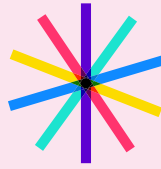


Volunteer
Scotland



Volunteering
Action Plan

Bridging the Participation Gap

Reflections from our roundtable series (May 2026)



Executive Summary

This report presents thematic findings from the 'Bridging the Participation Gap' roundtable series hosted by Volunteer Scotland between November 2025 and March 2026. The roundtables captured views from volunteers, the practice community (volunteer-involving organisations, their volunteer managers, volunteer development leads and supporting staff, employers, infrastructure bodies and suppliers) and enablers (policymakers, rule makers and funders).

Seven cross-cutting themes emerged from the roundtables, which are presented in Section 1 alongside supporting evidence and calls to action, activities and recommendations for different stakeholders. Volunteer Scotland's response to these themes, which builds on our work to date, is outlined in Section 2 across our five core programmes: The Knowledge Gateway; Participation Development and Membership; Events, Promotions and Campaigns; Research and Policy; and Disclosure Services.

Summary of themes

Theme 1: Volunteer managers don't have the resources they need

Volunteer managers told us that they face mounting pressures, including limited time to provide training, long waitlists for potential volunteers, and a growing number of volunteers with complex support needs that often exceed their capacity. While volunteers are generally satisfied, inconsistent access to training, guidance and referral pathways leaves managers struggling to provide the support required to retain volunteers and offer inclusive volunteering opportunities.

Theme 2: Financial support for volunteering is fragile and constrained

Roundtable participants described an increasingly fragile funding landscape, with rising costs driving many organisations toward crisis or closure and sharply reducing capacity for volunteer training, governance, and inclusion-focused work. Short-term, competitive funding and regional inconsistencies mean effective programmes are hard to sustain or scale, reinforcing the need for Fair Funding for the sector.

Theme 3: Volunteering pathways, while vital, need to be clear and properly resourced

Supported, in-person pathways to volunteering are crucial for engaging under-represented groups, with community outreach, embedded support roles, and 'service user to volunteer' pipelines often proving far more effective than open recruitment alone. Volunteering is also widely seen as a route to employment, with accredited training and skills development strengthening participation, highlighting the need for proactive, lived experience led approaches that meet people where they are and create accessible pathways into volunteering. To be successful, these pathways need to be clear to potential and current volunteers and be well-resourced.

Theme 4: Trustee recruitment and retention are sector-wide challenges

The roundtables revealed that trustee recruitment and retention present acute challenges, driven by low public awareness, liability concerns, perceived role complexity, and governance cultures that are often seen as inaccessible or unrepresentative. Limited access to training and guidance, high stress and burnout, and a lack of inclusive recruitment pathways are constraining board renewal, pointing to the need for better support, alternative trustee models, and clearer pathways from volunteering into governance roles.

Theme 5: Flexible volunteering roles are key to more inclusive participation

Flexibility is a critical enabler of volunteering for people from under-represented groups, particularly those with a disability or living in an area of high deprivation, with rigid schedules, complex onboarding, upfront costs, and digital only processes often acting as significant barriers. Evidence from the roundtables shows that adaptable roles, upfront expenses, clear communication, and tailored or micro volunteering opportunities can not only improve access but also boost recruitment, retention, and volunteer satisfaction.

Theme 6: Volunteers with lived experience enable effective and inclusive services

The roundtables highlighted that lived experience is essential to effective volunteering and peer support, helping organisations design accessible roles and deliver more responsive services. However, gaps in representation among senior leaders and trustees, combined with limited capacity to support volunteers under pressure, risk excluding those very groups most needed to close widening participation inequalities.

Theme 7: Volunteers from, and working with, under-represented groups are experiencing increased hostility

Roundtable participants reported a worsening hostile environment for minority ethnic communities, refugees and migrants and those volunteering to support these groups - with rising racism, intimidation and abuse undermining confidence, safety and participation in volunteering. Creating safe spaces, strengthening safeguarding and co-designing antiracism training with people who have lived experience were seen as essential responses, particularly as declining community trust and cohesion continue to weaken the wider volunteering ecosystem.



Table of Contents

Page 5 A message from our Chief Executive

Page 6 Introduction

Page 8 **Section 1:**
What we heard from the roundtables

Page 9 **Theme 1:**
Volunteer managers don't have the resources they need

Page 12 **Theme 2:**
Financial support for volunteering is fragile and constrained

Page 14 **Theme 3:**
Volunteering pathways, while vital, need to be clear
and properly resourced

Page 16 **Theme 4:**
Trustee recruitment and retention are sector-wide challenges

Page 18 **Theme 5:**
Flexible volunteering roles are key to more inclusive participation

Page 20 **Theme 6:**
Volunteers with lived experience enable effective and inclusive services

Page 22 **Theme 7:**
Volunteers from, and working with, under-represented groups
are experiencing increased hostility

Page 24 **Section 2:**
Our response to the findings

A Message from our Chief Executive

In September 2025, we welcomed with cautious optimism the news that [formal volunteer participation in Scotland had rebounded to 25% in 2024, almost pre-pandemic levels, after dropping to its lowest level of 18% in 2024](#). However, this news also brought with it a renewed concern about the inclusivity of volunteer participation, particularly for disabled people and those living in our most deprived communities.

We continue to lead the sector's engagement with the [Volunteering Action Plan](#) (VAP) on behalf of the Scottish Government's Third Sector Unit. VAP was launched during the global pandemic as a 10 year living plan designed to be flexible to respond to societal challenges. In light of the new evidence on trends in volunteering participation, we decided to address what we termed the 'participation gap'.

The '**Bridging the Participation Gap**' roundtable series emerged. We held nine roundtables with stakeholders across the Scottish voluntary sector eco-system, including facilitating a 'mega roundtable' with a room of 100 sector stakeholders at SCVO's Gathering Event. Holding space for colleagues across the voluntary sector - to grapple with the issues affecting volunteering participation - has been a rewarding and immensely valuable process. We'd like to extend our sincere thanks to the 180 people who took time to share their expertise, ideas and feedback with us over many months.

We are pleased to be sharing the results of these discussions in this report; we've provided calls to action for the sector across seven themes and we've also responded to these findings as a whole.

As you'll see in our reply, this is not a standing start for us. In the last year, we've developed the [Knowledge Gateway](#) a hub of practical resources for the volunteer practitioner community and launched a new [national framework for Employer Supported Volunteering](#). We've also shared the voice of the voluntary sector with elected representatives through our [No Volunteers, No Community campaign](#) and issued our annual [State of Scottish Volunteering report](#) (with its five key headlines).

