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#WhyVolunteeringMatters

What is volunteering?

- In its Volunteering Strategy (2004 - 2009) the Scottish Government defined volunteering as: “...the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, the environment and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one’s own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary.”
- All the other definitions we have examined agree on three elements: volunteering is by choice, is unpaid and it benefits people in the wider community outside immediate family.
- Volunteering can be either *formal* or *informal* and this strategy is concerned with both:
 - Formal volunteering refers to activities coordinated through an organisation, be it a small community group consisting entirely of volunteers, individuals serving as trustees on the boards of voluntary (and charitable) organisations, or through major public sector agencies such as NHS Health Boards, local authorities, or educational establishments (e.g. through university programmes or student associations).
 - Informal volunteering refers to activities undertaken independently as an individual to help others (e.g. checking on the wellbeing of an elderly neighbour), or as part of wider community activity in response to an identified issue or need (e.g. care and maintenance of the local environment).

Why is it important to Glasgow?

- Volunteering is the lifeblood of our 21st century, democratic civil society. People across the city choose to volunteer to:
 - Run sport and the arts
 - Support other people when they're vulnerable
 - Provide programmes and activities for our children and young people
 - Govern charities and community groups
 - Deliver advice and information services
 - Raise funds for charity
 - Protect and enhance the environment
 - Work to promote community safety and justice
 - Promote animal welfare
 - Develop other people's skills and support learning
 - Provide mutual support, health, housing and social care services
 - Undertake collective action/representation
 - Help organise and deliver events
 - Campaign for change.
- And there is an ever increasing body of evidence which confirms that people who volunteer are happier, healthier and more employable: *"Once you tot up the private benefits of volunteering - well-being, health, skills - something quite striking becomes apparent. The benefits to volunteering might be as large, if not larger, for volunteers themselves as for recipients. In other words, in giving we really do receive - possibly as much as we give!"*¹
- According to the Glasgow Household Survey in 2015 around 1 in 5 (19%) respondents had volunteered in the last 12 months. Of this group, 65% volunteered "formally" through a club or charity and 27% volunteered informally. A further 7% undertook both formal and informal activities.
- More than half (56%) of those who undertook formal volunteering did so at least once a week, with almost a quarter (24%) volunteering several times a week. A further 12% volunteered at least once a month and 31% did so less frequently.
- But we also know that people in Glasgow formally volunteer less than the rest of Scotland and that many people face a range of barriers which make it difficult to volunteer.

¹ Taken from a speech given by Andrew Haldane, Chief Economist, Bank of England: "In giving, how much do we receive? The Social Value of Volunteering", September 2014.

What do we want to achieve?

- Our vision for Glasgow is as, *“A city that values and supports volunteering, recognising its contribution to personal and community development, encouraging everyone to participate and share in the benefits, and enhancing practice across sectors to ensure quality volunteering experiences accessible to all.”*²
- We want to:
 1. Increase recognition of the contribution of volunteering to local and national priorities.
 2. Promote quality volunteer management practice to ensure positive volunteering experiences.
 3. Increase the number and type of opportunities in which volunteers can get involved.
 4. Increase the number of people volunteering.

² Glasgow's Strategic Volunteering Framework 2009

What principles and values should guide us?

1. Freedom and Choice – everyone should be free to choose to volunteer their time, energy and skills for the benefit of their community – without compulsion and without any unreasonable restrictions.
2. Mutual benefit – Every opportunity should identify how people will benefit from their participation in volunteering, and how their role will contribute both to the organisation and to wider community social objectives.
3. Volunteering and Paid Employment – We recognise that huge areas of activity in society are entirely reliant on people’s volunteering efforts. Increasing volunteering opportunities need not – and should not – detract from efforts to increase employment opportunities.
4. Inclusion – Volunteer involving organisations should actively seek to make opportunities as accessible as possible, and will monitor the diversity of their volunteers to ensure it reflects the characteristics of the general population.
5. Out of pocket expenses – People should not be financially disadvantaged by volunteering.
6. Collaboration – Both volunteers and paid staff should contribute to the development of volunteering policies and procedures, co-designing and developing new roles and opportunities too!
7. Appropriate resourcing – Support, training/development, inclusion, and recognition for people volunteering should be planned and budgeted for.
8. Support – people volunteering should be provided with support appropriate to their role and needs.
9. Quality – organisations should develop volunteer management processes and practice that support a positive, inclusive, high quality experience.
10. Healthy Environment – People that are volunteering have a right to a safe, secure and healthy environment, free from harassment and discrimination; and to a clear mechanism for the resolution of any concerns/disputes.
11. Recognition – The contribution of people volunteering and the value they bring to communities and services should be publicly recognised and celebrated.

