

**Cross Party Group on Volunteering Meeting  
Minute  
Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 1.00pm-2.30pm  
Committee Room 4, Scottish Parliament  
Convenor: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP**

**Attendees**

**MSP members of the Group**

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP – Scottish Liberal Democrat Party  
Jeremy Balfour MSP - Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

**MSP invited attendees**

Angela Constance MSP – Scottish National Party

**Non-MSPs Members of the Group:**

Paul Okroj – Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, John Mullin – Volunteer Scotland, Margaret Starkie – Volunteer Scotland, George Thomson – Volunteer Scotland, Kim Atkinson – Scottish Sports Association, Gordon Brown – VC Borders, Ian Bruce – CVS Inverclyde, Tina Cameron – Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire, Cat Campbell – Age Scotland, Valerie Carson – Voluntary Action Fund, Gail Cassidy – Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire, Fiona Couper – National Autistic Society, Sue Davies – TSI Moray, Sandie Dickson – The State Hospital, Ian Donald – Highland Third Sector Interface, Lidia Dye – PKAVS Volunteering Hub, Helen Fleming – Dyslexia Scotland, Elaine Gibb – Voluntary Action Scotland, Stephanie Guerin – Fresh Start, Catherine Henderson – Project Scotland, Maureen Hill – Scottish Waterways Trust, Alan Johnstone – Voluntary Action Scotland, James Jopling – Samaritans, Kirsty Keay – Volunteer Centre Dundee, Traci Kirkland – Open Secret, Gillian Lithgow – Youth Link Scotland, Alice McArdle – Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire, Janis McCulloch – Scouts Scotland, Claire McHarrie – Scottish Government, Bernadette Monaghan – Volunteer Glasgow, Lesley Munro – Voluntary Health Scotland, Emma Murton – Guide Dogs, Paul Reddish – Project Scotland, Jack Sanderson – Voluntary Arts Scotland, Bridget Sly – Glasgow Life, Angela Smith – St Andrews First Aid, Claire Stevens – Voluntary Health Scotland, Alan Stevenson, Volunteer Scotland, Liz Watson – Befriending Networks, Helen Webster – Scottish Government, Keith Weston – Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland, Mhairi Whyllie – Highland Third Sector Interface, Paul Wilson – Volunteer Edinburgh, Keith Wimbles – Voluntary Action Fund, Stephen Adamson – Fife Voluntary Action, Shelagh Young, Homestart, Louise McGinty – Quarriers, Louise Orr – Clackmannanshire Third Sector Unit

**Apologies**

**MSP members of the Group**

Pauline McNeil MSP – Scottish Labour Party  
Johann Lamont MSP – Scottish Labour Party  
Fulton McGregor MSP – Scottish National Party

**Non-MSPs Members of the Group:**

A considerable number of apologies were received for this meeting.

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Volunteering and invited introductions.

**2. Minutes of Previous meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by John Mullin, Volunteer Scotland and seconded by Kirsty Keay – Volunteer Centre Dundee.

All actions from the meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> June were ratified.

### **Actions from previous meeting:**

- Invitation to be sent to the Cabinet Secretary inviting her to attend the first meeting of the group in November - **Complete**
- A strategy will be created after the first meeting setting outcomes for the group – **on-going**
- A report will be scheduled for the end of the year to highlight any progress the group makes stating recommendations for the future of the group – **on-going**
- Proposals for Volunteers Week 2017 to be agreed – **date agreed**

Jeremy Balfour was appointed as Vice Convener, proposed by John Mullin, Volunteer Scotland, seconded by Paul Okroj, Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland

### **3. The Programme for Government and the future of Volunteering – discussion with Cabinet Secretary Angela Constance MSP**

