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# Needs Analysis with Olympic Sport Governing Bodies in Relation to Volunteering and Volunteer Management

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Summary Report

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May 2009



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## INTRODUCTION

**The Volunteer Development Agency** is a regional organisation which was initiated in 1991 and formally established in 1993. It is the lead organisation in Northern Ireland for the promotion and development of volunteering, providing a central resource of support, information and training for those who work with volunteers. This includes issues on good practice and policy regarding volunteering, volunteer management, child protection and voluntary management committees / governance. It also plays a key role in administering grants related to volunteering for the Department for Social Development and the Department of Education. Further information on the work of the Agency can be accessed on [www.volunteering-ni.org](http://www.volunteering-ni.org).

This report has been produced to show the current level of practice in relation to volunteering among Governing Bodies of Olympic sports in Northern Ireland. It has been produced as part of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Volunteer Strategy London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

## CONTEXT

The Volunteer Development Agency (Agency), through Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) funding, appointed a Project Manager in September 2008, to manage the implementation and delivery of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Northern Ireland Volunteer Strategy.

### **Northern Ireland Volunteer Strategy London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games**

The vision of the Northern Ireland Volunteer Strategy London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games is to *“involve, recognize and maximize the contribution of volunteers as part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games as a catalyst for inspiring increased volunteering”* and aims to:

- Raise the profile of volunteering in Northern Ireland;
- Maximise opportunities for the recruitment of new volunteers; and
- Endeavour for “Team NI” Volunteers to be involved in Games Time and establish a legacy of supported and skilled volunteers for future events in Northern Ireland.

An Action Plan was developed which places an operational framework around the Strategy and includes the objective to *“conduct a needs analysis with sporting organisations on volunteer management priorities”*.



## Methodology

In order to meet the objective a survey (please see appendix 1) was carried out with the Governing Bodies to ascertain their current level of practice with regards to volunteering and volunteer management. There are 28 Olympic Sports, with 26 Olympic Governing Bodies in Northern Ireland, and this report encompasses the responses of 25 (96.3% response rate) Olympic Governing Bodies and Disability Sport Northern Ireland (please see appendix 2).

## Definitions

**Volunteering** refers to individuals and the work or action they undertake for the benefit of others or the community (outside the immediate family), undertaken by free choice and not directly in return for wages.

**Volunteer Management** includes among other things planning involvement, policy development, recruitment, selection, support, training and recognition of volunteers. Good volunteer management should nurture the desire of people to help and get involved while ensuring that it is done in a framework of good practice which supports and protects the volunteer and the organisation.

**Formal Volunteering** unpaid voluntary work carried out with, or under the auspices of, an organisation.

## Investing in Volunteers

Investing in Volunteers is the national quality standard recognising good practice in organisations' volunteer management. It is applicable to any volunteer involving organisation with any number of volunteers and is based on the 4 main areas of volunteer management:

- Planning for volunteer involvement
- Recruiting volunteers
- Selecting and matching volunteers
- Supporting and retaining volunteers

It is the catalyst to put in place processes, policies and procedures to allow organisations to support their volunteers in a meaningful way and reflecting the commitment of the organisation to their volunteers.

## Governing Bodies of Sport

The Governing Bodies of Sport in Northern Ireland, and their affiliated club structures, are largely responsible for the delivery of sport in Northern Ireland and represent a significant element of the voluntary and community sector. They have lead responsibility for their specific sport and play a key role in the organisation and provision of services across Northern Ireland for all age groups and sections of society.

In particular they:

- Govern the rules and manage the health and safety aspects of sport;
- Provide opportunities for people of all ages to take part in the sport at all levels, ie recreational and competitively;
- Govern the training of coaches, referees, judges and other volunteers across the organisation; and
- Provide ongoing services to member clubs and individuals in relation to areas such as child protection and anti-doping.

There are approximately 5,000 - 6,000<sup>1</sup> clubs in Northern Ireland affiliated to Governing Bodies of sport. Sport NI are currently devising a proposal on the way forward for sports club accreditation in Northern Ireland through Clubmark NI; a programme that will offer support and endorsement to accreditation schemes operated by Governing Bodies of sport or Local Authorities.

## Volunteering in Sport Research

In 2007 the Volunteer Development Agency published *It's All About Time*, a study of volunteering in Northern Ireland, and the research notes that an estimated 37,233 formal volunteers in Northern Ireland are involved in voluntary activities with a sports club.

The activities they undertake vary from coaching (39.3%) and organising or helping to running an activity or event (35.7%) to working with young people (21.4%) and leading the group / member of a committee / trustees (17.9%).

