

National Volunteering Strategy Implementation

Annual Update - 2022

The National Volunteering Strategy (2021 - 2025) sets out a long-term vision for volunteering and volunteers in Ireland. With actions to be implemented over five years, the Strategy sets out a general direction for government policy in relation to the volunteers and the volunteering environment. It also builds upon and strengthens the renewed relationship and partnership between Government and the voluntary sector which has developed during the course of its preparation.

In line with commitments in the Strategy, a volunteering strategy implementation group was established in March 2021 and has met three times during 2021, and twice during 2022. The table below details the membership of/groups represented on the Implementation Group. The Group is developing an implementation plan for 2023 that will facilitate ongoing appraisal of implementation progress and overall impact of delivery as indicated in the Strategy.

Name	Organisation
Ms Paula Keatley	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Mr Declan Power	Department of Education
Mr Michael Clifford	Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment
Ms Mary Healy Ms Lisa Marie Joyce	Department of Foreign Affairs
Ms Siobhan Sleeman Mr Stephen Manning	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
Ms Karen Henry	Department of Social Protection
Mr James Lavelle Mr Micheál Ó Conaire	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media
Ms Rose Sweeney	An Garda Síochána
Ms Louise Bourke	Sport Ireland
Mr Natasza Wdowicka	ALONE
Mr John Curran	Volunteer Centre Manager Network
Ms Nina Arwitz	Volunteer Ireland
Ms Deirdre Garvey	The Wheel
Ms Lorraine Tansey	NUI Galway
Ms Linda Keane	Ability West
Ms Yvonne McKenna	Gaisce

Advisory Sub-Groups were established under each of the Strategic Objectives to support the development of an implementation plan, as well as the ongoing implementation of the actions under each of the objectives. Once implementation plans are finalised, the annual updates will follow the template of the implementation plans and provide updates agreed for the priority actions identified in that implementation planning period. For 2022 general updates under each of the objectives are outlined below.

Strategic Objective 1

The Strategy seeks to improve awareness of and increase participation in volunteering activities, particularly among those sections of our society that are currently under-represented. It also seeks to reflect diversity in volunteering and to integrate existing initiatives as well as adopting new and innovative ones

- **Sub Group: Communication, Awareness and Recognition**
- **Two meetings held**
- **Action 3** – The proposal received from Dublin City Volunteer Centre on Action 3, for a pilot programme to develop and deliver a training module to VIOs and a volunteer information workshop aimed at older volunteers, was put on hold due to the ongoing work on developing a funding model for Volunteer Centres. It will be re-examined in 2023.
- **Action 32** – DRCD has contributed to local and national awards by providing funding to volunteer involving organisations and volunteer centres.
- **Action 34** – To include a question on volunteering as part of the 2022 Census of Population. This action was achieved for the 2022 Census of Population with a question on volunteering included.
- **Action 37** – To progress part of this action, to develop a National Communication Strategy, funding was provided to Volunteer Ireland in December 2021. The working group has worked throughout the year with Carr Communications to develop the strategy. A draft of the strategy is expected to be circulated in Q1 of 2023 for consideration.
- **Action 37** – To contribute to implementing Action 37 of the Strategy, DRCD invested a once-off payment in The Wheel's We Act campaign in 2022 to include and promote volunteering. A report of the project will be submitted in Q1 of 2023.

Strategic Objective 2

This objective aims to have the best possible supports and infrastructure in place so that volunteering, volunteering infrastructure, Volunteering Involving Organisations, volunteering supports and the volunteers are empowered in the work they do in our communities.

- **Sub Group: Volunteer Management & Capacity Building**
- **Two meetings held**
- **Action 20:** To progress the action to invest in capacity building in VIOs, the subgroup worked with Pobal on a research scoping paper to carry out a 'Skills Analysis Survey'. Work on this project commenced following the signing of the PDA by DRCD and Pobal in November 2021. The skills analysis survey was completed in Q3 2022, and Pobal are working on compiling the data received from the surveys. Results are expected to be available in Q2 2023.
- **Action 24:** Volunteer Ireland, in partnership with the VC Network, have begun to pilot the 'Volunteer Friendly project'. A full review of the pilot was received in 2022. However, further work on this action was put on hold pending the outcome of the Review of the Funding Model for Volunteer Centres. This action will also be supported by the results from Action 20.
- **Action 25:** Action 25 will introduce a standard code of conduct for volunteers, to offer protection and clarity on expectations while volunteering. A proposal to fulfil Action 25 was put forward by Volunteer Ireland and accepted; work will commence in 2023. VI will work in consultation with VIOs and VCs on the project.
- **Action 27:** Action 27 will undertake a review to examine the requirement to introduce protections for volunteers e.g. in cases of bullying, discrimination or protected disclosures. A proposal to fulfil Action 27 was put forward by Volunteer Ireland and accepted; work will commence in 2023. VI will work in consultation with VIOs and volunteers on the project. A full report on the findings will be submitted in Q3 2024.
- **Action 1, 11 and 53:** These three actions grouped together address all 'new' types of volunteering i.e. time and needs matched programmes, event volunteering, task-based volunteering, short term, virtual, micro, once-off and episodic volunteering. A proposal to fulfil Actions 1, 11 and 53 over two years was put forward by Volunteer Ireland and accepted; work will commence in 2023 in cooperation with VIOs and VCs. A report on year one of the project will be submitted in Q1 2024, with a full report on the findings to be submitted in Q1 2025.
- **Action 28:** Following on from the Dermot McLaughlin Report – Volunteer Centre Funding Framework 2017, DRCD engaged with Volunteer Ireland on a Review of Funding to Volunteer Centres. A competitive tender process was completed in Q3 2021, and the contract was awarded to S3 Solutions, who presented their final report in June 2022. It was agreed that further work is required in this area to develop a new funding model for VCs. DRCD will therefore host an Away Day with Volunteer Centres to begin work on developing a new funding model in Q1 2023.
- **Action 56:** In relation to establishing a national 'Reserve Volunteering Corps', the Community Volunteer Programme was launched on the 14th September 2021. It was rolled out across 10 Local Authorities in seven counties across the country in 2021, and the