These new initiatives complement ongoing work to evidence, advocate and promote volunteering widely, underpinned by solid volunteering management practice and principles.

This said, our work - existing and new - will be fuelled by the insights and key themes generated by this report.

While we don't anticipate repeating this exercise every year, we will continue our process of listening and regularly introducing 'voice' and lived experience into our work. We invite colleagues across the Scottish voluntary sector - volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations and infrastructure partners - to continue to share their views, to help us collectively 'sense-make' and to work with us.

We're committed to 'Bridging the Participation Gap'.



A black ink handwritten signature, which appears to read 'Alan Stevenson', written in a cursive style.

Alan Stevenson
Chief Executive, Volunteer Scotland

Introduction

Volunteers are the backbone of Scotland's communities, they provide companionship to people who are isolated or lonely, act against climate change, enrich the lives of our children and young people, support the delivery of vital public services, and more.

[In 2024, a quarter of Scottish adults \(16+\) volunteered](#) with a group, club or organisation (known as formal volunteering). However, the data shows that participation gaps are emerging among particular demographic groups. The participation rate difference between non-disabled and disabled adults has increased to ten percentage points, from a difference of three percentage points in 2023. Similarly, the participation gap between adults living in Scotland's most deprived communities and the least deprived communities has increased by three percentage points from 2023 to a difference of 15 percentage points.

Volunteer Scotland has explored the current state of Scottish volunteering through analysis of volunteer participation and exploration of five key themes, looking at the impact of the cost of living crisis, findings from the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health and Wellbeing Survey 2022/23, and insights into volunteer experience in the SCVO's Scottish Voluntary Sector Workforce Survey. [The full State of Scottish Volunteering report is available here.](#)

Alongside this changing trend in volunteer participation, volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) are facing significant pressures. Despite rates of formal volunteering appearing to recover, volunteer recruitment and retention challenges persist. A lack of staff resource and/or staff time, needed to coordinate, support and manage volunteers, are limiting factors for many groups and organisations.



In light of these issues, Volunteer Scotland are seeking to refocus the Volunteering Action Plan (VAP) to support continued growth in participation through four priority actions:

- 1 Advocate to Scotland's leaders to embed volunteering in policy and highlight its community impact (See our [No Volunteers, No Community Campaign](#))
- 2 Bring a broad range of decision makers around the table to commit to partnerships and actions that will invest in volunteering
- 3 Provide volunteer management support designed for a changing landscape
- 4 Promote volunteering and its many benefits across Scotland

Between November 2025 and March 2026, Volunteer Scotland hosted a series of nine roundtable sessions in support of Action 2, with a focus on the topic of 'Bridging the Participation Gap'. While discussions were often varied, there was a consistent effort from participants to share their experiences and observations relating to 'bridging the participation gap' (gaps highlighted in the [2024 Scottish Household Survey](#) relate to household income, having a disability or not and living in a more or less deprived area).

Seven cross-cutting themes emerged from the roundtables, which are presented in Section 1 alongside supporting evidence and actions, activities and recommendations for different stakeholders to consider. Volunteer Scotland's response to these themes, which builds on our work to date, is outlined in Section 2 across our five core programmes.

The stakeholder groups that participated in the roundtables were*:

- The Third Sector Interface Network
- The Scottish Volunteering Forum
- Youth Intermediaries & Young People
- Volunteers from National Inclusion in Volunteering Group member organisations
- The Gathering Open Roundtable
- Volunteer Scotland Members
- Investing in Volunteers Achievers & Assessors
- Third Sector Intermediaries & Funders
- National Inclusion in Volunteering Group

[*See Annex for full list of participating organisations](#)



Section 1: What we heard from the roundtables

The roundtables provided views from volunteers, the practice community (VIOs, their volunteer managers, volunteer development leads and supporting staff, employers, infrastructure bodies and suppliers) and enablers (policymakers, rule makers and funders).

In total, seven cross-cutting themes emerged from the roundtables:

- 1 Volunteer managers don't have the resources they need
- 2 Financial support for volunteering is fragile and constrained
- 3 Volunteering pathways, while vital need to be clear and properly resourced
- 4 Trustee recruitment and retention are sector-wide challenges
- 5 Flexible volunteering roles are key to more inclusive participation
- 6 Volunteers with lived experience enable effective and inclusive services
- 7 Volunteers from, and working with, under-represented groups are experiencing increased hostility

Each theme is described in detail with examples and where possible we've provided additional supporting evidence. We've identified calls to action, activities and in some cases recommendations, for different stakeholders to consider.



Theme 1: Volunteer managers don't have the resources they need

“Volunteers are coming to us with very specific needs, and often there are multiple issues affecting one individual. We want to be as inclusive as possible, but we do not always have the skills or capacity to support them effectively. Many people are experiencing trauma, poverty-related issues, and potential domestic abuse, so many complex needs for volunteer managers to handle.”

- VIO Volunteering Lead

Participants from a wide range of VIOs, consistently raised challenges regarding volunteer management; from having long waitlists of volunteers, to lacking the resources to provide appropriate training and support. Moreover, despite the most recent rise in participation, volunteer recruitment remains an issue for many VIOs.

Volunteer managers are increasingly presented with volunteers who have complex needs, with health and trauma being commonly cited, and which often exceed the support available. In more complex cases, support needs go beyond what some considered reasonable to expect of a volunteer manager. Managers need clear referral pathways for these volunteers and clear guidance on when issues require professional intervention.

The roundtables also revealed that access to best practice support and guidance around volunteer management is inconsistent. Forums for organisations to network and share knowledge is limited so they are not widely used. To address this issue it was suggested that more proactive leadership from organisations is needed. Participants shared that in-person knowledge exchange learning spaces are highly valued and offer something more than formal training. A participant from an organisation with a newly launched volunteer programme felt that most available training is designed for organisations that already have well-established volunteer programmes.

More bespoke support, advice or mentoring on how to design and manage a new volunteer programme would be valued for this organisation.

Volunteer managers are often in the tricky position of knowing that their volunteers need support, and that without this they are more likely to leave their volunteer role, but do not have the resource to provide the necessary support. One example of this shared in the roundtables was from a children's charity who reported having fewer staff members than would be optimal, severely limiting their capacity and forcing them to limit the extent to which they can offer fully inclusive volunteering opportunities in line with their safeguarding obligations.

