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FEBRUARY 2025

Don't Underestimate Young Volunteers



Denise Hayward, CEO, Volunteer Now

Volunteer Now's Youth Advisory Group recently led an excellent session for volunteer managers showcasing the benefits of and barriers to volunteering. The young people drew on their own volunteer experiences and it was clear that they had benefited enormously in terms of enjoyment, building friendships and meeting new people and skills development. They told the stories of their volunteering journeys in many cases from a very young age. The group which included a number of volunteer involving organisations explored how we can overcome the barriers to involving young volunteers.

Key takeaways for the organisations who joined the sessions were:

- Be as approachable as possible
- Make application processes as simple as possible
- Use a variety of communication methods to reach young people including promotion via schools
- Review roles to see which can be suitable for young people, this can help to manage safeguarding or insurance which can be an issue
- Consider allowing young people to volunteer in pairs
- Be realistic about time commitment – exams etc do put pressure on young people so short term opportunities can be helpful
- Finally have confidence to involve young people – they are keen to get involved and have a lot to offer!



- Keeping Adults Safe: Training for Staff & Volunteers
- Measuring the Impact of Volunteering
- Training for Office Bearers, Committee Members, Trustees
- Keeping Children & Adults Safe: Training for Staff & Volunteers Refresher
- VOLT Session: Volunteer Driving

[View Training Calendar](#)



Volunteers' Week 2025 Countdown Begins!

The new Volunteers Week website is now LIVE – Begin the preparations for Volunteers Week 2025!

Every year, over 722,000 people dedicate their time to making a difference in local communities. This June, people across Northern Ireland with over 14m across the UK will come together to celebrate these inspiring individuals through parties, award ceremonies and coffee mornings, expressing gratitude to those who give selflessly to help others.

The UK-wide campaign, led by Volunteer Now in Northern Ireland, will call on all volunteer-involving organisations to join a programme of celebrations from 2-8 June 2025 to recognise the remarkable contributions of their volunteers.

from now until June so keep watching....

Volunteers' Week Website

VOLT Session: Volunteer Driving

Join us for this session in partnership with the Community Transport Association. We will be introducing the landscape, explaining the trends and findings from latest research. We will also be speaking about insurance implications, mileage rates and issues around recruitment and retention of volunteers.

If you currently involve volunteers as drivers, or may like to involve volunteers in these roles, we would love to see you at the session.



Book Your FREE Place

A purple and white poster for 'Together We Walk' by Women's Aid Armagh Down. The text includes: 'Women's Aid ARMAGH DOWN', 'Click the attached link to register for this event', 'COME WALK WITH US TO SUPPORT ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS AND SUPPORT WAAD', 'TOGETHER WE WALK', 'International Women's Day', '5km walk', 'Registration is essential this event is limited to 200 women', 'FREE Wellbeing goodie bag for the first 50 online registrations', 'Walk begins at 10am sharp', 'Refreshments will be provided at the end of the walk'. Locations listed are 'Newry Town Hall Saturday 1st March' and 'South Lake Leisure Centre Sunday 2nd March'. Logos for various partners are at the bottom.

Together We Walk

Volunteer Now are privileged to partner with Women's Aid Armagh Down on their Be Empowered Be Connected programme. We look forward to walking with WAAD on 1 March in Newry and on

Please register using the link below. ***Please note this is an 18+ female only walk***

Register for Together We Walk



Time for Impact Podcast

Hosted by Chris Wade, Founder of Time for Impact and Matt Cobble, Head of Volunteering at the MND Association, this show celebrates the future of volunteerism!

Denise, our Chief Executive, joins Chris and Matt for a discussion on volunteering in Northern Ireland, volunteering infrastructure and the international volunteerism profession!

[Time For Impact Podcast | Podcast on Spotify](#)
[Time For Impact Podcast | Apple Podcasts](#)

Loneliness Taskforce Research Network

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Loneliness & Social Connection: The Importance of Strategy

We had the pleasure of attending a very interesting session hosted by The Loneliness Taskforce Research Network this month, focusing on Loneliness & Social Connection. We heard Dr Nina Goldman review the current global loneliness policies, including what makes each country's approach unique, as well as the importance of loneliness strategies, policies and action plans as a whole, in order to make meaningful impact. Also speaking was Dr Kiffer Card, who discussed Canada's approach to developing public health guidelines for social connection, including the strategic decision to focus on 'social connection' rather than the word loneliness.

We encourage you to visit the link shared by Dr Kiffer outlining the extensive work done in Canada. There are guidelines for individuals on how to improve their social connection, guidelines for communities to support and encourage social connection, as well as an extensive evidence library and Q&A section, which are equally useful. [Evidence Library | Social Connection Guidelines](#)

Despite strong cross-party support, Northern Ireland remains the only part of the UK currently without a loneliness strategy. We are active members of the Action Group on Loneliness Policy and continue to call for the implementation of a much-needed loneliness strategy for Northern Ireland. Loneliness is an increasing problem and needs to be urgently addressed on a policy and practical level. In 2022/23, 19% of people in Northern Ireland reported feeling lonely at least some of the time, equating to around 361,000 people (Continuous Household Survey, 2022-2023).



