

# Plan Summary

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June 2022



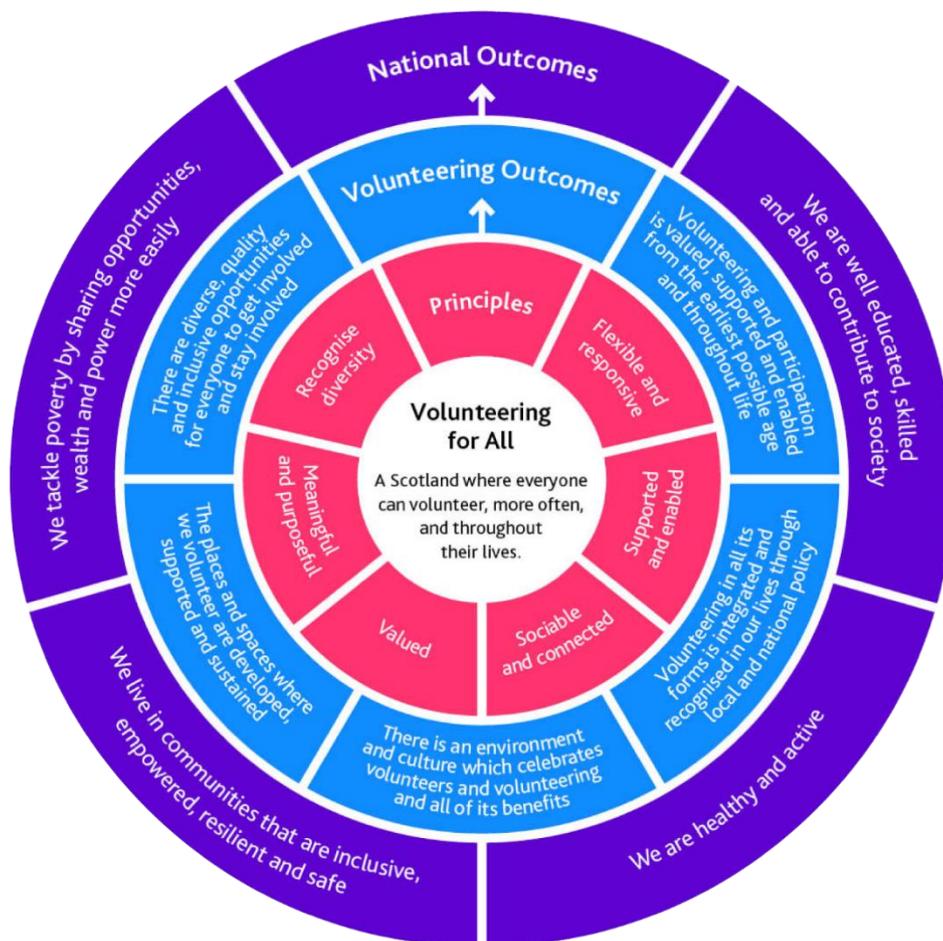
# Introduction

The Volunteering Action Plan aims to create a Scotland where everyone can volunteer, more often, and throughout their lives.

Volunteers have a key role in the delivery of many services to Scotland’s population at all life-stages, as well as supporting community connection and conserving Scotland’s natural, historical, and cultural assets. Many voluntary and public sector organisations are reliant on the contribution of volunteers to support their work, whilst the vibrancy of local communities is dependent upon individuals volunteering informally. This spectrum of volunteers is the heartbeat of Scotland.

However, the vital role of volunteering is often taken for granted and is consequently underrepresented at a strategic level. More work is needed, especially around partnership development and policy impact, if we are to maximise its potential and ensure it is inclusive for all.

The Volunteering Action Plan acknowledges the cross-cutting value of volunteering. It builds upon Volunteering for All: The National Framework and is mapped to Scotland’s National Outcomes as demonstrated in the diagram below.



The Volunteering Action Plan provides a renewed focus on the contribution of volunteers in communities and seeks to tackle inequality in volunteering through supporting the most disadvantaged in our society.

