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Join In, Get Involved: Build a Better Future

A Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland

March 2012



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Join In, Get Involved: Build a Better Future.

The Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland



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1 Ministerial Foreword

As the Minister for Social Development with lead responsibility for volunteering in Northern Ireland I am delighted to be responsible for bringing forward Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy.

People volunteer for all sorts of reasons - some to help others or to develop new skills and social networks, others because they are interested in a particular issue or activity. Whatever the motivation, thousands of people volunteer across Northern Ireland every day and this strategy aims to create the conditions that will enable volunteering to grow and flourish.

Volunteering makes Northern Ireland a better place for all of us to live in. It helps people connect with each other and with others in our community. Almost every aspect of everyday life – the communities we live in, our physical environment, our sport and leisure activities, where we work and worship, our schools and hospitals benefit from volunteers.

This strategy has been developed following extensive research and consultation and I want to thank everyone who participated in that process. In developing the strategy best practice across the UK and Ireland was investigated and reviewed. As a result, I am confident that this new approach stands robust scrutiny against best practice anywhere in the world and that it is reflective and fit for purpose for our 21st century society.

Going around Northern Ireland I have been greatly impressed by the time and energy volunteers contribute to our community. It is essential that we continue to nurture and realise the capacity and capability that exists, making it easier for people to contribute their time and views in creating the kind of society in which they want to live.

Volunteering makes all our lives better – it is in all our interests to embed a robust culture of volunteering in Northern Ireland. This strategy will play a significant part in achieving that aim. Now is the time for everyone to come together, to "join in, get involved and build a better future".

Nelson McCausland

NELSON MCCAUSLAND MLA
Minister for Social Development



2 Executive Summary

- 2.1** Supporting volunteering makes good sense. Almost every aspect of everyday life – the communities we live in, our physical environment, our sport and leisure activities, where we work and worship, our schools and hospitals benefits from volunteers.

Volunteering impacts on the delivery of many Government initiatives delivered across a range of policy areas. This five year Strategy creates a strong policy context to provide the conditions which will enable volunteering to flourish and ensure its impact on life in Northern Ireland is maximised.

In September 2007 the *It's All About Time*¹ research report was published. This report gave a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of volunteering in Northern Ireland from the perspective of individuals and organisations. This research formed the basis of evidence to inform the Volunteering Strategy.

The Strategy, its definition, vision, objectives and priorities have been developed following an extensive consultation process with a wide range of groups and individuals. A full report of the consultation process is found on the DSD website at: <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/vcni-about-volunteering-strategy.htm>

The findings from '*It's All About Time*' and the responses provided through the consultation process have allowed us to develop a comprehensive vision, associated values and key objectives and priorities at the heart of this strategy. Together these will drive the implementation of this strategy over the coming years.

2.2 Vision

The Northern Ireland Executive's vision for volunteering is a society where:

- Everyone values the vital contribution that volunteers make to community well-being.
- Everyone has the opportunity to have a meaningful, enjoyable volunteering experience.

This vision is underpinned by the following values:

- **Fairness and Equity:** Volunteering enhances social inclusion and good relations. It should be open to everyone.
- **The importance of free will/choice:** Volunteering is a matter of free choice and there should be no compulsion to take part.
- **Mutual Benefit:** Volunteering is a shared experience. It is rewarding and of benefit to the volunteer in building skills, confidence and extending social networks. Volunteering is of benefit to society in contributing to the building of social capital and progressive social change.

¹ *It's All About Time* Volunteering in Northern Ireland, Volunteer Development Agency, 2007

2 Executive Summary

2.3 Objectives and Priorities

Following an extensive consultation process the following objectives and associated priorities have been agreed as the basis for the Volunteering Strategy.

Objective 1: Recognising the Value and Promoting the Benefits

Priorities

- Build public recognition for volunteering
- Recruit more volunteers
- Measure the impact of volunteer involvement on volunteers, individuals, organisations and society.
- Seek to protect volunteering from the unintended negative consequences of legislation and Government policy.

Objective 2: Enhancing Accessibility and Diversity

Priority

- Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to volunteer and that volunteering is representative of the diversity of our community.

