament

Rob Murray – British Red Cross

Rebecca McDonald – Edinburgh Children’s Hospital Charity

Mike Melvin – ACVO

Magda Clark – Volunteer Midlothian

Luthien Lark – Highland Third Sector Interface

Louise Henderson – Girlguiding Scotland

Louise Bluett – Volunteer Centre East Lothian

Kiera Russell – Rowan Alba

Kelly McKnight - VOCAL
John Cardno – Marie Curie
Alan Stevenson – Volunteer Scotland
Debbie Maltman – Volunteer Scotland
Julie Lonsdale – Volunteer Scotland (minutes of meeting)
Emma Christie – Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action
Ewan Davidson – Impact Funding Partners
Fiona Harvey - CHAS
Gemma Campbell – Scottish Government
Gillian Kay – Voluntary Action South Ayrshire
Heather Robertson – Maidsafe Foundation
Ian McCall – Paths for All
Janice Malone - HIS
Jason Henderson - SCVO
Jessica Lightfoot – Macmillan Cancer Support
Jo Elston – Planning Aid Scotland
Ashleigh Burt – Fife Voluntary Action
Beth Cowen – CVS Falkirk & District
Bev Read – Firsthand Lothian
Caroline Johnstone – CVS Inverclyde
Carolynn Malone – Housing Options Scotland
Claire Mechie – Clan Cancer Support
David Maxwell – Volunteer Glasgow

Apologies

None

Agenda item 1: Welcome, Introduction & Apologies

Foyso Choudhury MSP (FC), Joint Convenor, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in person and online to the Cross-Party Group on Volunteering, and looked forward to their contributions to the meeting.

FC advised that Margaret Starkie was standing in for Sarah Latto.

Agenda item 2: Minutes of Previous Meeting – 26th October 2023

The minutes of the Cross-Party Group on Volunteering AGM held on 26th October 2023 were accepted as a correct record.

Proposer: Jeremy Balfour MSP
Seconder: Helen Fleming

Agenda item 3: Research Summary of SHS Survey 2022 volunteering data

FC welcomed Debbie Maltman, Volunteer Scotland Research Officer, to present to the Group in respect of the key findings from the SHS 2022 Survey.

DM gave an overview of the following highlights contained within the key findings:

Total Volunteering (formal + informal + (formal +informal) volunteering)

- A four-percentage point decrease in formal volunteering participation rates, from 26% in 2018 to 22% in 2022.
- No change in informal volunteering participation rates of 36%.
- A two-percentage point decrease in the Total Volunteering Participation rate from 48% to 46%.

Formal Volunteering

- Decline in formal volunteering participation rates, from a high point of 31% in 2010 to the low of 22% in 2022.

DM continued that for first time (since SHS records began) less than 1 million adults are formally volunteering in Scotland meaning, as discussed at the last CPG meeting.

DM noted that

Fewer adults formally volunteer = Less volunteers to provide services to beneficiaries in addition to Less adults receiving the benefits of volunteering

In terms of demographics, formal volunteering participation rates decreased for all age groups, however, for adults aged 16-34 and 35-59 the decrease of five percentage points, is more than double the (two-percentage point) decrease for adults aged 60 or over.

Adults over 60 now have slightly (one percentage point) higher formal volunteer participation rates than adults aged 16-34.

DM also noted the drop in formal volunteering rates by gender and disability contained in the study.

- Female volunteering participation rates decreased by six percentage points, double that of males; and
- Formal volunteering participation rates decreased by six percentage points for disabled adults and five percentage points for non-disabled

DM continued that it was interesting to note that Volunteering in 'local community or neighbourhood organisations' is now the organisation type supported by the highest proportion of Scottish volunteers, with Adult volunteering participation decreasing most in 'children's education and schools' (five percentage points), 'health, disability

and wellbeing' and 'youth or children's activities outside school' (both three percentage points).

DM noted that in terms of frequency of formal volunteering, 'about once a week' increased (six percentage points), while volunteering 'less than once a week but at least once a month' had the biggest decrease (four percentage points).

DM concluded that the most cited answers non-formal volunteers gave in response to **'is there anything that might encourage you to provide unpaid help to groups or organisations in the future?'** is 'If I knew how my time/skills could help others' (eight percent) and if 'Information on available roles and how to get started' (Six percent).

'If I knew how my time/skills could help others', applies to 8% of adults in 2022, equating to 286k potential volunteers, meaning that each 1% who can be convinced to volunteer through addressing these factors increases the overall participation rate which is inextricably linked to the aims of the National Recruitment Campaign, which Margaret Starkie would discuss with the Group later in the meeting.

The full report of Volunteer Scotland's analysis can be found at the following link:

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Scottish-Household-Survey-2022-Initial-Findings.pdf>

FC thanked DM for her interesting and thought-provoking presentation and noted his own thoughts, which he assumed were the same as those of others, that volunteering rates would increase following the pandemic. FC continued that an answer to augmenting these rates needed to be found, and then invited any questions or observations from attendees.