The Plan is designed to provide actions over a 10-year period. It is a 'Living Plan' and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. By adopting a learning culture and using an 'experimental' approach to the implementation of actions, the plan will continue to evolve in a dynamic way.

The specific end goals of the Plan which will determine its success are:

- Increase volunteering participation by focusing on non-volunteers and lapsed volunteers, and especially those who will gain most benefit.
- Widen access to volunteering by understanding and reducing the barriers to participation and supporting community-based, 'place-making' activities.
- Listen to volunteers by ensuring that the volunteer 'voice' is heard and that volunteers help make the decisions that affect them.
- Provide great experiences whereby volunteers feel supported, valued, and recognised for their contribution.

## **Cross-Cutting Themes**

To achieve these goals the Plan addresses key cross-cutting issues including how we improve our Policy Impact over time, and key actions to effectively fund and resource the Plan in Funding for Success. We have also described an Enabling Environment with elements around Leadership, Evidence and Voice, Learning, Capacity Building, Resilience, and Digital Volunteering. Actions within these areas will improve our ability to work effectively and collectively on the key challenges facing volunteering over the next 10-years.

### **Policy Impact**

While the profile of volunteering has increased significantly in the last decade, it continues to be significantly under-represented within public policy. This is a barrier to policy-maker engagement. By developing an infrastructure for the impact of volunteering to be shared across all relevant policy areas, partners and decision-makers can ensure that volunteering is properly valued and reflected across public policy.

### **Funding**

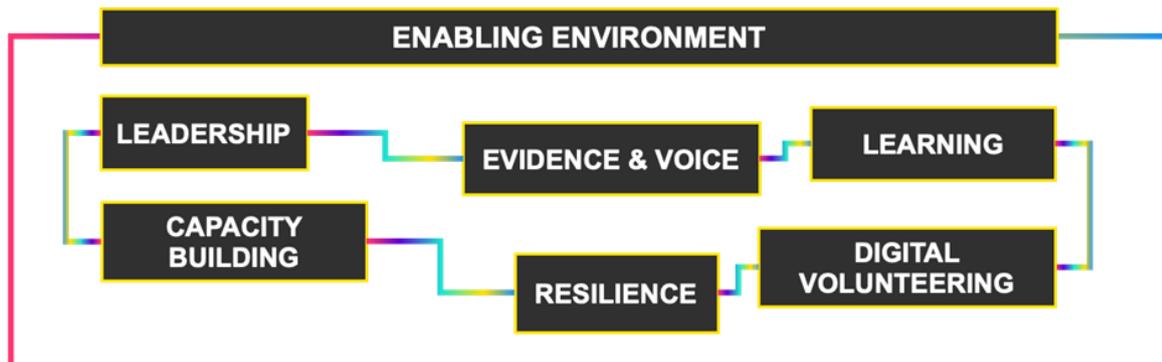
To unlock the aspirations of Volunteering for All, we must ensure that volunteering is appropriately funded. Volunteering is largely 'invisible' as a discrete funding opportunity; it is often viewed as a 'side-benefit' of a larger project instead of having strategic value in and of itself.

To 'fund for success' we must involve 'funders' as co-creators within solutions, through a consortium or similar structure. We must look to increase 'visibility' of

volunteering through tighter standards within third sector funding and increase sector engagement around impact measurement. Finally, we must be bold in our ambition for new ways of working, funded through 'experimental' actions with long-term impact.

## Enabling Environment

An Enabling Environment is our foundation for future action. It improves our ability to work effectively and collectively on the key challenges facing volunteering over 10 years.



### Leadership

Leaders will drive the Plan. There must be clear pathways to becoming a Leader in volunteering.

### Evidence and Voice

Evidence highlights gaps and tells us as much about what we 'don't know' as what we do. We must consider who and what can help us better understand our system. This involves hearing from those with lived experience.

### Learning

Learning is critical to achieving Volunteering for All but it will require us to organise and value learning differently.