Objective 3: Improving the Experience

Priorities

- Improve volunteer management practice
- Increase the number and quality of volunteering opportunities
- Encourage and support the development of skills by volunteers
- Extend volunteering in the public sector

2 Executive Summary

Objective 4: Supporting and Strengthening the Infrastructure

Priority

- Provide effective infrastructure support to volunteering.

Objective 5: Delivering the Strategy

Priorities

- Create a comprehensive investment programme to deliver the Strategy.
- Deliver the Strategy in an effective, accountable way reflecting its cross cutting nature.
- Identify a volunteering champion

These objectives and priorities will be used to design a programme of work which will support the implementation of the Volunteering Strategy. An Action Plan is being developed to manage this programme of work throughout the life of the Strategy.

3 Context

3.1 Why a Volunteering Strategy?

In Northern Ireland we have a strong history and ethos of volunteering. Volunteering underpins much of our community life and the services which benefit people and on which we rely. It is estimated that over 280,000 people regularly give time to formal volunteering in Northern Ireland. It is a matter of concern that volunteering levels in Northern Ireland are not increasing and volunteer involving organisations are reporting that despite a strong reliance on volunteers it is more difficult than ever to recruit them².

Volunteering impacts on how the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government is delivered across a range of policy areas such as community cohesion, sport, education, criminal justice, health and urban and rural development.

The Department for Social Development has identified the need for a strategic approach to the promotion and development of volunteering in Northern Ireland. This Volunteering Strategy has been designed to create a strong policy context providing the conditions that will enable volunteering to flourish and to ensure that its impact on life in Northern Ireland is maximised. This Strategy will determine the framework for volunteering activity in Northern Ireland for the next five years. This will enable more people to be involved in volunteer action and build a better future for the people of Northern Ireland.

3.2 Background to the development of the Strategy

Following the Year of the Volunteer in 2005 the Department for Social Development moved towards the production of a Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Department took the lead in establishing a Steering Group made up of representatives from the public, voluntary and community, faith based, business, sports and arts sectors to consider the development of a volunteering strategy. (See Appendix 1 for the Volunteering Strategy Steering Group Membership.) In 2007 the then Minister for Social Development, Margaret Ritchie, gave her agreement to take forward the development of the Strategy.

In September 2007 the *It's All About Time*² research report was published. This report gave a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of volunteering in Northern Ireland from the perspective of individuals and organisations and has been used as the prime evidence base for the development of the Volunteering Strategy.

Evidence in relation to volunteering best practice from across the UK, Republic of Ireland and further afield was also considered during the development of the Strategy.

² *It's All About Time* Volunteering in Northern Ireland, Volunteer Development Agency, 2007

3 Context

3.3 The Consultation Process

The consultation process for the Volunteering Strategy ran until November 2009. There were 237 written responses to the consultation document and over 320 people attended consultation events. On the whole there was a warm welcome for the strategy and the proposals it contained.

This final Strategy document presents objectives and priorities in relation to the way ahead for volunteering in Northern Ireland across a range of sectors. It is based on the original proposals presented in the consultation document and the responses received to these through the consultation process.

4 The Volunteering Strategy

The Volunteering Strategy sets out a new strategic framework for volunteer development in Northern Ireland. It aims to involve more people in volunteer action to help build a better future for the people of Northern Ireland.

4.1 Definition

‘Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one’s immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice’.

This definition refers to both formal volunteering (carried out with, or under the auspices of an organisation/group) and informal volunteering (carried out outside the organisation, often at neighbourhood level but outside, or in addition to, the immediate family). It comprises the widest spectrum of activity for example, community development, arts, sport, faith based, education, neighbourliness, youth, environmental, health and direct care.

4.2 Vision

The Northern Ireland Executive’s vision for volunteering is a society where:

- Everyone values the vital contribution that volunteers make to community well-being.
- Everyone has the opportunity to have a meaningful, enjoyable volunteering experience.