You Can Volunteer, You Can Change Lives

Everyone has the potential to change lives – volunteering is open to all

As the leading voice of volunteering in Northern Ireland, Volunteer Now is hoping to dispel some of the misconceptions about volunteering, in the hope that more people will realise there are roles to suit them and feel encouraged to give any spare time they have for others.

The *'You Can Volunteer, You Can Change Lives'* campaign will see us tackle some of the perceived barriers that people often feel hold them back from volunteering in an effort to prove that there are flexible, local, accessible volunteering options for all abilities, ages and circumstances.

Jane Gribbin, Community Engagement Manager with Volunteer Now explains:

“Northern Ireland has a brilliant volunteer network however, we simply need more people as so many organisations need their support to survive.

“Sometimes people feel they would love to volunteer but feel held back for a number of reasons such as time, accessibility, age or availability. We want to prove that if you think one of those factors is stopping you volunteering, we can help.

“For example, we often hear people say they would like to volunteer but don't have enough time in their week, or that they don't have access to their own transport. We might hear people say they would love to give volunteering a go but they're not from Northern Ireland so maybe it isn't right for them – or people may worry about accessibility issues.

“We are keen to combat these perceived barriers. You don't need to give a lot of time to volunteer regularly, even the smallest amount, as and when you can, will make a difference. If you don't have access to a car, there are plenty of regional volunteering opportunities we can match you with in your area. We have volunteering roles that suit people with accessibility requirements and we see time and time again how volunteering helps people from outside Northern Ireland integrate in their local community.

“The roles we have available are so diverse, from fundraising events to animal shelters,

By driving home the message that there are roles to suit everyone, we hope people will realise they have the potential to volunteer and, therefore, they have the potential to change lives,” said Jane Gribbin.

To find a volunteering opportunity in Northern Ireland that matches your requirements, visit our homepage and click on Search for Volunteering Opportunities.

Linking Generations NI Network Meetings

Are you interested in developing or promoting intergenerational connections in the community you live, work or go to school? LGNI's network meetings are a great place to start your journey or to share your story to inspire others. Whether you are an individual, community leader/worker, care home staff or early years practitioner, if you have an interest in making a difference by developing connections between generations we would love to welcome you to our network meetings.



Register Your Attendance



Introducing: David Moore Volunteering Development Officer

Hi, I'm David and I'm the Volunteering Development Officer at Volunteer Now.

Along with a team of volunteering support officers I am responsible for developing, initiating, and delivering a positive environment for volunteering by proactively engaging with volunteer involving organisations, public bodies, and those who wish to volunteer. I work with individuals and organisations to increase volunteering in Northern Ireland and to make volunteering as accessible as possible.

I provide volunteering 'mini health checks' and the Volunteer Friendly Quality Standard for organisations to help them check and improve the quality of their volunteering policies and practices. I also assist volunteer managers and coordinators in their use of our online Volunteer Recruitment & Management platform Be Collective. And I work with Volunteer Now's events team to provide Volunteer Management to a large team of event volunteers.

Member Spotlight

Street Soccer NI

Street Soccer NI is a charity that uses football and sport to bring positive change to people's lives. Their programmes tackle homelessness, unemployment, addiction, mental health issues and more.

They also run two Social Enterprises to generate income for the charity - Street Move and Street Store. Street Move is a removal service supporting people with house and office moves, deliveries, house clearances, etc. Street Move also runs a second hand furniture and clothes shop in Botanic Avenue. Street Store is a shop selling new electrical appliances and beds at affordable prices.



Street Soccer NI



Publication of the Month:

Health and Safety and Volunteering

Organisations and individuals have a general legal duty of care to avoid causing harm to, or endangering people or property as a result of activities.

The Health and Safety Executive also advises that, "in general, the same health and safety standards should be applied to voluntary workers, as they would to employees exposed to the same risks." Therefore, it is important that all organisations give this due consideration.

This publication explains what organisations must do to comply with the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order, as well as touching on training and induction, risk assessment and how to draft a health and safety policy.

Health and Safety and Volunteering



New Members

Welcome to our newest organisational members:

[Lancaster District CVS](#), [Dunlewey Addiction Services](#), [Combat Street Birmingham](#), [Antrim School of Music CIC](#), [Townsend Enterprise Park Ltd](#), St Michaels Scout Group, [Maidstone Homeless Care](#) and [Keep NI Beautiful - Live Here Love Here](#). This brings our organisational members total to 1172!

[Become A Member](#)

COURSES
All you need to know about volunteer management in 8 hours of learning!



Flexible, accessible training

Did you know you can learn all you need to know about volunteer management in just 8 hours with our on demand courses? You can complete these anytime, anywhere & on any device! Click below to find out more.

[Find Out More](#)



Volunteers in Focus: Episode 2 - Bronte, University of Atypical

Meet Bronte, a passionate volunteer at the University of Atypical 🧠

Bronte loves her role because it gives her the unique opportunity to experience the art just like gallery visitors, while also mingling with the artists themselves and fellow volunteers. She meets incredible Deaf, disabled, and neurodiverse artists, spending time with them and diving into their work, all while gaining inspiration from the range of experiences she's having.

Volunteers in Focus will show how volunteering can be a gateway to new perspectives and unforgettable moments. Stay tuned for more inspiring stories and discover how you can make a meaningful impact ❤️🌍

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