

**Cross Party Group on Volunteering Meeting
Minute
Wednesday 31st January 2018, 1.00pm-2.30pm
Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament
Convenor: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP**

Attendees

MSP members of the Group

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP – Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (Convenor)
Jeremy Balfour MSP - Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (Vice Convenor)
Fulton McGregor MSP – Scottish National Party (Vice Convenor)
Johann Lamont MSP – Scottish Labour Party

Non-MSPs Members of the Group:

Paul Okroj – Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, Margaret Starkie – Volunteer Scotland, John Mullin – Volunteer Scotland, Bernadette Monaghan – Volunteer Glasgow, Sarah Van Putten – Befriending Networks, Paul Wilson – Volunteer Edinburgh, Anne Hislop – Volunteer Scotland, Beverly Gall – Rowan Alba Lit, Chris Pettigrew – International Voluntary Service, Elaine Rimmer- PKAVS Volunteering Hub, Emma Cormack – Citizen Advice Scotland, Erin Fulton – Planning Aid for Scotland, Helen Fleming – Dyslexia Scotland, Ian Todd – CSR Scotland, James Jopling – Samaritans, Louise McGinty – Quarriers, Rebekah Menzies – Carnegie UK trust, Ruth Hutton- Scottish Government, Sarah Latto – Shelter Scotland, Shelagh Young – Homestart Scotland, Tracey Stewart – Rowan Alba Ltd, Will McLean – CHAS, Paul Reddish, Project Scotland, Amy Blake – International Voluntary Service, Alice Hancock – International Voluntary Service, Graham Copson – Volunteering Otago, New Zealand, Rebekah Moore – Scottish Drugs Forum, Ruth Bowen – Bield Housing & Care, Biddy Kelly – Fresh Start, Tina Cameron – Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire, Emma Murton – Guide Dogs, Alex James – Scouts Scotland, Catriona MacLeod- CVS Inverclyde, Joanne Stewart – Breast Cancer Care Scotland, Shelia McPherson – St Andrews First Aid, Ryan Devlin – Cancer Research UK

Apologies

MSP members of the Group

Pauline McNeil MSP – Scottish Labour Party
Gordon Lindhurst 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.

Actions from previous meeting:

- Convenor/secretariat to invite the Cabinet Secretary to a future CPG meeting. **Complete**
- Convenor/secretariat will write to all MSP's to request topics for lunchtime seminars based on issues raised within committees – it is aimed to have 2 seminars in 2018. **Complete**

- The Secretariat to arrange a joint CPG based on suggestions from members- **On-going**.
- The Secretariat to arrange to have a panel of corporate organisations such as SSE, RBS; Standard Life to discuss their employer supported volunteering schemes at a future meeting. **On-going**
- liV/liVE presentation to be agreed for next CPG meeting. **Complete**

All actions from the meeting on the 1st November 2017 were ratified.

3. **Matters Arising**

The convener raised the recent announcement that Scottish Government will cease to fund Voluntary Action Scotland from Sept 2018 – it was agreed this requires further discussion at the next CPG whereby a member of the third sector unit will provide an update.

The convener highlighted discussion such as these can help as in recent week he has helped with a campaign with the Scottish Sports Association to have their funding cut decision reversed.

4. **Investing in Volunteers (liV) Presentation – Anne Hislop, Volunteer Scotland**

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/investing-in-volunteers/>

Presentation is available on request from the secretariat.

liV is seen as the quality standard in helping organisations improve/maintain a high standard of volunteer management.

Paul Wilson Volunteer Edinburgh highlighted this its an invaluable tool to access how organisations are working and create a duty of care to volunteers.

Johann Lamont MSP stated liV was a way to identify good and fair employers especially helping to protect young people as they are encouraged to volunteer to make them more employable therefore the standard plays a part ensuring they have a good volunteering experience and are valued.

James Jopling –Samaritans asked what was in place for non-staff roles as within the Samaritans volunteers are managed by volunteers. Scottish Government has a business pledge but this doesn't cover volunteers.

Paul Reddish highlighted Project Scotland and SCVO are working together to develop a ESV digital platform which will be piloted by Scottish Government and a private sector organisation which will connect employers direct with an organisation and volunteers.

Ian Todd – CSR commented that liV and liVE is a way for employers to enhance their corporate social responsibility agreements.

It was agreed that Investing in Volunteers and Employer supported volunteering was an on-going discussion point and that the CPG would welcome presentations from cross sector organisations on their experiences and benefits of ESV and achieving these standards.

