



Volunteering at the heart of creating a fairer, greener and healthier Salford

**A volunteering strategy
for Salford
April 2026 to March 2029**



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Introduction

This Volunteering Strategy is intended to demonstrate a city-wide commitment to the importance and continuing future impact of volunteering for Salford. It provides a framework of support for individual volunteers as well as organisations and groups working with volunteers or providing employee volunteers across our city.

Salford has had a volunteering strategy since 2009 which has been refreshed every three years. This refresh has been undertaken by Salford CVS and Volunteer Centre Salford in conjunction with Vocal Leaders Forum and Vocal Volunteer Coordinators Network and our public sector partners. This work has been undertaken in the context of the many challenges Salford continues to face as a result of ongoing austerity, the cost of living crisis, public service reform and further Greater Manchester devolution.

Strategy Vision, Purpose and Aims

Vision

Salford is a great place to volunteer – a city where volunteering is properly resourced, good practice is observed, and volunteers are supported and recognised for their valuable contribution.

Purpose

This Volunteering Strategy is intended to demonstrate a city-wide commitment to the importance and continuing future impact of volunteering for Salford.



Aims

This strategy aims for Salford to be a city where

- ★ **Volunteering is properly valued and resourced**
- ★ **There is an embedded culture of volunteering across the city**
- ★ **Barriers to participation in volunteering are actively challenged and addressed**
- ★ **There is an excellent standard of volunteering which creates positive experiences for people who volunteer**
- ★ **Volunteering is recognised as contributing to key challenges within the city** such as reducing social isolation, improving mental health and wider wellbeing, improving skills and combatting the effects of poverty and worklessness

Shared values for volunteering in Salford

Choice - freedom to volunteer or not. Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Freedom to volunteer implies freedom not to become involved.

Diversity - open to all.

Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what their background, race, colour, nationality, religion or belief, ethnic or national origins, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Mutual Benefit - both the volunteer and the organisation should benefit. Volunteers offer their contribution and skills unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution. Giving time to volunteering must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also benefits and feels that their contribution is personally fulfilling.

Recognition - there should be explicit recognition of the value of volunteers. There must be explicit recognition that valuing the contribution of volunteers is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers, VCSE organisations and public sector organisations. This includes recognising the contribution to the organisation, the community, the social economy and wider social objectives.



Background and context

National

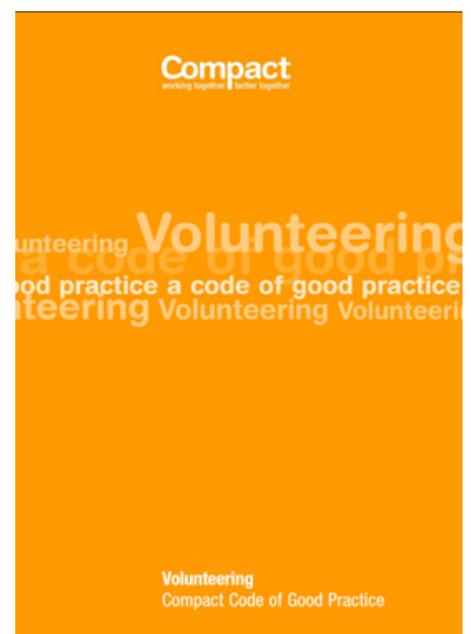
Government policy

National volunteering policy in England is primarily developed within the Department for Culture, Media and Sports with thematic specific policy created in other departments such as the Department of Health and Social Care.

Government engagement on, and investment in volunteering and across departments has declined over the past 10 years and partnership arrangements between government and the VCSE sector have not moved on since the national Compact (the Compact) was introduced by the Cabinet Office in 1998 and renewed in 2010. The Compact is a voluntary agreement setting out shared principles for effective partnership working between UK government and civil society organisations in England.

All central government departments (and their associated non-departmental public bodies, arm's length bodies and executive agencies) are signed up to implementing the Compact. As part of the Compact the government also published additional codes of practice including 'Volunteering: A Code of Good Practice'.

In some areas, responding to emergencies like COVID-19 with the support of local volunteers was not the first time. The Community Resilience Development Framework 2019 highlights the important role that volunteers can and do play in response to emergencies.



TIME WELL SPENT

A NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE



National Centre for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) Time Well Spent Research

Time Well Spent is a research programme which focuses on volunteering. The first report “National Survey on Volunteer Experience” was first published in 2019 and the research and reporting have continued each year.