- The Cabinet Secretary began by thanking everyone for the invitation to speak at the first Cross Party Group on Volunteering meeting and how important it is that we work together to develop the profile of Volunteering in Scotland.
- The Cabinet Secretary stated she has seen first hand the benefits volunteering makes to communities throughout her career.
- Ms Constance informed the group that volunteering contributes £2 billion to our economy.
- She also reflected that volunteering has changed over the years to support gaps in services and society and how volunteers can allow individuals to take ownership within their lives of activities they may not be able to participate in otherwise. But essentially it's about the gift of giving, a sense of community and a sense of belonging.
- The Cabinet Secretary highlighted the contribution volunteering makes was wide-spread from community empowerment, social enterprise and third sector.
- Ms Constance spoke about the findings from the Scottish Household Survey showing participation rates are lower in Scotland than in England (41% England/27% Scotland).
- The Cabinet Secretary highlighted that there were issues that needed to be resolved/negotiated to allow greater access to volunteering such as volunteering and claiming benefits and this was something that will be looked into and there is a large proportion of volunteers in Scotland who have set up communities, campaigns and organisations for no financial reward.
- Ms Constance indicated that Scottish Government invests £20 million into the empowerment and communities fund and £20 million in equalities therefore are working across a variety of areas all relating to volunteering.
- The Cabinet Secretary pointed out that concern had been raised in relation to volunteering not being mentioned within the Fairer Scotland Action Plan, she informed the group that volunteering was within the action plan but not as enhanced as it could have been, she agreed this would be taken on board and that it should have been made clearer within the action plan and will be more prominent in the future.
- The Cabinet Secretary stated that she wants to work closely with organisations and the cross party group and to find out concerns and challenges and have a more collaborative approach.
- The Cabinet Secretary stated that we need to challenge each other to raise the status of volunteering.

### **Q&A with the Cabinet Secretary;**

- George Thomson, Volunteer Scotland informed the Cabinet Secretary of the recent research Volunteer Scotland had undertaken on comparing participation rates in Scotland with England and it indicates that England count a variety of activities such as supporting football matches as volunteer participation therefore allowing for a higher participation rate.
- The Cabinet Secretary stated that we don't need to be defensive about statistics but it is important to get behind them and make improvements. She informed the group that the Social Attitude Survey showing how public services are designed was important to the development of volunteering.

- Keith Wimbles, Voluntary Action Fund asked - How volunteering needs to be more strategically involved in community empowerment. The Cabinet Secretary responded by saying that she highlighted in her speech the contribution volunteering makes to community empowerment and it was the 'golden thread' that connected several Scottish Government priorities.
- Kim Atkinson, Scottish Sports Association asked – How can the cross party group help you achieve what you need to, is there more we can do to support you and the programme of Government? The Cabinet Secretary responded by saying volunteering needs to be the golden thread at a strategic level for example Community Development Trusts are important to community empowerment. To ask the questions 'who are we empowering' how do we ensure the disadvantaged are empowered? Volunteering can reach groups others can't – capacity building and collaboration is vital in moving forward.
- John Mullin, Volunteer Scotland asked – when will we find out about the recent TSI review? The Cabinet Secretary responded by stating she hopes to have that report by the end of the year and that she will share its findings and look further input across the sector.

Alex Cole-Hamilton thanked the Cabinet Secretary for her time and contribution to the meeting.

#### 4. Further discussion

Once the Cabinet Secretary departed the discussion continued. At this point Helen Webster and Calire Mcharrie from the Scottish Gov't Third Sector unit were introduced and offered to take questions.

- Elaine Gibb – Voluntary Action Scotland (VAS) pointed out that it was good to see so many TSI's in the room. Elaine stated that VAS had been working with Volunteer Glasgow looking into volunteering and claiming benefits and framing a partnership offer along side DWP. Helen Webster, Third Sector Unit stated she would welcome further discussions on this in relation to the Disability Action Plan.
- Bernadette Monaghan – Volunteer Glasgow stated that they and VAS plan to work on scoping the development of Adult Recognition Awards - recognising Adult Volunteering participation rates to enhance communities , help increase volunteering participation rates and enhance the profile of volunteering, Bernadette said she would be happy to share this work with the group.

