

# REVIEW OF VOLUNTEERING IN GLASGOW

## Summary Report

September – November 2020



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# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

In September 2020, Advantage Training Consultancy were commissioned by Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, Volunteer Glasgow and Glasgow Life ('the commissioners') to conduct a review into the city's approach to promoting and developing volunteering.

The aim of the review was to provide recommendations to help achieve the vision outlined in *Volunteering for All 2019*, that Glasgow becomes a place "where everyone can volunteer, more often, and throughout their lives."<sup>1</sup>

## STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This is a summary report of the key findings and the recommendations.

It contains a brief description of how the review of volunteering was undertaken; outlines some of the limitations of the review; summarises the status of volunteering across the city now; and explains the recommendations and how they were reached.

For full details of the review, please see the main report.

## HOW THE REVIEW WAS CONDUCTED

A desk-based analysis of existing data was undertaken which helped inform the content of virtual interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders.

Stakeholders consulted included the commissioners, strategic partners, volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) and members of the public (n=69).

Participants were asked for their views on topics such as:

- What has gone well in terms of facilitating volunteering and community action over the last 12 months? (Pre-COVID; Post-COVID)

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government. 2019. Volunteering for All: national framework. National Framework, Edinburgh: Scottish Government. p.31.

- What could have gone better in terms of facilitating volunteering and community action over the last 12 months? (Pre-COVID; Post-COVID)
- What type of society do we want to see in the future?
- How can volunteering, community and third sector activity help us achieve this?
- Are Glasgow's strategies and structures for facilitating volunteering and community action fit for 'building back better'?

With the strategic partners and some VIOs, 14 hypotheses generated by the Glasgow Volunteering Strategy Governance Group (Policy and Research Sub Group) were also discussed to some extent.<sup>2</sup> These hypotheses were derived from analysis of a wide range of national and local survey and statistical data and included assertions to explain differences in rates of volunteering across ages; genders; areas of deprivation and localities.

A short online survey was also distributed for completion by members of the public, VIOs and other interested organisations (n=110).

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE REVIEW**

All projects of this type are subject to a range of limitations. These include:

- The views expressed by all participants are their own – they do not necessarily represent the views of the organisations they are employed by/volunteer with.
- Very few stakeholders were able to offer informed views on the hypotheses generated by the Policy and Research Sub Group. Instead, most were able to offer more general views on the circumstances pertaining in Glasgow on the issues in question e.g., on patterns of volunteering within particular groups.
- Despite best efforts, it has not been possible to gather the views of many Glasgow residents who do not currently volunteer nor the views of disabled people who live in Glasgow. The views of these demographics are therefore not represented as comprehensively as the consultants would have wished.
- Members of the public who have engaged with this review are a 'self-selecting sample' and therefore cannot be considered wholly representative.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix One.

# STATUS OF VOLUNTEERING IN GLASGOW

The main report is written in a 'SWOT' (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) analysis format and is divided into three substantive chapters:

- The Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-24<sup>3</sup> – Key themes identified include: the different ways people are now volunteering; persisting inequality of place; the impacts (positive and negative) of COVID-19 and financial concerns.
- Activities which can support identified needs – Key themes identified include: the need to elevate the profile of volunteering; altering the vocabulary used; and better addressing people's motivation for volunteering.
- Structures and the use of resources in the city – Key themes identified include: the people of Glasgow were seen as a significant strength and the perceived lack of a single, focused leadership for volunteering was the major weakness highlighted, along with a gap between the volunteering strategy and its operation.

Running through all three chapters are several 'golden threads' which are summarised below.

## WHERE GLASGOW EXCELS IN TERMS OF VOLUNTEERING

### **'People really do make Glasgow' and see the benefits of volunteering**

Stakeholders from all groups mentioned there is a 'civic passion' in Glasgow and people from all walks of life were seen to want to contribute:

- *"The people of Glasgow are passionate; there is a desire to get involved."* (VIO)

Resident's volunteering response to COVID-19 exemplified this desire to help their communities and support their neighbours – often in informal ways:

- *"People's volunteering response has been incredibly effective. Informal volunteering widened with COVID-19."* (Commissioner)

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<sup>3</sup> Glasgow Community Planning Partnership (CPP). 2019. Glasgow's Volunteering Strategy 2019 – 24. <http://www.volunteerglasgow.org/downloads/Glasgows-Volunteering-Strategy-2019-24-as-presented-to-GCPP-26-03-2019.pdf>.