This is underpinned by the following values:

- **Fairness and Equity:** Volunteering enhances social inclusion and good relations. It should be open to everyone.
- **The importance of free will/choice:** Volunteering is a matter of free choice and there should be no compulsion to take part.
- **Mutual Benefit:** Volunteering is a shared experience. It is rewarding and of benefit to the volunteer in building skills, confidence and extending social networks. Volunteering is of benefit to society in contributing to the building of social capital and progressive social change.

4 The Volunteering Strategy

4.3 Objectives

The five key objectives developed for the Volunteering Strategy are:

- 1) Recognising the Value and Promoting the Benefits;
- 2) Enhancing Accessibility and Diversity;
- 3) Improving the Experience;
- 4) Supporting and Strengthening the Infrastructure; and
- 5) Delivering the Strategy.

These key objectives were determined and agreed upon through the consultation process and form the overarching objectives for the strategy. These objectives are expanded upon and explained more fully in the following paragraphs. For each of these objectives key priorities for action during implementation have also been identified.

5 Objective 1: Recognising the Value and Promoting the Benefits

- 5.1** Volunteering is at the heart of a vibrant society where people can contribute to social change through giving their time. Volunteers are important in delivering the many things we take for granted such as youth activities, sports clubs, faith based activities, arts festivals, social housing and many other services and activities that make a positive contribution in our society.
- 5.2** In Northern Ireland we have a strong history and ethos of volunteering. However, in recent years it would seem that involvement in formal volunteering is not increasing while demand for volunteers is high. Consultation responses supported this and reflected the need to move volunteering even further into a position where it is valued and seen as an important aspect of every day life. There needs to be widespread recognition across society for the value of volunteers and the benefits of volunteering to people and their communities.
- 5.3** We need to provide clear information in a variety of styles and formats about volunteer opportunities in order to recruit new volunteers. The consultation supported the need for new ways of communicating to be explored such as the use of social networking sites and text messages.
- 5.4** Given the fact that the majority of adults are active in the workforce at one time or another, engagement with employers is important in promoting and encouraging volunteering. A key challenge is to encourage and enable employers of all sizes to take part in encouraging employees to volunteer. Employer Supported Volunteering is widely valued as a mechanism for encouraging participation, developing corporate social responsibility and building skills.
- 5.5** Many people give their time to volunteering in a faith-based context across a wide range of activities such as youth and children's work, befriending, luncheon clubs and transport. The faith-based sector involves significant numbers of volunteers. Implementation of the strategy will provide an opportunity to work constructively across sectors to share good practice, increase recognition and improve the experience of volunteers in a faith-based context.
- 5.6** Sport is also a major sector involving volunteers. There is a need to ensure increased recognition for volunteering and the part it plays in supporting participation in sport at all levels. There are large significant regional cultural and sporting events and organisations, which have a large volunteering component and these should be built upon to create a longer-term recognition for volunteering.

"In today's difficult economic climate employers, and in particular small businesses, are looking for creative ways to engage employees as effective teams for community benefit. Employer Supported Volunteering has enabled Johnston Campbell to deliver our corporate responsibility strategy and contribute to our competitive edge and we would encourage other similar employers to get involved".

**Johnny Simpson, Financial Adviser,
Johnston Campbell Ltd**

"Looking back on it, I was brought up in a 'volunteering' family where my mum and dad were all heavily involved in our local sports club... I have been involved in numerous sports club committees. I really enjoyed the challenge of organising club affairs to ensure that the club was as successful and enjoyable as possible."

Cathy

5 Objective 1: Recognising the Value and Promoting the Benefits

- 5.7** A range of legislation impacts upon volunteering such as safeguarding vulnerable groups, minimum wage or health and safety legislation. Volunteering is also impacted by policy on issues such as welfare benefits, sport, careers guidance, immigration and youth work. There is a need for policy makers to give consideration to protecting volunteering from the unintended negative consequences of legislation or policy changes.
- 5.8** Many charities, churches and sporting bodies operate on an all Ireland basis. Volunteers in border areas, which are predominantly rural, may live in one country and volunteer in the other. We need to find better ways of supporting these organisations and individuals.