second phase of the programme was rolled out in 2022 with a further 11 volunteer centres and local authorities collaborating on the programme in their county.

Strategic Objective 3

The Strategy wants all who volunteer to know their contribution is appreciated and valued and that volunteering is celebrated for its vital contribution to Irish society, developing communities as vibrant, inclusive and sustainable places where people want to live.

- **Sub Group: IT Development**
- **Three meetings held**
- **Action 6** - In order to develop a more cohesive online volunteering service, a working group convened in 2022 to conduct a mapping exercise and to draft Terms of Reference for this action. However, due to a high level of membership changeover this work is postponed until Q3 2023.
- **Action 15** – To support the ongoing development of I-VOL, it was agreed to progress work on building an organisation hub allowing organisations to have more access to their information on I-VOL and allowing them to manage their own volunteering roles. A proposal for part of this action was received from Volunteer Ireland, to fund 2,000 additional licences per month, and funding was provided in this regard. Work is continuing on developing the organisation hub website.
- **Action 31** – To progress this action, it was agreed that I-VOL will be further developed, to include a super administrator and the development of a ‘volunteering passport’. DRCD provided funding in 2022 to support I-VOL with a full time administrator, who is now working to support a number of actions including 15 and 45.
- **Action 45** –In order to explore the potential to expand the database, Comhlámh (with the support of DFA) and Volunteer Ireland worked together to develop a proposal to include international volunteering roles on I-VOL. The proposal was approved and work will get underway on the project in 2023.

Strategic Objective 4

Ethical and skills-based international volunteering can play an important role in delivering results for beneficiaries and in fostering Global Citizenship. A global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands our rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world - and their place in it. They take an active role in their community, and work with others to make the world more equal, fair and sustainable in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Sub Group: International Volunteering**
- **Three meetings held**
- **Action 40:** The Review of the Irish Aid Volunteering Initiative (2013) was completed in late 2020; DFA has compiled a short document on summary findings and key initiatives arising, which has been published and is available on their website at https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/getinvolved/volunteerstories/IAVI-Review_Summary-and-Next-Steps-May-2022-with-links.pdf.
- **Action 41:** Funding was allocated by DCEDIY to Léargas to progress this action, to engage with the EU in relation to the European Solidarity Corps.
- **Action 42:** DFA and Comhlámh continued to work on supporting ethical and responsible international volunteering in 2022.
- **Action 43:** Work is progressing on ensuring that international volunteers continue to be supported; DFA is assessing options with DSP and Comhlámh to streamline the administration of two relevant schemes; a further update is expected in 2023.
- **Action 44:** DFA continued to engage with UN Volunteer Programme during 2022.
- **Action 46:** Travel advice for citizens considering engaging in international volunteering continued to be revised and updated as required and in line with public health advice during 2022.

Strategic Objective 5

This Strategy affirms the contribution of volunteering at local and national level and commits to developing a cooperative approach between public bodies and volunteering representatives in the advancement of coherent policy. This Strategy also acknowledges the importance of ongoing research into the volunteering community in developing informed, evidence-based policy beyond the lifetime of this document.

- **Sub Group: Volunteer Research**
- **Three meetings held**
- **Actions 8 and 18** – DRCD has partnered with the Irish Research Council to commission two pieces of research, one on youth engagement with volunteering, and one on developing future questions on volunteering for inclusion in the Census. These research projects will contribute to fulfilling Actions 8 and 18, and will also contribute to Actions 5 and 34. A final report on the research under Action 8 will be submitted in Q2 2024 and a final report on the research under action 18 will be submitted in Q4 2023.
- **Action 23** – To progress representing the views of the sector on the impact of the cost and availability of public liability insurance on volunteering, Sport Ireland led on developing draft Terms of Reference for research on insurance costs in the sector. A tender process was held to progress the action, and a contract to carry out the research was awarded in December 2022. Work on the project will progress in 2023.