

Cross-Party Group on Volunteering

29th March 2022 12pm-1pm online

Minute

Present

MSPs

Jeremy Balfour MSP, Co-Convener
Foyso Choudhury, MSP Co-Convener

Invited guests

Matthew Linning & Debbie Maltman – Volunteer Scotland
Natalie Masterson – SVE
Paul Bradley – SCVO
David Maxwell – Volunteer Glasgow

Non-MSP Group Members

Lesley	Hinds
Sarah	Cleary
Tracey	Stewart
Fleur	Dijkman
Katy	Wilson- Scott
Elizabeth	Wigelsworth
Fiona	Harvey
Victoria	McRae
Angela	Dulley
Louise	Orr
Douglas	Bryce
Vicky	flood
Mike	Melvin
Emma	O'Shea
Suzanne	Macaulay
Siobhan	Docherty
Brian	Corrigan
Angus	Maclean
Maria	Throp
Lisa	McTaggart
Kirstin	Worsley
Helen	Fleming

Rebecca	McDonald
Ben	Parker
Gregor	Muir
Sue	Fraser
Emma	Harrison
Paul	Wilson
Gregor	McGrogan
Lesley	Hinds
Richard	Park
Bev	Read
Magdalena	Clark
Ann	Wilson
Ian	McCall
Tracey	Passway
Rachael	Glennie
Catriona	MacLeod
Jen	Reston
Ronnie	Young

Apologies

Kim Atkinson
Sarah Van Putten

Minutes of previous meeting 26th October 2021

David Maxwell proposed the minutes of the previous meeting and Margaret Starkie seconded them.

‘The Road to Recovery’: Lessons Learned from Scotland’s Volunteering Response to COVID-19

Matthew Linning, Volunteer Scotland presented on the context on the road to recovery report which presents a detailed impact of COVID within the Third sector and volunteering in Scotland. It forms a UK research response taken over a 2-year period from March 2020 to Aug 2021.

Central to evidence base was the Scottish government survey of VIO’s and infrastructure organizations such as TSI’s and local authorities. The wealth of data was vast therefore to assist the reader we have provided a summary report called ‘Route map to Recovery’ its focused-on lessons learned and future looking. How we can capture the innovation and good practice that was created during the pandemic.

Debbie Maltman, Volunteer Scotland provided an overview of the research scope which was done diagrammatically using the route map to improvement which is very

much a learning journey. It focuses on national policy context, volunteering for all outcomes and the national resilience response. Then there is leadership which is a catalyst for change demonstrating how leaders stepped up to the plate at local, national and community levels during Covid-19. The research split the responses into expected, unexpected and formal. There were expected responses looking at partnership, training etc. but there was also an unexpected response was the update on digital volunteering, which was the single greatest update, based on OSCR research. The mutual aid response ranks as the most unexpected and transformational response to the pandemic. The questions going forward is how we optimize digital infrastructure and how we can maintain the mutual aid groups into Scotland's reliance responses/structures.

Formal volunteering priorities and needs – the evidence has identified specific volunteering priorities for VIOs, and their support needs to help them deliver these priorities. Importantly, these priorities and needs are as important for 'steady state' beyond COVID-19 as they are in helping to support the ongoing recovery and addressing future crises.

The full report can be found <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/research-and-evaluation/publications/covid-19-research/the-road-to-recovery/> and questions directed to Matthew and Debbie can be sent via Margaret as follow up.

Update on Volunteering Action Plan (VAP)

Natalie Masterson, representing as Chair of the Volunteering Action Plan Governance Group provided an update in the action plan.

The Volunteering for all framework was published in 2019 which sets the vision of volunteering. The development of the action plan was delayed due to the pandemic. The journey of the action was focused at using a Human System Learning approach which worked alongside 130 stakeholders from a range of sectors.

We have worked together in five working groups covering, lifelong engagement, policy impact, recognition and celebration, places and spaces and inclusion – a full systems view on how we can transform volunteering.

The working groups have gone through a complex journey to understand how economic and social drivers influence volunteers and to ensure volunteering is for all and the action plan will be launched at the Gathering in June 2022.

The main headings of the plan are societal impact of volunteering, this is what we know that volunteering can transform. Policy impact – looks at policies are most important to volunteering, where have we achieved greatest impact in policy development and where there is still work to be done and make the case why volunteering is a key driver in social change. Funding for success – has a relationship to policy but its also about enabling environment – we are looking to work closely with funders in the implementation of the action plan. The enabling environment are a broad set of actions looking at leadership of volunteering, voice of volunteers, how do we continue a learning environment and have a transformational affect.

All these aspects of the plan will be coordinated through plan management, communications and engagement and monitoring and evaluation.

Invitations will be sent to members to attend the launch of the action plan in June.

Scottish Government Multi- Year Resource Spending Review

Paul Bradley, SCVO shared thoughts on the spending review priorities, funding of the voluntary sector and the engagement of the sector. The Scottish Government spending review follows on from the UK funding review last year and the UK spending review better enables Scottish Government to publish multi-year spending plans and that is what SCVO are focused on to try and move away from short-term funding cycle. The Scottish Governments consultation on the spending review opened in December 2021, closes in March, and will publish it full findings in May.

The spending review priorities have 3 major priorities, and they are 1. Tackling child poverty 2. Addressing climate change 3. Securing a stronger, fairer, greener economy.

The Scottish Government's new national strategy for economic transformation is set to underpin how the review based it opinions on how it would secure a fairer, greener economy. However the strategy which was published over a month ago barely mention of the pioneering work of the voluntary and third sector to create a wellbeing economy. There was only one mention of volunteering in the whole document this comes off the back of a fiscal cut to the sectors budget.

Therefore SCVO's response to the spending review is that Scottish Government can and must do better to recognize the sectors direct and indirect roles.

In response to funding and based on the report, the Finance and Public Administration Committee states the committee supports Scottish Government's plans to publish multiyear spending plans which will provide much needed certainty to the public and voluntary sectors.

Finally the Scottish Government has asked how it can engage with the sector following the spending review and we are really pleased that the Cabinet Secretary is looking a way to engage across the sector beyond the consultation.

A full link to SCVO's response can be found here; <https://scvo.scot/p/49550/2022/03/22/scvo-consultation-response-to-the-scottish-governments-resource-spending-review>

Removing barriers to volunteering for people with a disability - will volunteering affect DWP benefits?

David Maxwell, Volunteer Glasgow presented an update on the TSI facilitation of discussions on providing clearer guidance to DWP on volunteering and work capability assessments. A UK wide survey has just closed and the co-design group who meet

regularly, will work on the next stage to facilitate some working groups to explore survey results. A report on the survey will be available very soon.

Any questions please direct to David Maxwell at Volunteer Glasgow.

AOB

No AOB was discussed.