Formal volunteers who are involved with a sports club tend to volunteer more often than is the case for all formal volunteers. For instance, 78.5% of all sports club volunteers are engaged in some sort of activity at least once a month, whereas this figure is 73.6%<sup>2</sup> for all formal volunteers. In turn, the level of weekly activity is higher for volunteers who are

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<sup>1</sup> Sport NI based on submission returns from Governing Bodies

<sup>2</sup> *It's All About Time*, Volunteer Development Agency, 2007

engaged with sports clubs when compared to all formal volunteers (57.1% and 48.6% respectively).

For formal volunteers who engage with sports clubs the most common way they become involved is through knowing someone already involved in the group (35.9%).

Most notably, 92.3% of sports clubs / governing bodies could not operate without the support of volunteers.

### **Draft Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in Northern Ireland**

The Draft Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in Northern Ireland is due to be launched in the near future and outlines how it will use the London Olympic and Paralympic Games as an opportunity to promote volunteering in sport and notes that the work of the sporting volunteers will be publically recognised, supported and celebrated.

## SURVEY SUMMARY

This survey looked at the Olympic Governing Bodies of Sport in Northern Ireland and Disability Sport Northern Ireland and there was a 96.3% response rate. Of the organisations surveyed, 73% have staff; with 84.6% operating with 3 or fewer members of staff.

Activities which volunteers are engaged in	
Governance (ie Board / Executive Committee Member)	92.3%
Event Management	84.6%
Coaching	84.6%
Child Protection	80.8%
Officiating / Refereeing	76.9%
Stewarding	65.4%
PR / Marketing	57.7%
Fundraising	57.7%
Supporting individuals with a disability	53.8%
Transport	30.8%

Base: 26 (all respondents)

Research<sup>3</sup> shows that organisations are finding it harder to recruit volunteers, Governing Bodies note that they have difficulties in the recruitment of volunteers due to:

- time constraints
- Resources
- Legislation
- Lack of clarity on volunteer role
- Bureaucracy / policies and procedures

Current level of experience of recruiting volunteers	
Very easy	4%
Easy	8%
Hard	57%
Very hard	31%

Base: 26 (all respondents)

The table to the left illustrates the current difficulties facing volunteers with regards to recruitment.

88% of Governing Bodies found it hard or very hard to recruit volunteers.

<sup>3</sup> It's All About Time, Volunteer Development Agency, 2007

<b>How Governing Bodies recruit volunteers?</b>	
Through membership	96.2%
Personal contact	92.3%
Word of mouth	80.8%
School / university / college	42.3%
Local events	30.8%
Internet / GB website	26.9%
Leaflets (material from GB)	23.0%
Local paper	8.0%
Regional paper	8.0%
TV or radio	4.0%

Base: 26 (all respondents)

- The large majority of volunteers are recruited through membership, personal contact or word of mouth
- No Governing Bodies recruit volunteers through their local volunteer or community centre, Employers Volunteer Scheme (EVS), Millennium Volunteers (MV) or National Campaigns (ie Volunteers Week)
- This demonstrates that there is not a strong link at present between volunteers in sport and the wider volunteering infrastructure

- 53%<sup>4</sup> of all formal volunteering organisations ask volunteers to complete an application form; 30% request same in Governing Bodies
- 78.8%<sup>5</sup> of all formal volunteering organisations provide an interview / informal chat with potential volunteers; 42.3% do the same in Governing Bodies
- This demonstrates that the formal application and monitoring process within wider volunteer involving organisations is more in line with good practice than has been shown with Governing Bodies

<b>When recruiting volunteers Governing Bodies':</b>	
Ask new volunteers to complete an application form	30.8%
Ask new volunteers to provide references	19.2%
Provide an interview / informal chat with potential volunteers	42.3%
Provide new volunteers with an induction	42.3%
Undertake Access NI checks	73.1%
None of the above	11.5%

Base: 26 (all respondents)

<sup>4</sup> It's All About Time, Volunteer Development Agency, 2007

<sup>5</sup> It's All About Time, Volunteer Development Agency, 2007



A **volunteer policy** sets out how volunteering will be promoted and managed within an organisation. It highlights the value and unique contribution of volunteers and offers a framework to develop procedures or practices in working with volunteers and monitoring, reviewing and development of volunteers

<b>Volunteer Management provided to volunteers</b>	
Provided with the necessary information and training for their role	50.0%
Opportunity to take part in further training	76.9%
Provided with necessary support and supervision	61.5%
Clarity between the role of the volunteer and paid staff	69.2%
Provision of out-of-pocket expenses	69.2%
Informed of what out-of-pocket expenses can be claimed	65.4%

