



Volunteering Strategy 2023 - 2028



Our charitable purpose:

**To strengthen the
Voluntary, Community,
Faith and Social
Enterprise sector.**

**To enable positive
social change and
promote social justice.**

Our values:

Believe it's possible

Strengthen others

Be true

Our vision:

**A connected, resilient and diverse VCFSE
sector that supports people and communities
to do the things they love and change the
things they don't.**

**Collectively we have the power to make
things better, addressing the impacts and root
causes of poverty and inequalities.**

Our strategic priorities are to:

Strengthen social
infrastructure for
connected
communities

Advance our
approach to
social change

Grow and
transform as
a local funder

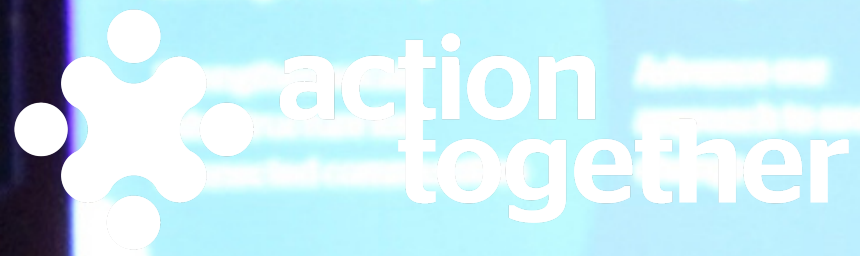
Our 'Vision for Volunteering'

What will 2028
look like?



We believe that Volunteering is at the heart of creating, supporting, and maintaining social infrastructure. Our organisational strategy will ensure that we develop and champion volunteering to empower more local people to share their skills, capacity and social capital.

By 2028 the Boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside will be great places to volunteer – places where volunteering is understood and appreciated, appropriately resourced and volunteers are supported and recognised for their valuable contribution to the social infrastructure of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.



We have adopted NCVO's vision for volunteering to align our strategy and practice to have the maximum impact for volunteering in each of our boroughs.

1. Awareness and Appreciation

We want volunteering to be integral to the way our communities support each other. We want institutions to recognise volunteering in all its forms, and to be clear about when it is and when it is not appropriate and ensure that we champion and take pride in the role volunteering and our volunteers have in the borough. We want there to be much more flexibility for people to move between volunteering opportunities within a place.



By 2028...

Volunteering will be valued, celebrated and recognised across all sectors, with an explicit understanding of the value it brings to communities, the social economy and how it contributes to wider social objectives.

- Volunteering will be widely understood as a mutually beneficial activity for both the individual and organisation.
- There will be clear, flexible and supported pathways for all who choose to volunteer across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside.
- Quality meaningful opportunities will be available to suit everyone depending on their time, geography, identity, skills, and interests.
- Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside will be places that fully value our volunteers and their contribution with a shared commitment across systems to resourcing and promoting quality volunteering.
- Communities and organisations will have the support and resources they need to ensure a quality volunteer experience for all.



2. Power, Leadership, Collaboration and Experimentation

Our priority to advance our approach to social change, relies on us developing and supporting leaders within our communities and to support the devolution of decisions closer to communities. We aim to work with our members, particularly community anchors to develop capacity for this.



By 2028...

We will be able to tell powerful impact stories about collective action, addressing root causes that has led to real change.

- Volunteers and communities will feel more connected, equipped and have a more equal role in local decision making.
- We will have developed successful new practices and investment models that increase trust and collaboration between communities and system partners.
- More leaders will feel supported and believe they can affect change.
- Volunteering in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside will help to address the priorities of the Boroughs and their key challenges such as reducing social isolation, improving mental health and wider wellbeing, improving skills and reducing the effects of worklessness and poverty.
- Volunteering in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside will contribute to each of the Boroughs' social value agenda.



3. Equality and Inclusion



We know that volunteering is not equally accessible, we know that people from sections of our communities are less likely to volunteer and have varying experiences when they do. We want to change this. We also firmly believe that volunteering is a choice for the individual and understand that volunteering is not for everyone, but that access to it should be.

By 2028 we will...

- Know who is missing from our volunteering brokerage offer and have tried and tested ways to encourage and support everyone to become volunteers.
- Have a deeper understanding of what motivates people to volunteer by working closely with our members, particularly those from marginalised communities to actively challenge and address barriers to participation in volunteering.
- There will be a range of good quality and diverse volunteering opportunities accessible to people across Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside - including more opportunities for younger volunteers.
- We will have a quality, coordinated workforce development offer for community leaders, with a complementary suite of good practice tools and resources to promote equality, diversity and inclusion within volunteering





Enablers

This Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside Volunteering Strategy 2023-2028 is built upon the following 6 key principles:

Capacity



Equality and
Diversity



Citizen-led, responsive
and reactive

Community
Engagement



Quality
Standards



Volunteer
Recognition

Capacity

Key agencies across the three boroughs have identified the need to grow the range and diversity of opportunities and the levels of support into volunteering for certain groups. In order to enable more people, and people who are farthest from volunteering, to contribute, this strategy recognises the principle that ‘volunteering costs’ and asserts that there needs to be investment in the development and ongoing support of volunteering in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside in order to both sustain current volunteering levels and increase the number of people undertaking quality volunteering.