What are we going to do?

We have a detailed action plan for the period 2015-18 which is available separately.

Included in the plan are the following key actions:

- Launch the Glasgow Volunteering Charter to challenge and support organisations to develop and increase inclusive volunteering opportunities and to raise the profile of volunteering in order to achieve a significant increase in the number of people volunteering
- Work with Job Centre Plus, Regeneration Agencies and the Home Office in clarifying guidance, making volunteering more accessible
- Work with Glasgow's Learning Partnership and Youth Employment Board to promote volunteering within schools and improve monitoring systems
- Develop a partnership for the promotion and marketing of volunteering coordinated by Volunteer Glasgow
- Gather further evidence on the impact of volunteering at a local and city-wide level using the Scottish Household Survey, the Glasgow Household Survey and the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health and Wellbeing and Schools Surveys

How will we know if we are successful?

Ultimately our aim is that more people in Glasgow choose to enjoy the benefits of volunteering and feel able to do so.

For this to happen we need the number of inclusive and appropriate volunteering opportunities to increase and we need to ensure people know how to access them.

Our action plan for 2015-18 lists in detail the data we will use to measure our success and the targets we have set ourselves.

We have a group which looks at data collection and this will report to the Governance Group every 6 months to ensure we are keeping on track.

These are the specific things by which we will judge our success:

1. All community planning partners have an understanding of the positive impact of volunteering on all policy areas, in particular employability as a strategic priority for the city, as well as developing, agreeing and implementing appropriate volunteering strategies. They recognise that volunteering is of value in itself; not just as a means of improving employability.
2. There will be an increased number of volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) operating a continuous improvement cycle to improve quality and inclusive practice to appropriate recognised quality standards.
3. There will be a centralised, one-stop shop approach for volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.
4. There will be increased opportunities for people volunteering to participate in accredited training, to develop skills for employment, to improve confidence as well as enhancing their personal development, health & wellbeing and to experience a diversity of volunteering opportunities.
5. There will be increased opportunities for recognising and accrediting volunteers' learning and employability skills.
6. People living in poverty can access volunteering opportunities.
7. There will be an increased level of awareness of volunteering, the benefits and how to get involved.
8. There will be increased employer-supported volunteering, leading to enhanced links between employers and communities.
9. There will be increased numbers of people volunteering.

Who is helping us?

- The Community Planning Partnership has authorised a governance group to develop and manage the Framework. The Group is called the “Strategic Volunteering Framework Governance Group”. The Group meets quarterly and more frequently if business dictates.
- Membership includes Volunteer Glasgow, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life, NHS GGC, Clyde Gateway, Glasgow Kelvin College, GCVS, Community Justice Authority, Skills Development Scotland, Health & Social Care Partnership, Wheatley Group and Glasgow Caledonian/Children’s University.

How can you get involved?

- If you are interested in volunteering and discovering hundreds of opportunities that are already available in Glasgow, you can visit the Volunteer Glasgow website or offices, or make contact using the details provided below.
- If you or your organisation would like to advertise or develop volunteering opportunities or programmes - please contact Volunteer Glasgow.
- You can download a copy of the detailed SVF action plan for 2015-18 from **volunteerglasgow.org/svf**
- Talk to us and take part in the conversation **#WhyVolunteeringMatters**



volunteerglasgow.org

Find us also on:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
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