Judging the appropriateness of a volunteer role for the needs, abilities and interests of a volunteer is a key part of volunteer managers' role. Participants identified that making these judgements is increasingly challenging given both the often-complex needs of volunteers and lack of resource for volunteer managers to create or adapt roles.

One Third Sector Interface (TSI) shared that they offer in-person advice at their public office about volunteering opportunities, and that this service is mostly used by vulnerable people, often mental health related, who walk into the office. In these cases, a successful outcome for their health and wellbeing might be that they do not volunteer and instead are referred on to a different service which would more be more appropriate for their needs.

Making tough decisions like this is a significant demand on volunteer managers that may not have relevant expertise or awareness of the different referral options. These decisions are time-consuming and often require sensitive conversations with the volunteer involved, all of which adds to the load of already over-stretched volunteer managers.

What does other evidence say?

The [Scottish Voluntary Sector Workforce Survey](#) (SCVO, 2025) revealed that volunteer satisfaction is high: 87% of volunteers are satisfied with their role. The data also demonstrated that volunteers who feel well supported in their role are more likely to be satisfied in their volunteering and are less likely to consider stepping away from their role in the next two years.

Despite high overall volunteer satisfaction, there are some concerning trends which volunteer managers require resources to reverse. Our latest [Cost of Living Bulletin](#) (covering Autumn/Summer 2025) revealed that a quarter of third sector organisations (TSOs) report a deterioration in volunteers' health and wellbeing and 36% report volunteer fatigue and/or burnout. The bulletin also revealed that 29% of TSOs lack time to support new volunteers, 30% do not have a volunteer coordinator and 16% are unable to offer development and/or enrichment opportunities for volunteers.

Key takeaway

Volunteer managers told us that they face mounting pressures, including limited time to provide training, long waitlists for potential volunteers, and a growing number of volunteers with complex support needs that often exceed their capacity. While volunteers are generally satisfied, inconsistent access to training, guidance and referral pathways leaves managers struggling to provide the support required to retain volunteers and offer inclusive volunteering opportunities.



Actions for the sector to consider

Actions to consider	Relevant audiences
Monitor the wellbeing and happiness of volunteers within your organisation. Be conscious of volunteer burnout and ensure that accessibility needs are being met.	Volunteer Managers
Have a firm understanding of your organisation's capabilities and expectations regarding meeting complex health issues faced by your volunteers. Research the resources and training available and hold regular discussions within your organisation on case studies and identifying risks to support continuous professional development in this area.	Volunteer Managers
Do not be afraid to refer potential volunteers to more appropriate services if your organisation does not best meet their needs	Volunteer Managers
Explore Investing in Volunteers (IiV) quality standard for your volunteering programmes and resources on the Knowledge Gateway to enhance your volunteers' experience and access professional development for volunteer managers	VIO Senior Leadership Volunteer Managers
Develop clear guidance around available referable pathways and when they are appropriate and raise awareness of alternative options for people who are not currently in a place to volunteer. Share scenarios of when volunteer managers should refer volunteers onto these pathways and what support and advice is available to them.	Intermediary Bodies TSIs Network
Publish guidance for volunteer managers on how to navigate difficult scenarios, such as making judgement calls about someone's ability or appropriateness to volunteer and managing the mental health of volunteers.	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland
Consider offering in-person networking and knowledge opportunities as well as online and hybrid options for volunteer managers to discuss and learn from each other.	Intermediary Bodies TSIs Network Volunteer Scotland
Develop guidance with the specific needs in mind of VIOs which are smaller, have limited resources, or have newly established volunteering programs.	Intermediary Bodies TSIs Network Volunteer Scotland

Theme 2: Financial support for volunteering is fragile and constrained

“I am not surprised by growing inequalities, because where there is real investment in supported volunteering these inclusion gaps disappear, however short-term thinking means that squeezed funding does not find its way to them very often.”

- Third Sector Interface

Roundtable participants agreed that the third sector funding landscape is extremely challenging, with consistent observations of organisations facing crisis or closure due to financial strain. Rising costs (notably in utilities and cost of employment) have reduced organisational capacity for volunteer training and governance improvements in many cases. A third sector funder roundtable participant described their “crisis in resilience” button for organisations to use if they believe they are at risk of closing and additional support. The button was used around ten times per month in previous years, however this has risen to 259 uses within the last year, with around 75% of cases being directly related to funding.

It was widely acknowledged among roundtable participants that targeted funding is the most effective method of reducing inclusion gaps, however many examples were shared of effective programmes being discontinued due to short-term grants running out. Funders are eager to offer capacity building support with smaller organisations often needing assistance with financial management as well as volunteer management. However, not all funders provide this assistance. Small grants can have a significant impact, especially for community-led organisations with no paid staff. Funding

limitations are also constraining the extent to which successful initiatives can be replicated from elsewhere in the UK. A TSI described that they had a funding bid turned down to implement a supported volunteering program which had seen success in Wales, signalling for them that there is strong competition for such funding even for tried and tested approaches.

One VIO respondent observed that locally based volunteering initiatives can successfully access pockets of local authority funding. However, they noted that examples of success stories are too isolated. There is also inconsistency across regions, with local authorities having different levels of funding provision available. Another roundtable participant suggested that additional national data around the impact of volunteering initiatives on reducing economic inactivity, social isolation and improving health outcomes could form the basis for a case for increased investment in volunteering as a means of reducing inclusion gaps.

A united effort is required from third sector enablers and the practice community to persist with national campaigns for Fair Funding and to continue to find innovative methods of accessing additional sources of funding.

What does other evidence say?

Financial support for volunteering in Scotland remains fragile and highly constrained, despite the recent rise in participation. [SCVO's State of the Sector 2024](#) shows that while government funding has remained broadly stable, inflation and rising operating costs have eroded real terms budgets, leaving many organisations with 'wafer-thin' margins.

Key takeaway

Roundtable participants described an increasingly fragile funding landscape, with rising costs driving many organisations toward crisis or closure and sharply reducing capacity for volunteer training, governance, and inclusion-focused work. Short-term, competitive funding and regional inconsistencies mean effective programmes are hard to sustain or scale, reinforcing the need for Fair Funding for the sector.



Actions for the sector to consider

Actions to consider	Relevant audiences
Join SCVO's campaign for Fair Funding for the sector.	Volunteer Managers
Funders to agree to and deliver Fair Funding for the sector.	Funders
Funders to support proven supported projects as well as innovative projects	Funders
Funders to consider additional measures they can take to support their organisations, including offering 'crisis button' for those in need of urgent support.	Funders
Infrastructure organisations to gather additional evidence on the impact of volunteering which could contribute to requests for additional national funding and collaborate with funders on the scope of this.	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland



Theme 3: Volunteering pathways, while vital, need to be clear and properly resourced

“We have ridiculously limited resources to work with but being embedded in other organisations which are offering other kinds of services, and having conversations with people that have not even considered volunteering due to perceptions around social class has been so effective.”