The benefits of volunteering to the individual as well as to society were widely recognised. Stakeholders who participated in this review believed volunteering contributed to positive physical and mental wellbeing and to community development:

- *"Volunteering is really good for your mental wellbeing – you make friends."* (Volunteer)
- *"It [volunteering] also gives many people an opportunity to improve their health, especially older people..."* (Volunteer via survey)
- *"It allows you to connect your community. It helps to make new friends and boost your Social skills..."* (Volunteer via survey)

## **WHERE GLASGOW COULD IMPROVE IN TERMS OF VOLUNTEERING**

**Language is important: The term 'volunteering' does not capture the full range of people's contributions to their neighbours and communities**

Many people in Glasgow – including those traditionally under-represented in volunteering (e.g., those in poverty) – have been undertaking tasks that they do not consider 'volunteering'. This means their contribution to the community may not always be effectively captured or fully supported. Widening the definition of volunteering and elevating its profile was seen to be important by numerous stakeholders – particularly since the manner in which services and supports were delivered altered with COVID-19:

- *"Mutual aid – people don't see it as volunteering; it's a cultural thing. We underestimate the full range of people's contributions. Organisations are beginning to see it now..."* (Commissioner)
- *How we capture information about informal volunteering is important – those living in deprivation are less likely to consider themselves a 'volunteer' despite 'informally volunteering'. (Commissioner)*
- *"We need to get rid of the term 'volunteering' and replace it with 'social responsibility'. And we should start talking about it in schools."* (VIO)
- *"There's something about messaging. Engaging people and understanding their motivation. Often it's about 'giving back to the community' or 'helping people'."* (VIO)

In addition to altering the vocabulary used, having a single leadership body in Glasgow for volunteering was also seen to be a crucial area for development.

## **There is no single, focused leadership with a strong, cohesive vision for volunteering and corresponding support to VIOs to promote the vision and strategy**

Many stakeholders highlighted the lack of a single leadership body, pushing forward and 'owning' a vision and strategy for volunteering, as a weakness in Glasgow:

- *"Volunteer Glasgow and GCVS should function as one organisation – they are two sides of the same coin."* (Strategic Partner)
- *"GCVS, Volunteer Glasgow and Glasgow Social Enterprise Network are all in the leadership frame. Where is volunteering happening? Glasgow Life."* (Strategic Partner)
- *'What could be done differently?': A single agency that handles and integrates volunteering alongside capacity building and enterprise development would be most useful for third sector organisations to go to when they want to develop themselves."* (VIO via survey)
- *"Who is going to own the strategy and drive it forwards? Someone needs to. There's a gap between strategy and operation."* (Strategic Partner)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

These evidence-based conclusions and recommendations consider the data gathered as part of this review in its entirety, and draw justification from across the whole body of work. **Please note, the recommendations are presented in analytic order, not in any order of importance or priority.**

### **Recommendation One**

***Revise Glasgow's Volunteering Charter or use a different method to monitor and assess Community Planning Partner (CPP) commitment to volunteering.***

The figures produced for the Charter do not necessarily reflect the ethos or activity of the CPPs. Given the current economic climate and the response to COVID-19, it may be that CPPs have created new ways of working to accommodate volunteering. Further consultation with these bodies to ascertain how best to support them to achieve appropriate volunteering strategies might be prudent.

## **Recommendation Two**

*Marketing messages should be revised to highlight wider benefits of volunteering.*

*Greater emphasis should be placed on 'volunteering to make a difference' and 'volunteering to give back', in addition to the health and wellbeing benefits.*

*Caution should be used when speaking about employability benefits given the current economic climate. It may be better to speak of 'gaining skills and experience'.*

## **Recommendation Three**

*More emphasis is needed to encourage, support and capture data on 'volunteering', in its widest sense, in deprived areas. This might involve working in different ways such as co-locating advice and support for those interested in offering their time in unpaid capacities in existing community venues such as libraries or health centres.*

Given anecdotal evidence and indications from reports on the response to COVID-19, those in areas of higher deprivation; the unemployed; those in rented/social housing etc. are more likely to informally volunteer, work with mutual aid groups, or offer their time to others in some 'unassigned' manner than to volunteer in a 'formal' way.

Their contribution is not always recognised because they do not consider what they do as 'volunteering' and, for the same reason, they may not access support available to them in their role that they might benefit from.

Having visible support, easily accessible in locations people already attend, may go some way to help increase data capture and may also encourage local residents to get involved with opportunities that interest them.

Linked to this recommendation is Recommendation Thirteen – to widen the definition of 'volunteering'.