Mike Melvin thanked DM for a 'superb presentation', and asked, with the Survey being a year behind, was the hope that further research was forthcoming which the sector could be positive about in terms of an increase in volunteer engagement. MM also wished to note his dismay in relation to the Disclosure Scotland consultation relating the review of fee waivers, discounts and registration fees which he felt would set the sector back.

Responding to this Consultation - Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 - accredited body fees and proposals for discounting: PVG scheme consultation - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Georgia Artus reiterated MM's comments and was pleased to advise that in January 2022 they had two new volunteers, compared to January 2024 when they had 24. GA recognised that additional investment was required to attract and retain volunteers.

DM concluded by inviting all present to contact her by email with any specific questions on deborah.maltman@volunteerscotland.org.uk

FC thanked all for their input and handed over to Margaret Starkie who would cover the next two agenda items.

Agenda item 4: Launch of Volunteers' Week 2024

MS thanked FC.

MS advised that yesterday, 26th March, was the launch of the Volunteers' Week 40th Anniversary Campaign.

www.volunteersweek.scot

In addition to a new brand MS advised that, following discussion and liaison with UK parties, the first day of Volunteers' Week had been changed to coincide with the first Monday in the month, rather than the first 'day' which could fall at a weekend limiting promotional activity.

MS confirmed that this year Volunteers' Week would run from Monday 3rd June 2024 for 7 days.

MS confirmed her gratitude to the National and Scottish partners, including the Recognition and Celebration Action Group, who assisted in the promotion of the campaign in Scotland.

MS asked that all present to consider sharing volunteer stories and engaged on social media in this legacy year for Volunteers' Week.

MS continued that this year had been tailored to be cognisant of cost-of-living pressures with a variety of free downloadable resources and suggestions for ways to hold cost effective events available on the website.

MS advised that other campaigns running alongside Volunteers' Week were:

Power of Youth Day – 4th June; and

The Big Help Out which would commence on the Friday of Volunteers' Week – 7th June – 9th June.

MS's call to action for those present was to please share the website, use the resources, provide volunteer stories and use the #.

MS concluded by saying that she hoped all present liked the new, vibrant branding and fully accessible materials, and that she was liaising with the Events Team at the Scottish Parliament in relation to organising an event to coincide with Volunteers' Week.

Alan Stevenson added that a lot of effort had gone into the organisation of this year encompassing a cross-UK coordinated approach with excellent liaison and teamwork.

Agenda item 5: Update: National Volunteer Recruitment Campaign

MS thanked FC and updated all present on the National Volunteer Recruitment Campaign.

MS advised that as all present were aware, the decline in volunteering rates was inextricably linked to the cost-of-living crisis and the Cost-of-Living Task Group had identified the need for a national recruitment campaign to support VIOs and volunteers.

MS continued that the campaign would launch the first week of September with a web page containing resources and downloadable resources available to organisations.

In terms of pre-launch activities MS advised that a free online knowledge event 'Re-thinking volunteer recruitment' would kick start the pre-launch. MS would circulate event information and booking details in early course.

MS concluded this Agenda item by inviting all present to email her at Margaret.starkie@volunteerscotland.org.uk with any questions or to get involved. MS also invited all present to attend a future Cost of Living Group meeting and asked all present to be open to sharing volunteer stories and sharing assets across the sector as we strive towards partnership working in good practice.

MS confirmed that this agenda item would be brought back to the Cross-Party Group on Volunteering nearer launch time.

FC asked if this project was an opportunity for organisations to demonstrate and share good practice.

MS responded that this was an exercise which was absolutely about learning and sharing good practice from others which would form part of resources, and she looked forward to input from organisations.

Georgia Artus advised that, as an example, Vintage Vibes were publishing a blog post the following week which would hopefully start a sharing precedent for good practice.

FC thanked MS for this update and intimated that a longer meeting was required in future to fully cover all agenda items and allow time for further input from attendees.

Agenda item 6: Youth VIP - Reflections from Two VIPs!

FC was delighted to welcome Fraser Clark and Lauren Alexandra Arthur, both panel members with Youth VIP to the meeting.

FC introduced LAA who spoke inspirationally about her experiences as a young volunteer which had gone on to support and inform her decisions later in life, with her ultimately finding employment at an organisation where she had volunteered.

LAA expressed her gratitude for the skills and confidence which her volunteering experiences had given her, leading her to a successful and enjoyable position, cementing her commitment to the work of Youth VIP.

LAA concluded that she felt volunteering had informed her path in life, and that all young people should be given this opportunity.

There was a round of applause for Lauren.

FC thanked LAA for her moving and inspirational presentation to the Group which told the story of her amazing journey.

Agenda Item 7: Thanks and Close

FC thanked all present again for their contributions and encouraged all to get in touch with himself, Jeremy, Margaret or Sarah if they had any questions.

FC confirmed that he would like to give other smaller 3rd sector organisations to present to the Group and share their stories and invited all present to get in touch with any suggestions.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1.55 pm.
The next meeting would be arranged in due course.