### Capacity Building

Creating an environment where volunteering thrives requires that we improve the infrastructure that enables volunteering.

### Resilience

Volunteers have a key role to play in building the resilience of Scotland's communities, both in responding to emergencies and in building a sustainable future. The ability of statutory responders to work effectively alongside voluntary organisations and volunteers is critical to our future resilience as a country.

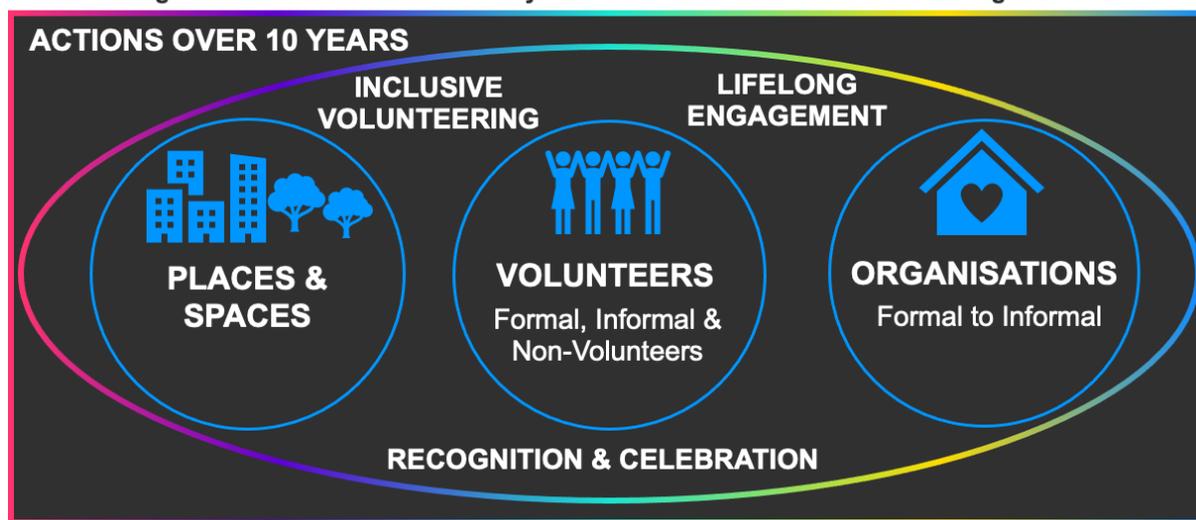
### Digital Volunteering

COVID-19 has highlighted the particularly important contribution that digital can confer but VIOs, volunteers and beneficiaries will need support to maximise these benefits, with equal access for all.

# Ideas into Action

Volunteering happens through the relationships between people, organisations, and places & spaces. Five Working Groups created a single high-level system map to inform 'ideas for change' and provide the basis for more detailed actions:

**Volunteering For All: 'a Scotland where everyone can volunteer more often and throughout their lives'**



Action Themes Identified include:

- To increase public awareness of volunteering, and to tackle stereotypes around what it is and who volunteers
- To engage community assets, organisations, and local leadership to maximise the contribution of volunteering at the community level.
- Increase the opportunities available to volunteer: widening the breadth of opportunities and increasing access for under-represented groups.
- Strengthen relationships between 'volunteering' and 'community engagement' partners; and between national and local stakeholders.
- Develop a targeted approach to new research evidence
- Promote the 'value' of volunteering more widely.
- Building knowledge and skills within inclusive volunteering, reducing bureaucracy, and widening standards of practice.

# Living the Plan

An ambitious 10-year plan will need ongoing flexibility and the opportunity to review and refresh actions based on the changing landscape. Many actions will require the establishment of groups of stakeholders and funders to progress them – they cannot be achieved by one organisation acting unilaterally. The Scottish Government and Volunteer Scotland will act as an enabler and facilitator in supporting this work over the next decade.



[volunteeringactionplan.co.uk](http://volunteeringactionplan.co.uk)

**#VolunteeringActionPlan**