Objective 1 - Priorities

- **Build public recognition for volunteering.**
- **Recruit more volunteers.**
- **Measure the impact of volunteer involvement on volunteers, individuals, organisations and society.**
- **Seek to protect volunteering from the unintended negative consequences of legislation and Government policy on volunteering**

6 Objective 2 - Enhancing Accessibility and Diversity

6.1 Volunteering should be open to everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race or where they live. Volunteering can be an excellent way of developing better community relations and it has a strong part to play in the shared and better future³ agenda.

6.2 Research⁴ shows that volunteering has a role to play in bringing different communities together. Yet, volunteering is not as inclusive as it might be. The evidence shows that while levels of volunteering by young people are holding up well, people over 65 are the least likely to be volunteers. This poses big challenges in the context of an aging population.

People with disabilities are also under represented in volunteering. People from rural areas, people from black and minority ethnic communities, new migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities may also encounter barriers in engaging in volunteering. Diversity in volunteering is a strength and good practice places a strong emphasis on volunteering being open to everyone.

“My husband and I are retired and volunteering gives us a new purpose to our lives. I love dogs and so volunteering as a Puppy Walker was the ideal way to help.”

Lena

Objective 2 - Priority

- **Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to volunteer and that volunteering is representative of the diversity of the community**

³ Programme for Government 2008-2011, Northern Ireland Executive, 2008

⁴ *It's All About Time* Volunteering in Northern Ireland, Volunteer Development Agency, 2007

7 Objective 3 - Improving the Experience

"Involving our organisation in working towards the Investing in Volunteers award was challenging but very worthwhile. We value all our volunteers highly and this award affirms our commitment to them. They are the cornerstone of our organisation."

Home-Start Antrim

7.1 The consultation supported the need for good volunteer management not to be overly bureaucratic. It should nurture the desire of people to help and get involved while ensuring that it is done in a framework of good practice which supports and protects the volunteer and the organisation and the service user. There is a need to develop the skills of the individuals responsible for managing volunteers⁵ whether they are doing it in a paid or unpaid capacity. These skills in recruiting and supporting volunteers should be embedded within volunteer involving organisations to ensure that every volunteer has a meaningful experience.

7.2 Standards of volunteer management should be raised. Organisations can offer training, accredited or otherwise, to volunteers which will develop the skills of the volunteer and enable them to carry out their tasks in a better more fulfilling way. Funders should be aware of good practice in volunteering.

7.3 Volunteers should have an enjoyable, rewarding and effective volunteering experience. Volunteers should be engaged in meaningful activity – responding to their passions and interests. Opportunities should be attractive, varied, flexible and well managed. Organisations should look to extend the range of roles available and to ensure that they challenge the boundaries of what activities can be done by volunteers. Greater diversity of roles leads to a more diverse volunteering population and a greater number of volunteers.

7.4 Time is a precious commodity and research shows that the pressures of other work and home commitments are seen as the biggest barriers to volunteering in Northern Ireland. We need to find ways of allowing volunteering to have a better fit in people's lives. Organisations need to develop greater flexibility in their volunteering opportunities and training to allow people to give time and still meet their other commitments. This might mean, for example, volunteering during weekends or evenings or virtually, by working on projects online.

7.5 Volunteers play a wide range of roles within public sector organisations, providing practical services as varied as fundraising to the provision of governance in schools. This Strategy will enhance the role of volunteers at a strategic level across public sector organisations, to ensure there is a value for their contribution and an emphasis on good practice. This will enable increased involvement of volunteers within the public sector which was welcomed in the consultation.

"Volunteering helped me to get back into work. It is something positive to do and provides useful experience. The whole social aspect is so important and employers like to see volunteering on CVs. Above all there is the satisfaction of doing something useful and helping others. Would I recommend volunteering? - TOTALLY!"

Niall

⁵ Northern Ireland Voluntary and Community Sector Skills Survey, NICVA, June 2008

7 Objective 3 - Improving the Experience

7.6 Volunteering can provide an important opportunity for people of all ages to develop skills. In studies relating to volunteering, people of all ages report that it gave them opportunities to: develop new skills (including social skills); develop confidence; improve employment prospects and, in some cases, to gain a recognised qualification. Volunteering can also provide an opportunity to get experience of a chosen career for example, through Service Learning where young people bring academic knowledge to real world problems and so provide solutions as well as vital experience for the young people involved. Many adults opt to volunteer to try a new career or to maintain skills after redundancy or retirement. The consultation responses recognised that not everyone comes to volunteering to build their skills but, where they do, volunteer involving organisations should examine ways to ensure that learning opportunities are provided and volunteers are able, where appropriate, to get recognised accreditation for the skills developed.