5. **Flexible working and volunteering: What's the link– Shelagh Young – Homestart Scotland**

Context:

At the last meeting the loss of 25 million volunteer hours was reported in the Scottish Household survey. We know that informal volunteering is hard to capture. But as the director of a federated network of charities powered by volunteers I can only say that the job of recruiting and retaining volunteers is not getting easier.

Although we know that many highly motivated people pack volunteering into an already busy life we also know that “lack of time” is a reason frequently given for NOT volunteering.

We cannot afford to ignore this message because it does not just emerge from surveys enquiring into levels of volunteering.

The charity Working Families publishes an annual report - the Modern Families Index - focused on working parents.

In the latest report both part-time and full-time workers reported working significant additional hours on a regular basis. 40% were working some extra hours regularly and almost a third were putting in an extra 7 to 8 hours a week - in effect a whole extra day.

Going home on time was difficult for many. Working in the evenings and at weekends in addition to the full working week was commonplace. And the main drivers cited by respondents were excessive workload and organisational culture - as many said: It is just expected.

Would less time at work stimulate more volunteering?

The respondents in the Modern Families survey displayed a surprising willingness to accept pay cuts in order to work fewer hours.

36% of millennial said they would do this

31% of fathers and 29% of mothers said they were likely to do this if possible but that increased to 42% of millennial fathers and 31% of millennial mothers

As the questions were all asked in the context of parents reflecting on overall caring responsibilities we cannot simply assume people would do this to regain more time for volunteering.

However, the barriers of workload and organisational culture are relevant - not least because there is a link between overwork and poor wellbeing and a contrasting and much more positive relationship between volunteering and enhanced wellbeing.

I have personally suffered from unwillingness to volunteer because of pressures at work - it is not really a matter of overall time available but the anxiety induced by the risk of letting people down at the last minute when the day job gets in the way.

What can be done if work is getting in the way of volunteering?

I believe we have to address this primarily through the employee wellbeing dynamic.

We should be joining the call for more employers to adopt more flexible working policies. As well as taking care to address overworking.

This is because the vast majority of people are employed by SMEs - not the large corporate who are more able to incorporate paid days off for volunteering as part of an overall package of pay and benefits.

I am not sure I could turn round and tell my funders that all my staff were getting paid time off to work for someone else as volunteers. But I can and I do operate a highly flexible culture which offers both shorter working weeks (along with less pay!) and variable length days.

We already know that the “two paid volunteering days a year” offer made by many employers does not fit with the needs of many volunteer powered Third Sector services even when the time can be used in smaller chunks.

When it comes to greater flexibility to enable volunteering we know this approach is already taken by some managers - often on an individually negotiated basis and flying beneath the formal corporate radar. But I don't think this has been very well-researched.

Would it be possible to increase the propensity of employers to encourage flexible working linked to volunteering in the way many more are doing in relation to caring responsibilities?

It is already the case that employers have to respond to requests for flexible working fairly - they cannot create a hierarchy when assessing requests for flexible hours by, for example, putting parents needs above those of other types of carers.

But how many staff and managers feel clear and confident about making the case for the work-related benefits of enabling flexibility for potential volunteers?

Sheffield University has a very interesting policy which specifically addresses regular volunteering and one-off volunteering. It issues advice to staff on how to make requests and to managers on how to respond.

Both parties are encouraged to consider how the volunteering work contributes to both the community and the employee's personal and professional development.

And managers are clearly encouraged to consider flexible working options - such as later start or finish times to enable time off for volunteering during core hours without either loss of pay for the worker or loss of working time for the employer.

A case can be made for more employers adopting this approach - it can be grounded in existing research which shows the benefits employers can gain from the wellbeing and personal and skills development which comes with regular volunteering.

Is it time that we joined forces with the advocates of flexible working to mount a more effective communications campaign to all employers, large and small, to encourage more of them to adopt similar policies?

6. National Performance Framework – Volunteer Indicator

In 2015/16, the Scottish Government carried out a review of the National Performance Framework indicator set. Volunteer Scotland was invited to join a group of expert external stakeholders to help develop and improve the indicators. The primary focus for Volunteer Scotland was on the possible inclusion of a volunteering indicator to act as a proxy measure for community connectedness and relationships in Scotland. The rationale being thatVolunteering participation is a critical indicator for community wellbeing in Scotland. Increasing the volunteer participation rate would help communities become more cohesive and connected, and make individuals feel empowered in their community. Volunteering allows people to give something back to their community while also contributing to their own personal wellbeing" (Scottish Government1).