- Third Sector Interface

Roundtable participants reported that supported pathways to volunteering appear important for reaching under-represented groups who otherwise tend not to respond to open recruitment drives. Roundtable participants shared that community presence and in-person outreach are the most effective recruitment methods in Scotland's most deprived areas, in which many people have never even considered volunteering before. One example shared by a participant including running community sessions in which volunteers get to know their local area and find new organisations to volunteer with.

One example shared by a participant included running community sessions in which volunteers get to know their local area and find new organisations to volunteer with. Another example from a TSI described how staff were embedded in 'gateway hubs' alongside partner organisations. This helped them to recruit people facing multiple barriers and forms of exclusion. This project was possible through Shared Prosperity Funding which lapsed in 2025. This type of embedded support was mentioned multiple times by roundtable participants.

The 'service user to volunteer pipeline' was indicated as a common method of recruitment in which people sign up to volunteer with organisations whose services they have used. Participants shared examples of VIOs which operate peer support networks and whose peer

support co-ordinators are exclusively former service users. However, it can be problematic when these volunteers have unresolved health issues and may necessitate additional support that organisations struggle to resource, as referenced in Theme 1. A health charity shared that they have their volunteers embedded inside of community rehabilitation hospitals, to offer peer support, build relationships and signpost on the basis of their own lived experience. The patients will frequently proceed to become volunteers themselves after their recovery because of their positive experience as a service user.

Roundtable participants observed that people frequently use volunteering as a means to finding paid work, whether within the organisation they volunteer with or elsewhere using the skills developed through volunteering. The employability benefits of volunteering were viewed as significant, and honing in on this and providing tangible qualifications through volunteering or training is attractive. A youth volunteering organisation described how they partner with schools and pitch their volunteering roles as a 'ruthless CV-building opportunity' for teenage pupils. Accredited training (such as SCQF Level 6 equivalent qualifications) provides concrete employability benefits for volunteers seeking progression. There are also examples of organisations offering internal job vacancies to long-term volunteers which is another tangible employability and education-related benefit.

What does other evidence say?

[Research from Dr David Bomark \(University of Strathclyde\), supported by Volunteer Scotland,](#) shows that participation in one area or activity often creates more participation in other areas too. Recreational and social activities act as powerful entry points into volunteering. Even informal hobbies create social ties and routines that make volunteering feel natural and accessible. This evidence on the role of wider civic and community participation reinforces the strong links between everyday activities - such as sport, hobbies, faith groups and clubs - and volunteering, and should be closely considered for the development of new pathways to increase volunteering participation.

Key takeaway

Supported, in-person pathways to volunteering are crucial for engaging under-represented groups, with community outreach, embedded support roles, and 'service user to volunteer' pipelines often proving far more effective than open recruitment alone. Volunteering is also widely seen as a route to employment, with accredited training and skills development strengthening participation, highlighting the need for proactive, lived experience led approaches that meet people where they are and create accessible pathways into volunteering. To be successful, these pathways need to be clear to potential and current volunteers and be well-resourced.



Actions for the sector to consider

Actions to consider	Relevant audiences
Consider proactive methods of outreach to under-represented groups, such as disabled people and people living in deprived areas, including embedding with partner organisations already engaged with these groups.	VIO Senior Leadership Volunteer Managers
Clearly articulate the employability and educational benefits of your volunteering opportunities such as recognised qualifications or access to internal job vacancies.	Intermediary Bodies VIO Senior Leadership
Demonstrate the employability benefits from volunteering, including referral pathways that VIOs can access for their volunteers.	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland
Publish good practice guidance on how to recruit and retain volunteers from the service user base	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland

Theme 4: Trustee recruitment and retention are sector-wide challenges

“There is a challenge in attracting trustees due to concerns around liability. Governance needs to be addressed at a national level, including exploring alternative trustee models. Many people assume trustees must know everything about running an organisation, which discourages participation.”

- Third Sector Intermediary Body

Although general volunteer recruitment remains a widespread issue, the recruitment and retention of trustees was specified frequently as being a particular problem by roundtable participants. Low public awareness, liability concerns and the perception of role difficulty were viewed as creating major barriers in attracting volunteers from under-represented demographics. A TSI said that they observed people underestimating their own abilities when it comes to these positions, with others perceiving trustee roles to be uninteresting and ‘just another meeting to go to’.

Roundtable participants mentioned that smaller community-led organisations face a significant governance strain, with many reporting crisis-level issues linked to financial pressure, documentation gaps and trustee burnout. One participant shared examples of trustees who do not actively contribute to board discussions due to complacency. Organisations must remain quorate, but with insufficient numbers of new trustees coming forward there is pressure on trustees to remain on boards even when they are no longer motivated to do so. Turnover of trustees every 3-5 years is ideal, with many overstaying this period as the organisation is unable to find new trustees. Participants also shared concerns around a lack of lived experience in trustee positions, with widespread reports of disconnects between volunteers and senior leadership resulting in a lack of understanding by boards of the work of the organisation and the difference they’re trying to make.

Governance advice exists but is not uniformly available; participants report that many organisations struggle to reliably access the guidance they need. It was expressed that cuts to formal trustee training have reduced pathways for trustees from diverse backgrounds and for young people, who are less likely to put themselves forward as a result.

Roundtable discussions explored alternative trustee models to address participation barriers such as ‘associate trustees’ that carry a reduced liability burden. It was mentioned that general awareness of alternative options was limited. One organisation said that the need for trustees is universal and called for a more comprehensive review of trustee regulation to reduce barriers to entry. Trustee roles were also perceived as being a ‘middle-class activity’ requiring confidence and assertiveness, particularly for secretary and treasurer roles. The inference is that boards are not inclusive or welcoming to people of all social backgrounds. Simplifying application processes, using inclusive language and providing accessible training on governance, finance and safeguarding were viewed as necessary to encourage a broader and more representative pool of candidates.

What does other evidence say?

NfpResearch published [research](#) shows that only 40% of the UK know what a charity trustee is, and 28% claim to be deterred from becoming a trustee due to concerns around the legal responsibilities involved. According to this research, only 6% said they would definitely consider becoming a trustee.