I think that driving is something that most people can do, I mean; it only takes a couple of hours a week and makes such a difference. I have met so many people that I would never have met. You never know where volunteering can take you.

Adrian

7.7 The context for volunteers involved in management committees of charities in Northern Ireland is changing. The introduction of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland will see changes in the requirements and rules around operating as a trustee. Volunteers involved in governance will be supported through this change period. Increase in bureaucracy will be avoided to ensure there are no difficulties in recruiting for what can be a challenging role.

Objective 3 - Priorities

- **Improve volunteer management practice**
- **Increase the number and quality of volunteering opportunities.**
- **Encourage and support the development of skills by volunteers**
- **Extend volunteering in the public sector**

8 Objective 4 - Supporting and Strengthening the Infrastructure

- 8.1** A high quality volunteering infrastructure has a key role to play in the successful delivery of a Volunteering Strategy. There is a range of services, which infrastructure support organisations⁶ provide to enhance the capacity of all sectors involving volunteers. These services may include policy development, research, training on recruiting and supporting volunteers, information on specific issues relating to volunteer involvement, promotion of volunteering, recruitment of volunteers, assistance with good practice in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and the development of standards in relation to volunteer management and support with governance. The consultation affirmed that this role could be enhanced by a more consistent co-ordinated approach.
- 8.2** The volunteering infrastructure needs to make it easy to access good quality, consistent volunteering information⁷. It needs to provide high quality, and value for money services to society in both rural and urban areas. The services must also be focused on meeting the current and future needs of volunteers and organisations that involve them.

Objective 4 - Priority

- **Provide effective infrastructure support to volunteering**

⁶ Currently the volunteering infrastructure support is provided by seven organisations. Volunteer Now, a regional organisation, which provides information, policy, training and support to enhance the involvement and maximise the contribution of volunteers as well as promoting volunteering opportunities and supporting the recruitment of volunteers. In addition six volunteer centres, which are independent organisations, provide support in the promotion and development of volunteer opportunities and the recruitment of volunteers across specific areas of Northern Ireland

⁷ Evaluation of the DSD funding of the Volunteer Bureaux Initiative, Department of Finance and Personnel, March 2008

9 Objective 5 - Delivering the Strategy

- 9.1 The Department for Social Development currently core funds the infrastructure support for volunteering and also provides direct support to volunteering through a small grant scheme to support local volunteer involvement.
- 9.2 Volunteering in Northern Ireland is also supported through central and local Government funding for regional and sub-regional organisations providing direct service delivery advice, community development, etc. Improved collaboration and coordination across Government and all sectors will be necessary to ensure the effective delivery of the Strategy.
- 9.3 DSD recognises the real benefits for society in providing investment to volunteering and will continually review its allocation of resources to volunteering over the lifetime of the strategy. The economic reality that will be experienced during the lifetime of this strategy will also be a driver for effective and impacting delivery of the Strategy.
- 9.4 There has been extensive consultation in relation to the development of the Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland and engagement from a range of stakeholders. DSD intends to build upon this engagement by developing innovative and transparent accountability mechanisms for reporting upon implementation. This will include a review of the achievements at the end of the period of the Strategy and consideration of any future measures that would support the ongoing development of volunteering. It is envisaged that any established monitoring mechanism will report to the DSD Minister regularly throughout the lifetime of the Strategy.
- 9.5 The proposal for a volunteering champion was well supported during the consultation and the Department will seek to develop the role of champion for volunteering within Government, to promote the value for volunteering across a number of policy areas.