Action: Bernadette to email information to Paul and John

- Keith Wimbles – Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) stated that a sub-group of the Scottish Volunteering Forum was looking how volunteering was funded throughout Scotland and was there an opportunity to work with Scottish Government to identify how organisations are engaging with volunteers based on the funds they receive.
- It was highlighted that it is becoming increasingly difficult for TSI's to support volunteers due to capacity issues and the diversity of volunteers coming forward, this is a real issue that needs supported.
- Paul Reddish – Project Scotland raised the concern that nothing changed from the previous cross party working group from this Cross Party Group and that there needs to be a more collaborative approach for this one and work more closely with the digital agenda as a sector and have a collective approach to digital. Action: Paul to share developments with colleagues at the CPG Shelagh Young – Homestart UK stated that there is a good track record of getting people into volunteering but that only happens as a result of the support volunteers receive from organisations, there is a real need to look at time investment which includes funding.
- Jeremy Balfour MSP asked the group how to we tap into groups who are volunteering but aren't aware they are volunteering? There are lots of people who undertake informal volunteering and this is often not recognised.
- The main aim of this Cross Party Group will be to identify 2-3 themes that the group can work on to prevent it becoming a talking shop. These themes can be identified and provide an opportunity to lobby to Government and take these issues to the forefront of Government agenda with support from VAS, TSI'S VS and the Scottish Volunteering Forum. The aim of the group is to be action driven.

- Helen Webster – Third Sector Unit stated she was very pleased to be here and was glad to see the group had focus and where action drive to making a difference to volunteering and is happy to support the 'Golden Thread' that is volunteering going forward.
- Paul Okroj – Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland stated that volunteering sits across all sectors and we should ensure there are representatives from other sectors on the CPG and identify opportunities for joint CPG's.

## **5. Presentation by Alan Stevenson – Volunteer Scotland Analysis for the Scottish Household Survey findings 2000-2015**

### **Key points from the presentation:**

- 17% of adult population volunteer once a month or more often
- Between 41% and 47% of volunteers give more than 6 hours in a month. This equates to between 12% and 14% of the adult population. This has remained fairly steady over the years.
- Gender gap is not new 30% Female pop = 57% of Volunteer pop
- 35-44 yr olds have the highest levels of volunteering.
- 16-24 yr old males are above average. Most other male age groups have declined with exception of 60-74 yr olds.
- 10%-12% of adult population in SIMD areas, volunteer once a month or more often (~70% of r.o.s)
- Between 35% and 45% of volunteers in (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation -SIMD) 15%-20% areas give more than 6 hours in a month. This equates to between 6% and 9% of the population in these areas.
- Volunteering amongst 'unemployed and seeking work' is generally on the rise. Volunteering amongst 'full-time employed' has most potential to influence the overall rate.

### **Conclusions:**

- The declining volunteering rate appears to be explained by fewer people volunteering 'less frequently'.
- Significant differences exist by area of deprivation (with a possible set of related issues around income, economic status and social capital to be explored).
- Gender and age differences are important in understanding the dynamic of participation. Particularly in terms of role, type of organisation and 'lifestage'.
- There are areas where volunteer participation consistently sits below average, with clear links to the inclusion agenda. The results indicate linkages to the civic landscape with the rise of looser defined roles and more topical issues (e.g. the environmental movement and political activism).

## **6. Any other Business & Close**

Helen Webster and Claire McHarrie from the Third Sector Unit advised the group that information had been circulated regarding the celebrations of the 30<sup>th</sup> November and if anyone hadn't received them to contact Claire.

Date of next meeting is 25<sup>th</sup> January (1.00pm-2.30pm).

### **ACTIONS**

- A request to CPG members will be sent asking them to identify issues/concerns they are currently facing, 3-4 key themes will be identified and an action plan will be created for the CPG to take forward.
- Bernadette Monaghan to email information on Adult Recognition awards to Paul and John for circulation to the CPG members.