According to the 2023 report, despite high levels of people volunteering during the pandemic, levels of volunteering are currently below their pre-COVID levels. This is attributed predominantly to older people not wanting to continue post-pandemic. The report also shows that remote volunteering (online or over the telephone) is commonplace.

The motivation for volunteering over the four years of the research has remained the same with people wanting to improve things, make a difference or because they are connected to the cause, group or organisation. Amongst 18–24-year-olds the main motivation is around skills, career or qualifications

When measuring satisfaction, the report shows that this is low amongst young people and disabled people in particular. There is also less satisfaction amongst those volunteering in public sector roles. Overall low satisfaction was linked to non-payment of out-of-pocket expenses and the negative financial impact this had. There was also a portion of volunteers who felt like volunteering was too much like paid work as it lacked flexibility and the expectations placed upon volunteers was unreasonable.

NHS England

In 2022 NHS England setup the NHS Volunteering Task force which brought together Clinicians, Volunteers, VCSE organisations, Policy Makers and Civil Servants together to understand how to harness and build on the support provided by volunteers during COVID-19. This task group aimed to stimulate transformational change in volunteering and strengthen links between volunteer programmes in and outside of the NHS in England.



To frame its work, the taskforce developed a five-year vision for volunteering in the NHS. This set out its key ambitions for volunteering to be recognised as a key contributor to:

- ★ **improved patient experience and outcomes**
- ★ **better staff experience and wellbeing**
- ★ **reduced pressure on staff and services**
- ★ **improved volunteer wellbeing alongside the acquisition of skills and experience**

It is not yet known how the announcement of the abolishment of NHS England will affect this taskforce.

www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/nhs-volunteering-taskforce-report-and-recommendations/



Vision for Volunteering 2023

Vision for Volunteering is a 10 year collaborative project between Volunteering Matters, NCVO, NAVCA, Muslim Charities Forum, Association of Volunteer Managers and the Department for Culture Media and Sport. It sets out a view of what volunteering needs to look like and how this will make volunteers feel in their roles by 2032.

The Vision for Volunteering has the following five themes:

Awareness and appreciation - a future where a culture of volunteering is part of everyone's life and volunteer roles are given the recognition they deserve.

Power - a future where volunteers (and the communities they work with) lead on change that matters to them.

Equity and inclusion - a future where it's easy for people to give their time and energy to the causes they care about, they feel welcomed, and the benefits are equally distributed.

Collaboration - a future where collaboration is natural and spontaneous, where people do great stuff together because they want to.

Experimentation - a future where communities aren't afraid to try new things to develop their own innovative solutions to engaging and supporting volunteers.

Greater Manchester

In 2021 the Greater Manchester VCSE Accord was signed, replacing the 2017 VCSE Accord and MOU with GM Integrated Care System. It is a tripartite collaboration agreement between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and the GM Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (represented by the Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group).

Although this agreement does not specifically contain a commitment around volunteering it does refer to the level of volunteering across Greater Manchester and acknowledges their role in the pandemic.

www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/5207/gm-vcse-accord-2021-2026-final-signed-october-2021-for-publication.pdf

Salford

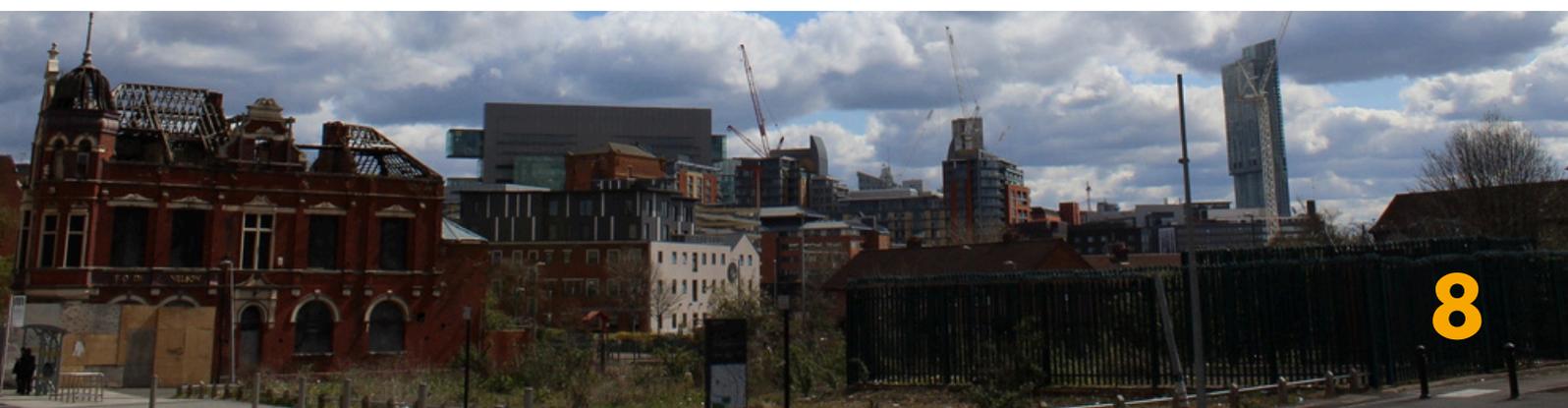
In Salford volunteering and community action is embedded in a number of strategies, policy and work.