Equality and Diversity

The opportunity to volunteer should be made available to the widest range of individuals and communities and should be led by widespread recognition of the wealth of skills and experience that the people of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside can bring to and gain from volunteering.

This includes those who may currently be socially excluded; e.g. refugees and asylum seekers, ex-offenders, disabled people, younger people, those on long-term benefits and those without qualifications.



Citizen-led, responsive and reactive

One of the crucial experiences from the covid-19 pandemic in relation to volunteering, was the way people self-organised and responded collectively to meet the needs of local communities. The sheer number of hyper-local mutual aid groups springing into action, self organising to support people in their communities. There was some key learning for volunteer centres and for the public sector system, around how to be enabling of this type of social action. This strategy aims to build on that learning, recognising and promoting the power of local people, and using an asset-based approach when working within communities to harness local skills, capacity and social capital to strengthen communities.



Community Engagement

This strategy recognises that volunteering empowers people to participate actively in their communities, in improving their communities and neighbourhoods, their own skills and prospects, and their health and wider wellbeing – all whilst contributing positively to the local economy (worth £235million in 2021).



Quality Standards

A range of Good Practice and Quality Standards to which participating organisations sign up to is critical to safeguard and enhance both the volunteer experience and the provision of services by volunteers across the Boroughs. People should have access to volunteering opportunities that are safe, rewarding and developmental in order for them to contribute and make progress in a variety of ways. Equally, volunteer-involving organisations should benefit from the commitment, loyalty and contribution made by motivated and well supported volunteers in the delivery of their services and activities.



Volunteer Recognition

We acknowledge that formal and informal recognition of volunteers improves the motivation, retention and overall quality of volunteer experience and of service delivery by volunteers. There is a need for this understanding to be adopted by all partners and for there to be identifiable formal recognition schemes in place to which volunteer-involving organisations can nominate volunteers. In addition, good practice guidelines should include recommendations for organisations to develop and implement internal recognition schemes.



Appendix 1:

What is Volunteering?



What is Volunteering?

This Strategy concurs with the definitions of volunteering found in the National Compact on Volunteering and that of NCVO (Volunteering England), the national organisation for supporting development for volunteering. It also recognises the role that volunteering infrastructure makes in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside in enabling local people to be able to experience quality volunteering opportunities.



Definition of Volunteering

Volunteering is 'An activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives.' (National Compact - Volunteering Code of Good Practice 200 /2008/2010)

For the purposes of this strategy, this commitment refers to people volunteering with recognised community groups and voluntary organisations and / or public sector organisations. This definition also includes those who give their time as voluntary members of committees and boards of trustees in the VCFSE and lay members of partnerships. It does not include those people who give of their time to support a relative, neighbour or friend in need.

It also recognises the role that volunteering infrastructure makes in Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside in enabling local people to be able to experience quality volunteering opportunities.

“Volunteering infrastructure exists to encourage people to volunteer, to make the process of engaging in volunteering as easy as possible and to ensure that the quality of the volunteering experience is as good as it can be. Volunteering infrastructure is defined as ‘organisations and services that exist to encourage people to volunteer for other agencies (whether they are in the community, voluntary, public or private sectors), to support these agencies in the development of high quality volunteering programmes”
(National Compact - Volunteering Code of Good Practice 2005 / 2008 / 2010)

What are the benefits of Volunteering?



Benefits for **individuals**

- Development of skills and experience
- Enhanced CV and employment opportunities
- Improved health and mental wellbeing
- A sense of pride and achievement
- Personal development, such as confidence and self-esteem
- Making a difference
- Feeling part of a team
- Meeting new people
- Sharing skills and experience
- Respect and responsibility

What are the benefits of Volunteering?

Benefits for organisations involving volunteers

- Enhance and add value to services and activities
- Motivated and empowered workforce
- Increased flexibility and quality of delivery
- Provision of services which are not funded by the public sector
- More diverse pool of people
- Improved skills and experience
- Enables us to do more
- Increases skills base



What are the benefits of Volunteering?



Benefits for the community

- Developing social capital and actively promoting and enhancing community cohesion (inter-generational, cultural) through joint events and activities, improvements to the physical environment, changing perceptions (e.g. older people's view of young people)
- Leading people into jobs as part of the intermediate labour market
- Volunteers are at the forefront of civic renewal and community leadership
- Building social networks and community cohesion with emerging impact in respect of volunteers showing more appreciation of other cultures
- Improved health and wellbeing, reducing the impact on the NHS
- Reduced crime rates
- Enhanced social responsibility
- Deeper reach into communities through empowerment and community participation
- Increases economic benefit