[Volunteer Scotland's analysis of SCVO's Scottish Voluntary Sector Workforce Survey](#) found that trustees show strong engagement and commitment, with most having volunteered consistently throughout their lives. We recommend that VIOs consider developing pathways into trustee roles from their volunteering programme. The survey also finds that while satisfaction levels are broadly similar to other volunteers, trustees report slightly higher stress levels and concerns about unpaid work resembling paid roles. Furthermore, providing accessible training on governance, finance and safeguarding can build confidence among aspiring trustees, particularly younger volunteers or those early in their careers.

Key takeaway

The roundtables revealed that trustee recruitment and retention present acute challenges, driven by low public awareness, liability concerns, perceived role complexity, and governance cultures that are often seen as inaccessible or unrepresentative. Limited access to training and guidance, high stress and burnout, and a lack of inclusive recruitment pathways are constraining board renewal, pointing to the need for better support, alternative trustee models, and clearer pathways from volunteering into governance roles.



Actions for the sector to consider

Actions to consider	Relevant audiences
Create structured progression routes from volunteering into trusteeship, including mentoring, shadowing and observer opportunities	VIO Senior Leadership
Provide or facilitate accessible training on governance, finance and safeguarding for volunteers who aspire to be a trustee	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland
Support the sector to recruit trustees through training and promotional campaigns	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland
Provide guidance on retaining trustees	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland
Include trustee recruitment in the National Volunteer Recruitment Campaign reset plan	Volunteer Scotland
Provide advice on governance for small charities to address concerns around liability	Intermediary Bodies
Run Trustee Training courses for new and potential trustees	VIO Senior Leadership
Continue to call on the Scottish Government to complete an independent review of charity regulation, with a focus on ensuring that volunteering as a charity trustee is inclusive, proportionate and sustainable	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland

Theme 5: Flexible volunteering roles are key to more inclusive participation

“A large local organisation had a massive recruitment drive, however they were training their volunteers through an online course which some volunteers could not access. The organisation were fed back to and then implemented a system in which volunteers could train in-person.”

- Third Sector Interface

Participants across the roundtables mentioned that flexibility is crucial for volunteers from under-represented backgrounds. Providing volunteering opportunities with flexible time requirements, easily accessible onboarding and training, and reducing financial burdens on volunteers were all cited. It was also noted that people that live in more deprived areas tend to have less free time in general and have more unpredictable work schedules around which to plan volunteering. Participants across the roundtables also identified that many volunteering opportunities require job-style interviews or demanding onboarding processes, which can be intimidating.

Positive examples were given of good practice in 'flexibility'; one testimony was from an individual (with multiple accessibility requirements) volunteering with an organisation that tailors each volunteering role to an individual, provides remote volunteering opportunities, and schedules informal meetings with potential volunteers before the more formal recruitment process. This same organisation reports having a long waitlist for volunteers due to the attractiveness of their roles. One TSI observed that the organisations which weathered the Covid-era drop in volunteering participation the best, also offered more flexibility in terms of hours and shift patterns.

Another aspect of flexibility, which particularly affects those in more deprived communities is the provision of volunteering expenses. Participants mentioned that in their experience, most VIOs that can provide expenses for their volunteers, will. Expenses are most commonly provided in arrears, meaning that volunteers will be out of pocket for

a certain amount of time before being reimbursed. This can be off-putting for those who are more likely to be living on low budgets and unable to take this temporary financial hit. The policy of paying expenses up front was suggested several times as a course of action, but no participants shared that this was their current practice.

Digitally excluded volunteers were mentioned as not being taken into account with the ubiquitous delivery of online training courses. Certain roles have additional safeguarding requirements, such as PVG checks for roles involving children or vulnerable adults. The formal processes can create uncertainty during the onboarding process or even put off individuals from applying. Considering how processes might be perceived for different groups of individuals and having clear upfront explanations and regular communication, were all seen as being helpful.

Participants from VIOs have reported experiencing an influx of volunteers when they have targeted volunteering roles to the interests and availability of specific individuals. One respondent shared that they had seen success in their organisation through offering one-off micro-volunteering opportunities which often lead to volunteers returning for more consistent volunteering, and through using Whatsapp for more informal volunteering recruitment.

What does other evidence say?

Of the most frequently cited reasons for volunteers considering quitting their roles, time-related pressures feature prominently:

40% report changing personal circumstances and 33% want more time for other interests (SCVO Scottish Voluntary Sector Workforce Survey). Stress is a factor for one in four volunteers (25%), while 22% selected “Other” reasons, indicating a range of additional personal or contextual factors. A sense of limited impact (19%), lack of appreciation (18%), and dissatisfaction with management (14%) also contribute to disengagement. These findings are consistent with observations shared throughout roundtables of both positive and negative experiences with organisational flexibility.

Key takeaway

Flexibility is a critical enabler of volunteering for people from under-represented groups, particularly those with a disability or living in an area of high deprivation, with rigid schedules, complex onboarding, upfront costs, and digital only processes often acting as significant barriers. Evidence from the roundtables shows that adaptable roles, upfront expenses, clear communication, and tailored or micro volunteering opportunities can not only improve access but also boost recruitment, retention, and volunteer satisfaction.



Actions for the sector to consider

Actions to consider	Relevant audiences
Consider ways to break down volunteering roles into smaller, more flexible roles or micro-volunteering opportunities.	Volunteer Managers
Be upfront and clear about the onboarding requirements for your volunteer roles, so that potential volunteers are prepared. Consider how your volunteering recruitment and onboarding might be inaccessible to the digitally excluded. Use the Make Your Mark Toolkit for inclusive volunteering for guidance.	Volunteer Managers
Ensure volunteers are aware of the expenses policy and encourage them to claim. Consider paying upfront travel expenses.	Funders VIO Senior Leadership
Support organisations to understand the legal requirements that influence the formality of volunteer onboarding processes, provide communications in this regard that manages expectations for those with barriers to volunteering.	Intermediary Bodies Funders
Provide a guide to flexibility in volunteering which includes best practice examples, akin to the guide produced by Volunteer Ireland .	Volunteer Scotland

Theme 6: Volunteers with lived experience enable effective and inclusive services

“Ensuring inclusivity while supporting volunteer managers is a major challenge as their responsibilities are underestimated. Peer support is particularly important in sharing experiences and recognising the emotional aspects of the role.”

- Youth Volunteering Organisation

Throughout the roundtables, organisations identified issues in relation to poverty, domestic abuse, racism, and terminal illness as particularly valuable areas of lived experience. VIOs shared that reaching and including volunteers with lived experience is crucial for ensuring effective service provision and delivering roles which support the needs of volunteers, in particular for organisations which provide peer support networks.