Despite positive engagement with the Scottish Government, a decision was taken not to include an indicator on volunteering in the refreshed NPF, mainly due to concerns surrounding the limitations of the current volunteering measurement in Scotland (taken from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS)). At that time, the SHS only captured formal volunteering and it was felt that this missed other "activities relating to participation and engagement in communities and wider society such as mutual help and

co-operation between individuals, between different types of communities and between communities and public services and authorities” (Scottish Government2).

National Outcomes Review

In addition to the previously mentioned review of the NPF, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 has also placed a duty on Scottish Ministers to consult on, develop and publish a new set of National Outcomes for Scotland (resulting in a complete review of the Scottish Government’s purpose, the National Outcomes and the National Performance Framework).

Following a period of public consultation in 2017, a new set of draft National Outcomes has been developed, including a communities’ outcome – we live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe. This has provided another opportunity for Volunteer Scotland to influence and shape the set of indicators that will be used in the NPF to measure this new National Outcome.

Volunteering Indicator

Volunteer Scotland believes there is a strong justification for a volunteering indicator to be included as one of the reporting measures for this new National Outcome. The key rationale being:

- Volunteering is a good proxy to evidence communities which are inclusive. The SHS volunteering results can be analyzed by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to determine the extent to which communities are engaged collaboratively through volunteering – both formally and informally given the recent announcement that the SHS will begin to capture informal volunteering;
- Volunteering empowers communities to be active citizens and tackle issues which are of importance to them. We know that volunteering is inherently a local activity and benefits those in the local community;
- Volunteering has health and wellbeing benefits that make individuals and communities stronger and more resilient, e.g. reduced loneliness and isolation, increased confidence and social capital, etc. Volunteering also provides skills and harder competencies of benefit to individuals that can enhance the social mobility of communities (especially for the younger age demographic);
- Volunteering takes place in many of the organizations which makes Scotland a much safer place, e.g. Police Scotland Youth Volunteers, charities dealing with domestic abuse and violence towards women, etc. Volunteering brings people together and promotes community spirit, helping to breakdown the (real or perceived) barriers to community cohesion and connectedness;
- Volunteering is the “golden thread” running through and binding communities together. It nurtures and promotes the core values that underpin a happy, healthy, resilient and engaged community.

Next steps

Volunteer Scotland believes there is a strong platform for formal and informal volunteering to be used as one of the key measures to evidence the new outcome for communities. In particular, the inclusion of informal volunteering in the SHS from 2018 has significantly strengthened the case for a volunteering indicator.

The Scottish Government has indicated that a final draft of the new National Performance Framework will be presented before Parliament in early 2018 (no exact timescales have been provided). In the intervening time before this submission, Volunteer Scotland will continue to engage with the Scottish Government to put forward the case for volunteering to be a leading indicator for the communities National Outcome. In anticipation of the review it would be beneficial for CPG members to support this proposal.

7. Isolation and Loneliness Consolation

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/01/2761/downloads>

Please see consultation for further information. Deadline for consultation is 30th April 2018.

8. Volunteer Pledge Campaign – Chris Pettigrew International Voluntary Service

The International Voluntary Service was established in 1931 and is UK wide charity which helps send volunteers overseas and bring volunteers from abroad to the UK; volunteers are in decline therefore a pledge has been created to attract more volunteers;

<https://www.volunteerpledge.org/>

The Volunteer Pledge Campaign an initiative run by The International Voluntary Service - Make the Pledge to volunteer in 2018 and make positive change to local communities, yourself, and to your CV.

Make a Difference -You can have a huge impact on an organisation, and the lives of those who depend on support, by volunteering

Make New Friends- Make friends and meet people you would not normally have the opportunity to engage with

Boost Your CV - As a volunteer, you can also pick up new skills and gain invaluable life experiences. It would be appreciated if the CPG members would look at the campaign and help promote it.

9. Any other business

Invitation to the Cabinet Secretary to attend the next meeting has been sent and we await a response.

The convener with the assistance of the secretariat will send an e-mail to all MSP's regarding the need and topics for future lunchtime seminars.

The Convener and CPG members welcomed Graham Copson – Volunteering Otago, New Zealand, who is visiting Volunteer Edinburgh, Graham highlighted that discussions from today's meetings and the barriers to volunteering are very similar to those in New Zealand and thanked everyone for the opportunity to attend the meeting.

Date of next meeting is 28th March 2018, 1.00-2.30pm, Committee Room 5.

ACTIONS

- Paul Reddish, Project Scotland to present ESV Digital Platform at next CPG.
- Secretariat to arrange presentations from cross sector organisations on ESV.
- The convener with the assistance of the secretariat will send an e-mail to all MSP's regarding the need and topics for future lunchtime seminars