Report on VG's Engagement with Volunteer Involving Organisations

Purpose

- To identify and then widely promote volunteering opportunities not currently advertised on opportunities.volunteerglasgow.org
- To identify common volunteering challenges being faced thus allowing for development and prioritising of support services to best effect.

Method

The process has had 3 stages;

- A survey was designed and disseminated to 600+ volunteer involving organisations on 22/4/20. A total of 40 organisations have completed to date.
- A follow up email was sent on 28/4/20 encouraging more completions of survey, providing advice on how to promote opportunities and promising a further follow up call from one of the team.
- A mass phone round of 406 organisations registered with VG began w/b 4/5/20 in order to identify opportunities and gather information on the challenges being faced, thus allowing for support service delivery to be tweaked and prioritised. 3 sectors were prioritised in Phase 1, representing 62% of those registered;
  - Children, Family and Youth Services
  - Health & Social Care
  - Housing & Community Regeneration

Key Findings

In both survey and phone round respondents were asked to identify which of the following volunteering challenges their org is facing;

Challenge Category	Survey (40 Orgs)	Phone round (151 Vol Mgr's)
Developing new roles	11%	46%
Managing vols remotely	29%	55%
Safeguarding	20%	37%
Developing mg't systems	46%	2%
Maintaining engagement with existing vols	18%	60%
Reduced staff/board capacity	18%	28%*

*number of calls that were unanswered with no voicemail option or had auto messages saying staff were furloughed/services were suspended suggest this fig is probably considerably higher

Emerging Themes

Difficult to engage orgs - As of 6/5/20, VG staff have made a total 345 calls and had 151 conversations with volunteer involving organisations, left 49 voicemails and sent 50 direct follow up emails. Despite multiple attempts in different formats, staff have so far been unable to make meaningful contact with approx. 60% of orgs registered with VG in the 3 priority sectors.

Having gone through the notes of all 151 'successful' calls I'd say the following;

- Although 'maintaining engagement with existing vols' and 'managing vols remotely' are probably the 2 key perceived challenges, it is clear that many organisations are facing multiple significant challenges with many expressing concern over 4,5 or even all 6 challenge categories.
- Many respondents specifically expressed gratitude for the chance to feed their issues into decision making processes at both VG and in the wider structures. There were also multiple comments about how useful VG's safeguarding info and updates were in the early stage of lockdown.

- It is highly unlikely that we will see a significant uptick in the number of formal opportunities available for promotion under current lockdown regulations.
- Many organisations have completely suspended services and therefore volunteering programmes too.
- Those organisations who have pivoted to delivering new services have tended to focus on existing service users and utilised existing staff and volunteers.
- A significant minority reported fearing 'opening the floodgates' to thousands of applications if they promote roles.
- For many organisations, moving staff and services online has been a slower and more challenging process than they thought although many report progress being made.
- Organisations are now starting to focus on what happens post-lockdown with fears expressed about how many volunteers they'll have available when services resume.

Next Steps

- VG will carry out Phase 2 i.e. the expansion of the phone round to other sectors.
- VG will prioritise supporting the few organisations who do have an immediate need for volunteers to advertise them quickly and effectively.
- VG will use the data gathered to better inform ongoing internal planning discussions about the best suite of support services to develop/promote in order to meet needs.
- VG will host 5 Networking Events for a total of 40 Vol Managers in late May, gathering more information about the volunteering needs of the sector and how best VG can support them.

Volunteer Glasgow

7/5/20