One aspect of lived experience that was raised in several roundtables was the apparent disconnect between senior management (both staff and trustees) and volunteer managers and volunteers. This can result in a misunderstanding of senior management of the roles and responsibilities of volunteers, particularly those that provide services to vulnerable groups. Roundtable participants reflected that this disconnect could be addressed, at least in part, though greater representation of relevant lived experience among senior leadership of VIOs.

A volunteer with multiple health charities which provide peer support mentioned that engaging those with lived experience of the illness, was essential to creating effective support networks. They had observed poor practice in a charity in which family members of recently deceased volunteers received no follow-up support, something which volunteers with lived experience would have been conscious of.

It was mentioned that organisations which provide peer support networks require those with lived experience to also lead these networks. Participants highlighted the importance of co-design with people with lived experience as this leads to roles that feel accessible and welcoming for others that may otherwise have felt excluded. A VIO with a low representation of volunteers from deprived and minority ethnic communities has been co-designing volunteering opportunities with individuals from these groups.

A food bank organisation shared that most of their volunteers come from the same communities that use their service. However, this brings challenges because some volunteers are already under significant pressure (e.g. financial and mental health), and the organisation does not have the capacity or resource to provide additional support to volunteers in these areas.



What does other evidence say?

Analysis of volunteer participation in the [2024 Scottish Household Survey](#) by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles (SIMD Q) reveals that the increase in volunteering participation rates between 2023 and 2024 was lowest in the most deprived areas of Scotland, SIMD Q1 (four percentage points) and highest in SIMD Q4 (nine percentage points). The gap between volunteer participation in the most and least deprived areas of Scotland widened from 12 percentage points in 2023 to 15 percentage points in 2024. Evidence from the [SCVO Scottish Voluntary Sector Workforce Survey](#) also suggests that disabled volunteers more likely to leave their current volunteering role than those without a disability. Initiatives in this area can help to bridge the participation gap, as those with lived experience would appear less likely to volunteer, similar to the disability and deprivation participation gap.

Key takeaway

The roundtables highlighted that lived experience is essential to effective volunteering and peer support, helping organisations design accessible roles and deliver more responsive services. However, gaps in representation among senior leaders and trustees, combined with limited capacity to support volunteers under pressure, risk excluding those very groups most needed to close widening participation inequalities.



Actions for the sector to consider

Actions to consider	Relevant audiences
Join the National Inclusion in Volunteering group to share your expertise and learn from others.	Volunteer Managers
Assess where you are including lived experience in your volunteering programme and identify where the gaps are.	VIO Senior Leadership Volunteer Managers
Develop trustee positions with a focus on lived experience relevant to your organisation’s work to ensure trustee inclusion.	VIO Senior Leadership Volunteer Managers
Consult the Volunteer Charter , Investing in Volunteers quality standard and the Knowledge Gateway to ensure appropriate volunteer management practices.	VIO Senior Leadership Volunteer Managers
Produce guidance on how to appropriately and successfully incorporate lived experience (and when not to) into volunteering (including recruitment, onboarding and designing roles) to support volunteer-involving organisations.	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland
Raise awareness of organisations who are successfully incorporating lived experience into their volunteering programmes, share best practice and consider costs associated with this	Funders Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland

Theme 7: Volunteers from, and working with, under-represented groups are experiencing increased hostility

“Race is always a barrier, we have a base in Falkirk, and the recent political climate has been challenging. Schools see our antiracism work as politically charged at the moment. Parents and teachers at schools don’t feel equipped to have these conversations because accepting antiracism advice is to admit racism exists.”

- Antiracism Volunteering Organisation

The view emerging from the roundtables was that minority ethnic communities, refugees and migrants are facing an increasing level of hostility linked to racism and discrimination. There were consistent reports from participants that incidents of racism have increased in the last few years, with links being made to an increasingly toxic and heated political environment. Volunteers and service users have reported a spike in verbal and physical assaults and intimidation. In turn, organisations feel anxious about engaging with politically sensitive issues due to a lack of skills and experience.

Roundtable participants report that antiracism charities were viewed by some as being contentious or controversial due to the changing political climate. The topic of racism in general is being discussed with a degree of tension by many, with one participant citing parents and teachers as expressing discomfort when antiracism charities propose providing educational services to schools.

Participants also mentioned that excellent grassroots expertise regarding social justice exists but is currently under-utilised on a national level. Co-creating antiracism training with people experiencing this more hostile environment was recommended as a topical solution to a growing problem.

In the roundtables, volunteers from minority ethnic backgrounds reported not feeling confident entering volunteering roles in which they may expose themselves to racism.

A volunteer from a minority ethnic background also discussed how they were only able to engage in volunteering in the first place because of the presence of ‘safe racial spaces’, enabled by volunteers with common lived experience which made them feel comfortable.

An antiracism organisation described the additional safeguarding responsibilities which they face due to hostile environment concerns. Their service provides open spaces for service users, predominantly young people, to share honestly their experiences with racism and related trauma. When young service users return to the organisation as volunteers, there have been some instances in which, due to their inexperience, they continue this open communication and honesty in a way which is inappropriate as volunteers. This organisation said that senior management personnel have a duty to take proactive measures to ensure that their younger volunteers have a proper understanding of expectations of their role.

Concerns over hostile environment for volunteers are growing with increasing instances of harassment and abuse and organisational uncertainty about how to respond. Valuable resources exist at a local level, and further collaboration is necessary to fully understand how these challenges can be addressed.

What does other evidence say?

This emerging trend is supported by recent evidence highlighted in the [State of Scottish Volunteering](#) report that fragmented communities are undermining volunteering. Analysis of the Scottish Household Survey (2022) shows that stronger neighbourhood connection consistently aligns with higher volunteering participation. However, Scotland is seeing gradual but persistent declines in trust, reciprocity, belonging, perceived influence, opportunities to connect and collective action. These are the foundations that support volunteering, meaning the ecosystem around volunteering is weakening. NCVO reports growing trends in intimidation and abuse towards charities and volunteers, which is creating a 'pervasive climate of fear'. In Scotland, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are local flashpoints around asylum accommodation sites, targeting of those supporting migrants, and community-level tensions undermining inclusive volunteering.