## **Recommendation Four**

*Since Volunteer Glasgow is considered by some to 'quality assure' the volunteering opportunities it advertises, perhaps it should consider only advertising those which offer to reimburse volunteers for any out-of-pocket expenses as soon as they are incurred. This may help reduce financial barriers to participation.*

## **Recommendation Five**

There still seems to be some way to go to make many volunteering opportunities accessible to those with physical disabilities.

*Some awareness raising may help advise VIOs that not all 'reasonable adjustments' have significant financial implications.*

*It may also be worth thinking creatively e.g., could Self Directed Support direct payments enable those eligible to access volunteering opportunities more effectively?*

## **Recommendation Six**

*Volunteer Glasgow 'Taster Courses'<sup>4</sup> are well received by traditionally excluded groups. Consideration should be given to increasing the reach of this programme across the whole city and to include other groups such as young people.*

## **Recommendation Seven**

*Childcare responsibilities are a barrier to volunteering for some groups. Thought could be given to encouraging partnership working between childcare providers/NC, HNC or SVQ childcare placements and VIOs; potentially linking the Volunteering Strategy with the (Vocational) Education Strategy.*

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<sup>4</sup> A two-week programme where volunteers are supported to experience a wide range of volunteering placements across different sectors and use different skills.



## **Recommendation Eight**

*VIOs should be encouraged and supported to put volunteers through certificated courses.*

A central body could perhaps coordinate the organisation of a range of popular courses and provide VIOs with the opportunity to book places on an ad hoc basis.

## **Recommendation Nine**

*To be more inclusive and accessible, the volunteering database of opportunities could be developed.*

Ideas suggested included:

- having the ability to match volunteer skills/wants to the opportunities available;
- having the instructions on how to use the database available in a range of popular languages such as Farsi, Arabic, Kurdish etc.
- having the instructions on how to use the database available in 'simple English';
- using some simple graphics to help with explanation.

Linked to this recommendation, is Recommendation Ten.

## **Recommendation Ten**

*To be more inclusive, accessible and efficient, there should be a simple, universal application form for all volunteering opportunities advertised on the central Glasgow volunteering database.*

## **Recommendation Eleven**

*Building on what was delivered during COVID-19, better, more accessible volunteer management training is required; training suitable for Mutual Aid organisations and informal volunteering too.*

Thinking creatively, this support could perhaps come from the private sector, offering their expertise in a voluntary capacity.

This links in with Recommendation Twelve.

## **Recommendation Twelve**

***There is a need to work more closely and more effectively with the private / corporate sector.***

In the wake of COVID-19, with both people and organisations feeling an increased social responsibility, now might be the time to have conversations with corporations about how they can support VIOs (in the widest sense) more effectively to support the local community e.g., as Trustees/Board Members/Advisors on specific topics including digital literacy/inclusion and mental wellbeing support for volunteers.

## **Recommendation Thirteen**

***Language is important. 'Volunteering' needs to be rebranded to include the breadth of people's contributions to their neighbours and communities.***

Many people do not see what they do as 'volunteering', nor are they attracted to what they perceive to be 'volunteering' in the traditional, formal sense.

Emphasis should be placed on 'giving back' and 'community benefit'. Opportunities within the public sector, mutual aid groups and other forms of informal volunteering should be highlighted.

## **Recommendation Fourteen**

***Celebrate volunteering in its widest sense.***

Many of those consulted with as part of this review felt volunteers were not fully appreciated. There was a desire for some sort of celebratory event where the full range of contributions were acknowledged at a city level – including the informal roles prevalent during the pandemic response.

Volunteer Week (June) might be the obvious time to conduct such a celebratory event, and it may be prudent to seek feedback from volunteers about how they want to be recognised.

## **Recommendation Fifteen**

*There is a need for a single, focused leadership with a strong, cohesive vision for volunteering and the capacity to provide corresponding support to VIOs.*

A single leadership body, with the power and accountability to drive forward the volunteering strategy across the city – to get ‘buy in’ at an operational level – is required.

## **Recommendation Sixteen**

*Consideration should be given to liaising with the national charities responsible for the COVID-19 volunteering response. Migrating responsibility for ongoing contact with those Glasgow residents not used in the national programme, to a local body, may foster better relationships with potential future volunteers.*

## **Recommendation Seventeen**

*Traditional sources of funding have significantly altered in financial year 2020/21. Perhaps new funding streams from the Council / Health & Social Care Partnerships etc. should be linked to the Volunteering Strategy and include requirements to work better together.*

Going forwards, funding should perhaps be more strategic to reflect national and local priorities – including as they pertain to volunteering (in its widest sense).<sup>5</sup> Perhaps new funding streams need to be linked to the Volunteering Strategy and include requirements to work better together.