Salford Compact and four codes of practice

In 2006 Salford Compact on relations between the Statutory Sector and the VCSE Sector in Salford, along with its four codes of practice which includes volunteering was signed. www.salfordcvs.co.uk/salford-compact

VCSE Manifesto and Strategy

In 2016 Vocal VCSE Leaders (a forum facilitated by Salford CVS) developed a VCSE Manifesto. It was agreed and signed up to by Salford City Council, VCSE Leaders and other public sector partners and provides a framework for collaboration involving VCSE leaders and organisations in the delivery of the city's strategies and services. It also highlights the ongoing contribution that VCSE organisations can make in Salford and challenges partners to continue to engage with and invest in the sector so that local people and communities can help to address the challenges and embrace the opportunities of the future as equal partners. The VCSE Manifesto is built around six pillars, one of which includes valuing volunteers.



Making Salford a Better Place through our 10% Better Campaign

Social Value Alliance 10% Better Campaign

In 2017, Salford's Social Value Alliance launched the 10% Better Campaign. The purpose of which is to address poverty, inequalities, and improve the wellbeing and quality of life for residents in Salford through the creation of social value. The campaign commitments relate to people, planet and prosperity and includes as one of the commitments more people volunteering in high-quality volunteering opportunities. www.salfordsocialvalue.org.uk/about/making-salford-a-better-place-through-our-10-better-campaign/

Recognition of volunteers in Salford

VCSE Organisations across Salford formally recognise and thank their volunteers often during Volunteers Week. During Volunteers Week 2024, Aspire put on an excellent lunch for all volunteers, hosted by the CEO at their community centre. They provided food, drinks, gifts for each volunteer, and recognition certificates.



In Volunteers Week 2023, Dancing with Dementia hosted a celebration event at Boundary Stone Salford where they handed out volunteer certificates, followed by dancing and food. They celebrated both long term volunteers and those that had only recently started supporting the group.



The Heart of Salford awards are Salford CVS and Volunteer Centre's prestigious annual event, to celebrate volunteering and voluntary action in our community. The awards have been going since 2003 and provide an opportunity for us to recognise the incredible contribution made by individuals, volunteering teams and volunteering organisations within the VCSE sector.

What is volunteering, why it matters and how it is changing?

What is volunteering?

This Strategy concurs with the definitions of volunteering found in the National and Local Compacts on Volunteering and that of NCVO (Volunteering England), the national organisation for supporting development for volunteering. Volunteering is when someone spends unpaid time doing something to benefit others, the community or the environment.

Volunteering can be formal and coordinated by organisations, or informal within communities. It should always be a free choice made by the person giving up their time.

Why does volunteering matter?

Volunteering benefits organisations, individuals, communities, nature and the climate. It also builds health, wellbeing and connections for individuals who volunteer. Volunteers can also develop skills, knowledge and experiences that can be useful in paid employment.

Volunteers help transform communities and build resilience, whether this is geographical communities, communities of identity or those with shared interest. They also play an invaluable role in supporting vital public services such as health and social care and policing. In times of crisis volunteers also provide vital extra support to local emergency responses which was demonstrated in Salford during COVID-19.