Objective 5 - Priorities

- **Review resources to provide support to deliver the Strategy.**
- **Deliver Strategy in an effective, accountable way reflecting its cross cutting nature.**
- **Identify a volunteering champion**

10 The Way Forward

10.1 Delivering Objectives and Priorities

These objectives and priorities will be used to drive a programme of work which will support the implementation of the Volunteering Strategy. An Action Plan will be developed to deliver this programme of work throughout the life of the strategy.

The Volunteering Strategy Action Plan will be a living document, implementing a range of actions, continually updated, reviewed, revisited and agreed across all sectors through the life of the strategy.

11 Appendix 1 - Volunteering Strategy Steering Group Membership

Western Health & Social Care Trust

Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Volunteer Centres Northern Ireland

South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

Princes Trust

NICVA

Northern Ireland Sports Forum

Department for Social Development

Business In The Community

YouthNet

Rural Community Network

Voluntary Arts Ireland

Churches Community Work Alliance

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

Disability Action

Department of Education

Lisburn City Council

Age Concern Help the Aged Northern Ireland

NI Environment Link

Department of Culture Arts and Leisure

Join In, Get Involved: Build a Better Future.

Volunteering Strategy Action Plan



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Objective1: Recognising the Value and Promoting the Benefits of Volunteering						
	Priority		Actions	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Options
1.1	Build public recognition for volunteering	1.1a	Identify a Volunteering Champion who will promote volunteering, set a personal example, be an ambassador and advocate for volunteering and recognise the achievement of volunteers and the impact they are making.	By September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal identification of Volunteering Champion Establishment of diary of "championing events" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media coverage. Involvement of Champion at events Level of awareness of Volunteering Champion
		1.1b	Support a minimum of 11 volunteer recognition events each year.	April 2012 - 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 events completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people attending events Amount of media coverage Website traffic Number of awards given, amount (value) of private sector support Number of voluntary sector organisations involved

1.2	Recruit more volunteers	1.2a	Develop and implement a volunteer recruitment campaign including specific support for thematic groups such as sports and faith based organisations	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 % increase in the numbers of people volunteering Increase in numbers volunteering in thematic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website traffic Numbers of new volunteers coming forward Surveys
1.2b		Development of the existing Northern Ireland wide volunteering database and associated website to provide the key information point for volunteering opportunities including the use of new technology such as Facebook and Twitter	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased usage of an NI database for volunteering opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website traffic Numbers of organisations advertising opportunities Number of opportunities Social media participants 	
1.2c		Provide and maintain an easily accessible range of comprehensive volunteering information in a variety of formats	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to date widely available volunteering information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of documents produced Amount of information available in alternative formats and other languages. Frequency of review of information 	
1.2d		Realise volunteering potential of regional, sub regional cultural and sporting events involving and recognising volunteers eg London Olympic and Paralympic Games, World Fire and Police Games, City of Culture developing and implementing volunteering strategies to maximise the involvement of volunteers	April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteering strategies in place for events and successful volunteer involvement in them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of volunteers and volunteering opportunities at events Numbers of volunteering strategies developed to support events 	

Recruit more volunteers (continued)	1.2e	Promote and encourage Employer Supported Volunteering within public, private and community sectors and make it easy for employers of all sizes to engage in Employer Supported Volunteering	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the level of Employer Supported Volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of councils, departments, NDPBs and employers etc with volunteering / ESV policies and membership of ESV schemes Numbers of employees participating in ESV schemes
	1.2f	Host a number of annual volunteer recruitment fairs with the involvement of the voluntary and community sector and public and private sectors to recruit new volunteers	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 8 volunteer recruitment events per annum recruitment of at least 250 new volunteers and 50 new placement organisations (annually) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of exhibitors, organisations, members of the public attending Numbers of organisations coming forward to avail of services New volunteers recruited
	1.2g	Host an annual Volunteering Conference which will showcase best practice and address key areas in the development of volunteering	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A successful, well attended conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers attending Feedback from attendees

