



SHAPING  
the future with  
VOLUNTEERING

# Position statement

# SUMMARY

**We believe volunteering can play a transformative role in creating the kind of society we all want to live in, helping address the biggest challenges that we face from Covid recovery to mental health to climate change.**

That's why we have come together as national charities to build on the momentum created during the pandemic. We are committed to working together and with others across charities, government, and the private sector to support all communities across the UK to be dynamic and welcoming places for volunteering.

We must and will continue to change and develop how we work and engage with all communities. We are building on our heritage of decades of delivering through volunteering, but modernising our approach to fit today's expectations and opportunities.

**"We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a bigger and broader civic society which will build stronger communities. We know change is needed if we are to make the most of this incredible chance and we are determined to seize the moment."**

**Catherine Johnstone CBE, CEO Royal Voluntary Service**

# CONTEXT

**Whilst some volunteering roles were reduced or put on hold over the past year, others – such as mutual aid programmes – have emerged as key contributors, supporting neighbours and local communities.**

Over the past year more than 12 million volunteers have contributed to the wellbeing of people in every city, town, village and community. In all our charities local volunteers gave their time and expertise to work towards building a stronger social and economic future for our nations, remodelling their roles and rising to the challenges created by the pandemic.

Hundreds of thousands have enrolled in national initiatives such as the NHS Volunteer Responder Programme and St John Ambulance vaccination roles and there was an outpouring of people who joined local groups to volunteer for the first time.

**“One of the key ingredients to the successful mobilisation of volunteers during the pandemic has been collaboration. So it is fantastic that 24 of the largest volunteering charities, who between them support hundreds of thousands of volunteers, have committed to working collectively to shape the future of volunteering.”**

**Sarah Vibert, Interim CEO, NCVO**

# OPPORTUNITY

- Volunteering has played a key part in Covid response. It can now play a central role in national recovery.
- Volunteering is beneficial for a volunteer's own well-being as well as benefiting others.
- Volunteering contributes to the development of all communities, co-producing with diverse communities the opportunities that will make the biggest difference. Everyone should be offered the opportunity to enrich their lives and that of their community around them through volunteering.
- Volunteering is also pivotal to the community fundraising that is core to reviving charities hard hit by the pandemic.

**"Giving our time is good for us, actively improving our well-being by connecting us to something bigger. It's good for our communities and good for our country. That's why we have come together as major volunteer-involving charities to work together and learn from each other, extending our reach and making a bigger impact in our communities."**

**Matt Hyde OBE, Chief Executive, Scouts**

# COMMITMENT

**Changes in volunteering have accelerated as a result on the pandemic. As volunteer-involving organisations we must continue to embrace change.**

It is crucial that we work together across the nations to support communities as they recover and rebuild from the pandemic. We want to contribute to a well-resourced voluntary sector of national and local organisations, with a strong and supportive infrastructure.

Through our volunteer involvement, in some cases for over a century, we bring enormous and valuable experience in helping people, their communities and the world we live in. We must build beyond that heritage to be relevant and accessible. We are committed to working in new ways together to improve the collective reach, effectiveness and impact of our organisations for the best possible outcomes.

# We will work together across **four action areas:**

## **1 / UNDERSTANDING**

We'll tell our story together, promote better understanding and celebrate the power of volunteering. We'll highlight the contribution volunteering makes to the economy and society. We'll share our insight from volunteers' experiences and how that shapes our activities and impact assessment.

## **2 / INCLUSION**

We have a shared commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and will learn from the best examples of volunteer engagement across diverse demographics, geographies and cultures. With this knowledge we'll extend our reach together, listening to more diverse voices and challenging our own perspectives. We'll particularly seek to connect with those communities who face the most challenges in pandemic recovery, including areas of deprivation and Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

## 3 / SUPPORT

Our work will be shaped by volunteers and we'll learn more about valuing volunteers and how they can be better supported. We'll review the accessibility of our systems to make it easier for more people from different backgrounds and circumstances to become volunteers, have their skills and experience recognised, and their safety protected. We will enable people to volunteer in a way that better suits their needs and personal priorities.

We'll increase recognition of and support for the value of volunteering in promoting health and well-being of volunteers themselves. Working with partners, we'll share approaches to evaluation of volunteering activity and the results of that evaluation.

## 4 / PARTNERSHIPS

We'll work with other volunteer-involving organisations of all shapes and sizes, learning from each other. It is only by working together that we can realise the potential of volunteering in post-pandemic UK. We'll work closely with government, business and other agencies. In delivering on our commitment, we will highlight areas where government action can enable the voluntary sector to realise the potential of volunteering to society and the economy. We will support our national sector bodies (e.g. NCVO) in taking these messages to Government. This includes the impact that government regulatory requirements can have on volunteer-involving organisations.

## For more information

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