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, see: ‘Resilient and Empowered Communities’, *Glasgow City Council Strategic Plan 2017 to 2022* (Glasgow City Council 2017) and links with the five strategic priorities for the Glasgow City IJB / HSCP for health and social care in Glasgow e.g., Prevention, early intervention and harm reduction (Integrated Joint Board 2019).

# APPENDIX ONE | HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis	Sources of Evidence
<p><b>Gender</b></p> <p>1. There is a greater amount of formal volunteering in sport in Glasgow City as a proportion of all formal volunteering as male participation has always been higher in sport.</p> <p>2. There are a plethora of projects which focus on increasing male volunteering.</p>	<p>NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health and Wellbeing Survey 2017-18 Volunteering Cross Sectional Analysis.</p>
<p><b>Each of the other LAAs recorded a significant reduction in volunteering participation over the period 2014/15-2017/18, while Glasgow City rate remained steady.</b></p> <p>3. The public awareness campaigns and inclusion programmes for event volunteering at Glasgow 2014, Homeless World Cup and Glasgow 2018 mitigated the effects of wider economic conditions and social security policies on adult participation in Glasgow City but not in the other LAAs/GGC area overall.</p> <p>4. A possible reduction in infrastructure support services for volunteering in other LAAs also contributed to a reduction in participation rates.</p> <p>5. Local VG support and TP community engagement programmes both before and throughout the period contributed to Govanhill and Greater Gorbals increases: such programmes didn't exist or started later in the other TPs/neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health and Wellbeing Survey - time series: 2014-15 and 2017-18 for NHSGGC</p>
<p><b>Volunteering more common in older school pupils in least deprived areas than in most deprived areas; more common in girls than boys.</b></p> <p>6. There are likely to be fewer volunteering opportunities in more deprived areas.</p> <p>7. Volunteering in young people is also likely to be shaped by parental attitudes and behaviour in relation to volunteering.</p>	<p>NHS GGC schools' surveys - Glasgow City Schools Health &amp; Well Being Survey 2014/15.</p>
<p><b>Mega-event volunteering programmes tend to attract people who are already volunteering and in employment, particularly from more affluent areas.</b></p> <p>8. Volunteering programmes were not designed to promote participation from people in most deprived areas/those furthest from volunteering.</p>	<p>Evaluations of event volunteering programmes 2014-18</p>
<p><b>Higher levels of mortality recorded in Scotland compared with other parts of the UK cannot be explained entirely in terms of poverty and socioeconomic deprivation alone. One possible contributory factor here is volunteering: Volunteering rates in Glasgow are significantly lower than in Manchester and Liverpool, which are cities with similar levels of deprivation.</b></p>	<p>GCPH and Co - Excess Mortality</p>

<p>9. Other cities may have transitioned to post-industrial life more effectively. Liverpool is a more socially and politically active city - population has developed capacities for coping with stressful events. Manchester much more ethnically diverse. Artefact: currently used measures of deprivation fail to capture important differences in the complex 'lived reality' of deprivation and poverty in Scotland, and especially in Glasgow, compared with elsewhere in the UK.</p>	
<p><b>Why is there less regular volunteering in Glasgow than in Scotland?</b></p> <p>10. As 47% of Glasgow residents live in 1st quintile SIMD datazones (2016), the overall Glasgow rate is significantly impacted by poverty. But are the rates in Glasgow consistent with the national rates for each quintile or...?</p>	<p>SHS analysis for Glasgow City: 2013 - 2016</p>
<p><b>Formal youth volunteer participation is 49%, nearly double the adult formal volunteer figure of 26%.</b></p> <p>11. Consistent policies and programmes across a population segment can increase volunteering participation rates and address inequalities.</p> <p>12. Survey data gives compelling evidence that for those in education, there are a range of 'push factors' and 'influencers' in their lives which encourages much higher volunteering participation in young people. Indeed, the formal volunteering participation rate is nearly double that for the adult volunteering participation in Scotland.</p>	<p>Young People in Scotland SURVEYS</p>
<p><b>Volunteering participation has increased by 26% during covid19 lockdown, from 48% to 74% of those surveyed. Informal volunteering has much higher participation (35%) compared to mutual aid (16%) and formal volunteering (13%).</b></p> <p>13. People's availability to volunteer increased as a result of furlough scheme and lockdown restrictions.</p> <p>14. People encouraged to volunteer informally and in mutual aid groups particularly via social media and via TSIs/Volunteer Centres/Volunteer Scotland and LAA partners.</p>	<p>IPSOS-MORI for Volunteer Scotland</p>