1.3	Measure the impact of volunteer involvement on volunteers, individuals, organisations and society	1.3a	Identify appropriate and consistent methods of measuring the numbers and impact of volunteers	March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of tool(s) to measure volunteer impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organisations measuring volunteer impact
		1.3b	Measure the impact of volunteering using the tool(s) identified to measure impact	April 2012 - ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey a minimum of 1000 volunteers, 250 placements organisations • Produce a report on findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys completed • Collation of findings from organisations using the impact measurement tools
1.4	Seek to protect volunteering from the unintended consequences of legislation and Government policy	1.4a	Establish policy group of volunteering stakeholders to enable the checking of policy and legislation proposals which might mitigate against volunteering	By September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Group input to policies being developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of policy and legislation developments that the policy group had input to / that were amended to reflect volunteering needs
		1.4b	Volunteering policy group to report each year to DSD Minister on the barriers, real and perceived, which may prevent people on benefits from volunteering together with an appropriate action plan	From April 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the numbers of people on benefits volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of people on benefits volunteering • Numbers of benefit claimants advised about volunteering

Objective 2: Volunteering: Enhancing Accessibility and Diversity						
	Priority		Actions	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Options
2.1	Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to volunteer and that volunteering is representative of the diversity of the community	2.1a	Enable children and young people to become involved in volunteering and help them develop skills and gain experience through their voluntary activity	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased numbers of young people volunteering Increased participation in the Millennium Volunteers programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of young people volunteering More young people and placement organisations participating in the Millennium Volunteers programme
		2.1b	Support volunteer involving organisations to develop practices that enable them to involve a diverse range of volunteers and offer a welcoming environment to everyone	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased volunteering numbers Increased diversity in the volunteering population to be more reflective of the general population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of volunteers including those from section 75 groups, people on benefits etc
		2.1c	Develop an action plan to support and encourage people with disabilities to become involved in volunteering and to provide support to facilitate their involvement	By March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to increase volunteering by people with disabilities Production of an action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of volunteers with a disability supported Volunteering levels among people with disabilities

<p>Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to volunteer and that volunteering is representative of the diversity of the community (continued)</p>	<p>2.1d</p>	<p>Work across Government, the volunteering infrastructure and the insurance industry to limit the potential for insurance to be a barrier to volunteering</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of the needs of the voluntary sector with insurance companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of insurance organisations participating in any initiatives on insurance
	<p>2.1e</p>	<p>Promote and enable volunteering among older people and other under-represented groups</p>	<p>2012-2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases in volunteering levels in under-represented groups to be more reflective of the general population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of people volunteering from under-represented groups
	<p>2.1f</p>	<p>Deliver a series of road shows for schools to make young people aware of the benefits of volunteering and the opportunities that are available</p>	<p>September 2012 - March 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2500 young people attending road shows each year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools involved, pupils attending and levels of volunteering in young people
	<p>2.1g</p>	<p>Align volunteering activity with Government activities and policies aimed at combating disadvantage</p>	<p>2012-2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When suitable incorporate volunteer involvement in initiatives that are designed to combat disadvantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of volunteers involved in initiatives designed to tackle disadvantage

Objective 3: Improving the Experience						
	Priority		Actions	Timeframe	Key performance Indicators	Measurement Options
3.1	Improve volunteer management practice	3.1a	Encourage and support volunteer managers and organisations to improve their volunteer management practice and gain relevant accreditation	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of organisations and individuals with accreditation/ qualifications in volunteer management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of organisations with accreditation Number of individuals with qualifications
		3.1b	Encourage funders, including local authorities, where appropriate, to ensure the quality of volunteer involvement and management is of an effective standard when considering funding an organisation or awarding a contract where volunteers play a significant part in delivering services	By March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of organisations meeting quality standards in volunteer management Recognition by funders of the need for good volunteer management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of funders considering volunteer management skills, volunteer expenses, volunteer policies etc as part of the process of decision making on applications for funding
		3.1c	Refresh / develop simple, effective and user friendly best practice factsheets on volunteering and volunteer management for current and perspective placement organisations	From March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Factsheets per annum a prepared and circulated to at least 1000 VCS organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of publications prepared and distributed Increased levels of good management practice