Base: 26 (all respondents)

- Only 6% of Governing Bodies have a written volunteer policy
- 80.8% of Governing Bodies have a written equal opportunities policy which applies to volunteers; compared to 61.3% in It's All About Time
- 65.4% of Governing Bodies have written role descriptions for their volunteer positions; compared to 53.4% in It's All About Time
- 53.8% of Governing Bodies provide recognition / acknowledges (ie events, materials, certificates) for their volunteers

The table below highlights that Governing Bodies:

- Have strengths in their understanding of the protection of children and vulnerable adults and Executive Committee / Board roles and responsibilities.
- Feel there are gaps in terms of the management and motivation of volunteers and the support and provision of training for volunteers.
- Have weaknesses with the development of a volunteer policy, the monitoring and evaluation of volunteer involvement and the recruitment and selection of volunteers.

<b>Governing Bodies' perceived expertise in the following:</b>				
	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Some Gaps</b>	<b>NA</b>
Protection of children and vulnerable adults	73	8	19	0
Understanding of Executive Committee / Board roles and	58	4	38	0
Accreditation of volunteers' skills and knowledge	31	27	42	0
Promotion of diversity in volunteers	23	35	31	11
Support and provision of training for volunteers	23	19	58	0
Management and motivation of volunteers	19	16	65	0
Understanding of legal issues regarding volunteers	15	31	54	0
Dealing with difficult volunteer situations	12	32	48	8
Recruitment and selection of volunteers	4	42	50	4
Monitoring and evaluation of volunteer involvement	24	48	28	0
Development of volunteer policy	0	58	35	7

Base: 26 (all respondents)

## CONCLUSION

It is widely accepted that organisations are more likely to attract and retain volunteers by providing volunteers with the management they deserve. That includes providing a clear understanding of organisational expectations of them, clear recruitment and selection procedures, provision of reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, opportunity to take part in training and continued support and supervision.

Volunteers are clearly the backbone of sport in Northern Ireland and this report highlights their integral role; as well as noting a number of trends in terms of their responsibilities and the volunteer management within Governing Bodies.

As society changes, how organisations engage with volunteers and attract new volunteers must also change. With access to lottery funding for capital development, athlete development and increasing participation in Targeting Social Needs (TSN) areas greater onus has been placed on Governing Bodies to demonstrate a professional and business approach to their role; whilst still relying significantly on volunteers. This, along with increased legislation, has created additional pressures on the voluntary Boards of Governing Bodies to adopt best operational practice and adhere to principles of good governance in today's environment.

It is clear that the Governing Bodies, and the volunteers who govern the organisations, face regular challenges and require additional support in a number of key areas in order to improve their effectiveness and efficiency in relation to the management of volunteers. This can be achieved by addressing the recommendations overleaf; therefore ensuring more efficient operations and competent volunteers.

The Volunteer Development Agency is keen to offer an effective service to Governing Bodies of Olympic Sports in Northern Ireland and Disability Sport Northern Ireland in order to develop and disseminate good practice information and enable the valuable volunteers to make their full contribution to the Governing Body's goals whilst developing their own skills and interests.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to increase the capacity of the Governing Body, individual volunteers and staff to enable management of change. Specific funding and resources need to be identified in order to enable some or all of the recommendations to be completed:

- Establishment of a named individual in each Olympic Governing Body to be the primary contact for information / recruitment of volunteers.
- Development of stronger links between sport and the wider volunteering infrastructure.
- Development of a clear value base for the involvement of volunteers in sport.
- Ensure that all Governing Bodies have an operational volunteer policy.
- Development of Governing Bodies' volunteer management practice through the delivery of training, for example:
  - When Everyone's a Sporting Volunteer
  - Introduction to Managing and Motivating Volunteers
  - Principles of Recruitment and Selection
  - Support and Supervision of Volunteers
- Governing Bodies should use the Investing in Volunteer framework as a guide for developing good practice in volunteer management. Those organisations which are well established in their good practice of involving volunteers should be supported and encouraged to work towards accreditation in the standard.
- Accredited volunteer management training for staff of Olympic Governing Bodies of sport who are responsible for providing support to clubs through Clubmark NI.

## Appendix 1

### Volunteers in Sport Survey

#### 1. Please enter your contact details

Name of Governing	<input type="text"/>
First Name:	<input type="text"/>
Last Name:	<input type="text"/>
Position:	<input type="text"/>
Address:	<input type="text"/>
Postcode:	<input type="text"/>
Telephone:	<input type="text"/>
Email:	<input type="text"/>
Website:	<input type="text"/>

#### Volunteers and Volunteering:

Volunteers and Volunteering refer to individuals and the work or action they undertake for the benefit of others or the community (outside the immediate family), undertaken by free choice and not directly in return for wages.