Key takeaway

Roundtable participants reported a worsening hostile environment for minority ethnic communities, refugees and migrants and those volunteering to support these groups - with rising racism, intimidation and abuse undermining confidence, safety and participation in volunteering. Creating safe spaces, strengthening safeguarding and co-designing antiracism training with people who have lived experience were seen as essential responses, particularly as declining community trust and cohesion continue to weaken the wider volunteering ecosystem.



Actions for the sector to consider

Actions to consider	Relevant audiences
Share your experience of hostile environments for volunteers – what the issues are and what is working.	TSIs Network Volunteer Managers
Update your antiracism training and safeguarding processes and risk assessments to account for hostile environments for volunteers.	VIO Senior Leadership
Publish up to date and robust scoping of hostile environments for volunteering as an emerging trend.	Volunteer Scotland
Provide guidance for volunteer managers on keeping volunteers safe.	Intermediary Bodies Volunteer Scotland
Co-create antiracism training with people experiencing hostile environments.	VIO Senior Leadership Intermediary Bodies
Equip schools and youth organisations with resources and guidance to discuss racism and confidently promote safe volunteering opportunities for young people.	Intermediary Bodies

Section 2: Our response to the findings

This roundtable series has generated rich and thought-provoking discussions which have informed Volunteer Scotland's work for the next year. While we cannot act on every suggestion made by participants, our forward workplans seek to address the core themes arising from the roundtables.

Volunteer Scotland's response to the roundtables aligns to our Programme areas:



[Sign up as Volunteer Scotland member](#) and [subscribe to our regular VIO newsletter](#) to receive updates and invites to support our work

1. The Knowledge Gateway, supporting inclusive volunteering practice



Volunteer Scotland is committed to supporting the volunteer practitioner community through several activities in our forward workplans.

The [Knowledge Gateway](#) is a newly launched hub for practical guidance, training and resources to help practitioners develop, promote and strengthen volunteering across Scotland. Practitioners can explore tools, insights and support designed to empower volunteer-involving organisations and create the conditions where volunteering can thrive. Content is provided by Volunteer Scotland, statutory bodies, the public sector and a range of initiatives and [Trusted Partners](#).

Volunteer Scotland will add new resources and practical guidance to the Knowledge Gateway, which will respond to several themes raised by participants in the roundtable discussions.

Examples include:

- Working with partners to map and develop guidance and resources relating to hostile environments for volunteers
- Guidance on attracting, recruiting and supporting volunteers through defined pathways, a part of the national 'inclusive pathways into volunteering' project
- Guidance with the specific needs in mind of VIOs which are smaller, have limited resources, or have newly established volunteering programs
- Good practice demonstrating how to engage and learn from people's lived experience to help shape inclusive volunteering
- Case studies of successfully creating or adapting volunteer opportunities to be flexible for a range of audiences
- Guidance on recruiting, training and developing Trustees

How this links to VAP

The Knowledge Gateway addresses aspects of several VAP actions related to knowledge development and exchange, including:



15 Enhancing volunteering practice

42 National approach to Employer Supported Volunteering

41 Fair Volunteering

43 Build knowledge, skills and capacity in inclusive volunteering

44 Knowledge hub to recognise and celebrate volunteering

45 The right level of bureaucracy

47 Improve and widen the uptake of standards of practice

2. Events, Campaigns and Promotions, highlighting the participation gap

Events & training

Volunteer Scotland is delivering a new events and training programme. Drawing on our national expertise and partnerships, events, roundtables, workshops and learning sessions we'll respond to the challenges and opportunities raised in the roundtable series.

Volunteer Scotland are delivering a hybrid 'Bridging the Participation Gap' conference in November 2026. The event will mark an important mid-point milestone and forward look for the [Volunteering Action Plan \(VAP\)](#) while bringing the sector together for a day of learning and networking.

[Explore our events and training programme.](#)

National Campaigns

Building on the successful launch of the [National Volunteer Recruitment Campaign](#) in 2024, Volunteer Scotland will undertake a 'reset' of the campaign in 2026-27. This reset will draw upon public relations expertise and feedback received from the sector, as well as responding to the themes raised in the roundtable series. We will consider how the campaign could address issues raised in the roundtables, for example promoting the recruitment of trustees, reaching young volunteers and promoting participation among disabled people and people living in deprived communities.

How this links VAP

The events and training programme addresses aspects of several VAP actions related to knowledge development and exchange, **including:**

15 Enhancing volunteering practice

43 Build knowledge, skills and capacity in inclusive volunteering

45 The right level of bureaucracy

47 Improve and widen the uptake of standards of practice



The National Recruitment Campaign addresses aspects of several VAP actions related to pathways into volunteering, **including:**

25 Encourage people to consider volunteering

28 Stimulate volunteer pathways

32 Volunteering Opportunities by lifestage

35 Engage national partners

40 Create a positive culture for volunteers

3. Participation Development and Membership

Participation Development - Inclusive Pathways into Volunteering

Volunteer Scotland will continue to focus on inclusive volunteering participation throughout 2026-27.

Volunteer Scotland are committed to leading a new national project that will focus on 'inclusive pathways into volunteering', with a focus on young people, people with disabilities and service users. Through a series of focus groups, the project will bring VIOs together with individuals who can share their lived experience to inform participation partnerships. These partnerships will agree, model and test pathways that will result in a range of guidance and tools that will be added to our Knowledge Gateway. Further information on how to get involved will be shared soon.

How this links to VAP

The new national 'inclusive pathways into volunteering' project will address aspects of several VAP actions related to pathways into volunteering, **including**:

25 Encourage people to consider volunteering

28 Stimulate volunteer pathways

32 Volunteering Opportunities by lifestage

35 Engage national partners

Membership Development – Volunteering Practitioner Community

Volunteer Scotland will broaden our membership and launch a Volunteering Practitioner Community in 2026-27. This will bring both paid and unpaid volunteer coordinators, managers, programme developers and leaders together for networking, peer support, sharing of expertise and development. More information will be shared in due course.

How this links to VAP

The Volunteering Practitioner Community addresses aspects of several VAP actions related to knowledge development and exchange, **including**:

10 Support for Volunteering Leaders

14 The Volunteering For All: National Learning Community

15 Enhancing volunteering practice

43 Build knowledge, skills and capacity in inclusive volunteering

4. Research and Policy, evidence and influence around the participation gap

Volunteer Scotland will continue to build the evidence base around volunteering and its valuable impact, and to advocate for an enabling environment through which volunteering can thrive.