3.2	Increase the number and quality of volunteering opportunities	3.2a	Promote and support family volunteering opportunities that enable families to volunteer as a group to encourage volunteering from an early age	March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 20 initiatives targeted at providing volunteering opportunities for families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of initiatives Number of volunteers participating
3.2b	Promote and support the development of “turn up, take part” volunteering opportunities that provide immediate opportunities for people to volunteer	3.2b	Promote and support the development of “turn up, take part” volunteering opportunities that provide immediate opportunities for people to volunteer	March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 20 initiatives targeted at providing volunteering opportunities on a turn up take part basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of initiatives Number of volunteers participating
3.2c	Utilise Employer Supported Volunteering to develop and strengthen management committees	3.2c	Utilise Employer Supported Volunteering to develop and strengthen management committees	March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Employer Supported Volunteering in management committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of people involved in ESV schemes Surveys of management committees
3.2d	Programme of support for new ways of volunteering	3.2d	Programme of support for new ways of volunteering	March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the opportunity for people to volunteer in non traditional roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new initiatives. Number of workshops. Number of volunteers

<p>3.3</p> <p>Encourage and support the development of skills by volunteers</p>	<p>3.3a</p>	<p>Support volunteers involved in management committees to enhance their skills and knowledge base and improve their volunteer experience</p>	<p>March 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased skills sets and strength of management committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers attending training/good practice events • Use of online and other resources • Surveys of management committees
<p>3.3b</p>	<p>Support the development of skills by volunteers and, as appropriate, the achievement of recognised qualifications that are beneficial to carrying out their voluntary activities</p>	<p>March 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of volunteers gaining qualifications as part of their volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of volunteers undergoing training as part of their volunteer role 	
<p>3.3c</p>	<p>Enable careers information in schools to present volunteering as an option for gaining skills and experience</p>	<p>2012-2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased recognition of volunteering to support career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from schools / students • Leaflets distributed • New volunteers 	

3.4	Extend volunteering in the public sector	3.4a	Encourage the development of volunteering as a means of involving people in supporting the delivery of services for the public	March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in volunteering levels in the delivery of public services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of public sector organisations involving volunteers • Number of volunteers
		3.4b	Promote volunteering opportunities to local councils and public bodies and encourage buy in from them to promote and disseminate the opportunities	April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 26 councils promoting volunteering opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of councils / public bodies involved / audience size • Number of opportunities promoted • Website traffic

Objective 4: Supporting and Strengthening the Infrastructure						
	Priority		Actions	Timeframe	Key performance Indicator	Measurement Options
4.1	Ensure the infrastructure provides effective support to volunteering	4.1a	Support an integrated infrastructure which provides appropriate services across Northern Ireland and can effectively contribute to the delivery of the Strategy	April 2012 - 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 10% increase in the numbers of people volunteering during the lifetime of the strategy Successful delivery of the elements of the strategy action plan to be carried out by the infrastructure organisation(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring of any contracts in place based on the measurement options for the actions to be delivered by the infrastructure. Survey of public to ascertain volunteering levels
		4.1b	Provide regional and local level support for volunteering activity	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance against contract conditions

Objective 5: Delivering the Strategy						
	Priority		Actions	Timeframe	Key performance Indicators	Measurement Options
5.1	Create an investment programme to deliver the Strategy	5.1a	Further development of the small grants programme to support local volunteer involvement	2012-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The running of a successful small grants programme to support 300+ organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of organisations supported. Number of Volunteers Supported Demand/ Uptake levels
5.2	Deliver strategy in an effective, accountable way reflecting its cross cutting nature	5.2a	Establish an Action Plan Steering Group, with representation from volunteering stakeholders to monitor and report on the implementation of the Strategy. Ensure transparency and accountability regarding the activities of this group, including annual reports to the NI Executive	By September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of operational / implementation plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual report to DSD Minister
		5.2b	Commission mid- term Strategy evaluation	March 2014 March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid Strategy Evaluation Report is produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of measurements based on the measurement options used for each of the priorities and actions
		5.2c	Commission a new survey of the public and organisations to complete end of Strategy evaluation and provide baseline for future volunteering policy and strategy	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An completed survey and report on volunteering in Northern Ireland A Strategy Evaluation Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys of the public and voluntary and community sector organisations

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