#### 2. Volunteer numbers

Number of paid staff in the Governing Body	<input type="text"/>
Number of volunteers on the Executive Committee / Board	<input type="text"/>
Number of other volunteers in the Governing Body	<input type="text"/>

**3. Role of these volunteers (please tick all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governance (Board / Executive Committee) | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event Management                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> PR / Marketing                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stewarding                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Officiating / Referee                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Individuals with a Disability |

**4. How would you describe your current experience of recruiting volunteers to assist your Governing Body?**

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Easy | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easy      | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Hard |

**5. If your Governing Body is finding it hard or very hard to recruit volunteers, why do you think this is?**

**6. How do you recruit volunteers? (Please tick all that apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Through membership              | <input type="checkbox"/> School / college / university                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Contact                | <input type="checkbox"/> Local newspaper                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional newspaper (eg Belfast Telegraph)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Centres               | <input type="checkbox"/> TV or Radio (local or national)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local events                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet / Governing Body website            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Centre                | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaflets (material from your Governing Body) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer Volunteer Scheme (EVS) | <input type="checkbox"/> National campaigns (ie Volunteers Week)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Millennium Volunteers Programme |   |

Other (please specify)

**7. When recruiting new volunteers does your Governing Body do any of the following?  
(please tick all that apply)**

- Ask new volunteers to complete an application form
- Ask new volunteers to provide references
- Provide an interview / informal chat with potential volunteers
- Provide new volunteers with an induction
- Undertake Access NI checks
- None of the above

**8. Does your Governing Body have a written equal opportunities policy which applies to volunteers?**

- Yes
- No

**9. Has your Governing Body a written Volunteer Policy?**

A volunteer policy sets out how volunteering will be promoted and managed within your organisation. It highlights the value and unique contribution of volunteers and offers a framework to develop procedures or practices in working with volunteers and monitoring, reviewing and development of volunteering.

- Yes
- No

**10. Do you have written role descriptions for you volunteer descriptions?**

- Yes
- No

**11. Are all new volunteers provided with the necessary information and training for their role?**

- Yes
- No

**12. Does your Governing Body provide volunteers with the opportunity to take part in further training?**

- Yes
- No

**13. Are all volunteers provided with the necessary support and supervision?**

- Yes
- No

**14. Is there clarity between the role of volunteers and the role of paid staff within the Governing Body?**

- Yes
- No

**15. Do you provide any recognition / acknowledgements (events, materials, certificates) for your volunteers?**

- Yes
- No

**16. Do you provide volunteers with out-of-pocket expenses?**

- Yes
- No

**17. If so, are volunteers informed of what expenses can be claimed?**

- Yes
- No



**18. How would you assess your Governing Body's status / expertise in the following areas?**

	n/a	strong	some gaps	weak
Development of your volunteer policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruitment and selection of volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management and motivation of volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promotion of diversity in volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support / provision of training for volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with difficult volunteer situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accreditation of volunteers skills and knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation of volunteer involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding of Executive Committee/ Board roles and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection of children and vulnerable adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**19. What are the biggest challenges in involving volunteers in your Governing Body?**

**20. What would practically help you take volunteering forward?**

**21. If there are any other comments you would like to make, please do so here**

## Appendix 2

The following organisations responded to the Volunteering in Sport Survey:

Athletics Northern Ireland  
Badminton Ireland (Ulster Branch)  
Basketball Northern Ireland  
British Horse Society (Northern Ireland Committee)  
Canoe Association of Northern Ireland  
Cycling Ulster  
Disability Sports Northern Ireland  
Gymnastics Northern Ireland  
Irish Amateur Boxing Association (Ulster Provincial Council)  
Irish Football Association  
Irish Hockey Association (Ulster Branch)  
Northern Ireland Fencing Union  
Northern Ireland Judo Federation  
Northern Ireland Volleyball Association  
Northern Ireland Wrestling Association  
Rowing Ulster  
Royal Yachting Association  
Shooting Federation of Northern Ireland  
Swim Ulster  
Table Tennis Ulster  
Taekwondo Association of Northern Ireland  
Tennis Ireland (Ulster Branch)  
Triathlon Ulster  
Ulster Handball Council  
Ulster Women's Hockey Union  
Weightlifting Association for Northern Ireland

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