Relevant actions in this area are:

- Infrastructure organisations to gather additional evidence on the impact of volunteering which could contribute to requests for additional national funding
- Continue to call on the Scottish Government to complete an independent review of charity regulation, with a focus on ensuring that volunteering as a charity trustee is inclusive, proportionate and sustainable
- Publish up to date and robust scoping of hostile environments for volunteering as an emerging trend

As the national centre for volunteering, we seek to communicate the collective experience of volunteers and the practice community and are therefore creating new ways to capture the 'Volunteering Voice'. The 'Bridging the Participation Gap' Roundtable series was delivered through the Research and Policy team, who will continue to embed the 'Volunteering Voice' throughout Volunteer Scotland's projects. There will be an opportunity to further shape our work through volunteer focus groups, VIO roundtables and hosting field visits.

This year our policy focus is to develop relationships with the new Scottish Government, with a strong emphasis on promoting fair funding for the sector as well as reviewing charity legislation and trusteeship.

We are also starting a mapping exercise of practical guidance and resources to support volunteering in hostile environments.

How this links to the Volunteering Action Plan

The Research and Policy activities address aspects of several VAP actions, including:



1 Responsibility for Volunteering Policy

12 Build Voice capacity

4 Organising for policy success

13 Build Evidence capacity

5. Disclosure Services

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services (VSDS) help qualifying voluntary organisations get fee-waived disclosure checks for people working or volunteering in regulated roles with them. They enrol organisations to the scheme, assess their 'regulated' roles and countersign applications on their behalf. VSDS also provide training, advice and support to ensure organisations remain compliant with regards the Disclosure Act. In 2026-27, the training, support and engagement offered by VSDS will be easier to access and fit around busy schedules with the launch of online 'learning bytes'. VSDS will also be launching monthly educational 'spotlights', to support ongoing learning and raise awareness of key aspects of the Disclosure Act.

Annex

List of organisations attending the roundtable series

ALLIANCE	Baillie Gifford	Befriend a Child
Befriending Networks	Bethany Christian Trust	Borders Community Action
Cake or Dice CIC	Care and Repair Edinburgh Ltd	Changeworks
Charity Leadership Scotland	Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland	Children's Hospices Across Scotland
Citizens Advice Scotland	Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface	CLD Standards Council
CLDMS	Community Enterprise Scotland	Community Transport Association
Corra Foundation	COVEY	Cruinn Consulting
CVO East Ayrshire	CVS Falkirk & District	Dalavich Improvement Group
DataKind UK	Duke of Edinburgh Award	Dundee Volunteer & Voluntary Action
Dunfermline Advocacy	Dynamic Community Fusion	Dyslexia Scotland
East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action	Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity	Edinburgh Food Project
Edinburgh North East Foodbank	Edinburgh Tenants Federation	Engage Renfrewshire
Euan's Guide	Fare Scotland	Fife Council

List of organisations

Continued

Fife Cultural Trust	Fife Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations	Fife Voluntary Action
FirstHand Lothian	Four Square (Scotland)	Fresh Start (Scotland)
Generations Working Together	Girlguiding Scotland	Girls Brigade Scotland
Glasgow Women's Library	Guide Dogs	Health In Mind
Healthy & Active in East Kilbride	Heriot-Watt University	Highland Hospice
Highland Third Sector Interface	Historic Environment Scotland	Home-Start West Lothian
Humanist Society Scotland	Impact Funding Partners	Inspiring Scotland
Intercultural Youth Scotland	Inverclyde Council - Inclusive Communities	Kirkmillan Consulting Ltd
Larkhall and District Volunteer Group	Make Your Mark in Volunteering Campaign	Marie Curie
MCR Pathways	Midlothian Community Action	Money Ready
Narcolepsy UK	National Autistic Society Scotland	National Galleries of Scotland
National Lottery Fund	Nepal Scotland Association	NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland
One Parent Families Scotland	Parkinson's UK	PATH Scotland
Patients' Advocacy Service	Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary Service	Police Scotland Youth Volunteers
Prostate Scotland	Royal National Lifeboat Institution	Royal Voluntary Service Scotland
ScotRail Trains Ltd	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	Scottish Government
Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	Scottish Wildlife Trust	Scottish Women's Aid
SHAX	Simon Community Scotland	Spinal Injuries Scotland
sportscotland	St Andrew's First Aid	St Columba's Hospice Care
Stirling Council - Learning and Employability Team	Stirling District Citizens Advice Bureau	Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise
Super Power Agency	Team Jak Foundation	The Conservation Volunteers
The Mark Scott Award - The Outward Bound Trust	The National Trust for Scotland	The Sanctuary Garden

List of organisations

Continued

Transition Stirling	TSI Network	Unicorn Preservation Society
Venture Scotland	Victim Support Scotland	Vintage Vibes
VOCAL	Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire	Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire
Voluntary Action South Ayrshire	Volunteer Centre Western Isles	Volunteer Edinburgh
Volunteer Glasgow	Volunteering Matters Scotland	Who Cares? Scotland
Widowed & Young	William Grant Foundation	Women’s Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Dundee and Angus
YMCA Edinburgh	YMCA Scotland	YouthLink Scotland
YTAS		



Relevant VAP actions per theme

Theme	Relevant VAP actions
Theme 1 Volunteer managers don't have the resources they need	15: Enhancing volunteering practice 18: Improve resilience processes and guidance 22: Establish a common understanding of inclusive volunteering 43: Build knowledge, skills and capacity in inclusive volunteering 45: The right level of bureaucracy 46: Create a wellbeing training resource
Theme 2 Financial support for volunteering is fragile and constrained	7: Volunteering Funding Consortium 9: Funding standards
Theme 3 Volunteering pathways, while vital, need to be clear and properly resourced	13: Build evidence capacity 25: Encourage people to consider volunteering 27: Scaling up models of successful community volunteer engagement 28: Stimulate volunteer pathways 34: Bridge expertise 36: Tackle transitions for volunteers
Theme 4 Trustee recruitment and retention are sector-wide challenges	10: Support for volunteering leaders 25: Encourage people to consider volunteering 45: The right level of bureaucracy
Theme 5 More flexible volunteering roles are key to more inclusive participation	19: Supporting digital practice and digital access in volunteering 28: Stimulate volunteer pathways 45: The right level of bureaucracy
Theme 6 Volunteers with lived experience enable effective and inclusive services	10: Support for volunteering leaders 12: Build Voice Capacity 22: Establish a common understanding of inclusive volunteering 43: Build knowledge, skills and capacity in inclusive volunteering
Theme 7 Volunteers from underrepresented groups are experiencing increased hostility	15: Enhancing volunteering practice 18: Improve resilience processes and guidance 34: Bridge expertise



volunteerscotland.net