How volunteering is changing

Formal volunteering involves giving unpaid help through a group, club or organisation (including public and VCSE organisations). Formal volunteer roles typically have set hours, clear role descriptions and involve supervision by a member of staff within the group, club or organisation. Many people have formally volunteered with a variety of different organisations at some point in their lives, often dipping in and out of involvement over time.

Wider data shows a trend of decline in formal volunteering participation (Government Community Service Life Survey) which is reflected in the NCVO Time Well Spent report 2023. **Over 30% of volunteers cite 'not wanting to make an ongoing commitment'** as a reason for not getting involved in volunteering.

Volunteers are looking to more **flexible opportunities**, which allow them to contribute in ways that fit their lives. Technology today encourages remote volunteering, virtual mentoring, and online collaboration, making it easier for people to engage in their community. However, digital exclusion still remains a barrier for certain people due to age and socio-economic circumstances.

Although formal volunteering remains at the heart of our local communities within Salford, it is time to recognise that we need to adapt our offer to be more flexible and inclusive.

Micro-volunteering is small, quick, low-commitment volunteering tasks that can be completed quickly and easily. They can be done online, in person, individually or as part of a group. Many companies have employer-supported volunteering programmes which encourage employees to volunteer their time and skills. Micro volunteering opportunities make it easier for employees to participate in these programmes.

The introduction of **volunteer passport** schemes have been around for a number of years but, since COVID-19, there has been a renewed interest in its development. It involves developing a joined-up approach to volunteer recruitment, onboarding and management, to enable portability of a volunteer between volunteering involving organisations.



These initiatives include shared vetting and training between a network of similar organisations, creating a joined-up approach and a pool of shared skills. It also creates a mechanism for valuing and validating volunteers knowledge, experience, skills and contributions.

Volunteering rewards like Tempo Time Credits are a reward and recognition scheme that organisations can sign up to and offer to their volunteers as a way to say thank you. Volunteers earn credits that reflect the time that they volunteer in the community. These credits can then be exchanged for a range of services and activities, provided by national and local partners.

Strategic Objectives

Below are the strategic objectives for Salford. For more details on each objective, and how success will be measured, please see the action plan.

To continue to recognise and value volunteers

What we want to achieve together:

- ★ Continue to deliver the Heart of Salford Awards annually.
- ★ Continue to deliver a volunteering element as part of the Spirit of Salford Awards.
- ★ Continue to support volunteer-involving organisations to pay volunteer expenses.
- ★ Increase confidence for local people and ensure volunteering is part of Salford Skills and Work Strategy's ongoing action plan.
- ★ Continue to deliver the volunteer recognition scheme.

- ★ Continue to promote, celebrate and participate in national and international volunteering campaigns such as Volunteers Week, Student Volunteers Week, International Volunteer Day or International Micro-Volunteering Day.
- ★ Continuously learn about new ways of recognising volunteers, encouraging the implementation of the best ones in Salford.

We will know that we have been successful when:

By 2028 volunteering within the city will be appreciated by individuals, communities, organisations and policy makers as helping to enrich lives and create cohesive and resilient communities.

To continue to build on the culture of volunteering across the city

What we want to achieve together:

- ★ By 2028 we will have more individuals volunteering to make a difference in their own community
- ★ By 2028 we will have more local employers offering employer-supported volunteering that weren't available before, as part of their Social Responsibility and the creation of Social Value.
- ★ By the end of 2026 we will develop a volunteer passport initiative for Salford.

We will know that we have been successful when:

By 2028 we will have more volunteers participating in Salford based opportunities, through both their employers and their own initiative.





VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

To develop a range of good quality volunteering opportunities

We will work together to create a range of good quality, diverse and accessible volunteering opportunities for all.

What we want to achieve together:

- ★ Develop and enhance the Volunteer Coordinators Network to ensure sharing of good practice and high quality volunteer management.
- ★ Respond to volunteer research reports and dissemination of trends, recommendations or new volunteering initiatives through the Volunteer Coordinators Network.
- ★ Increase volunteering opportunities in health and wellbeing, arts, culture and heritage, Family Hubs and youth centres, emergency response and humanitarian assistance, climate change / emergency, green and blue spaces and poverty and inequality.
- ★ Increase the number of organisations signed up to the Volunteer Charter.

We will know that we have been successful when:

By 2028 volunteers and organisations will have good quality and easily accessed volunteering opportunities, with both parties reporting a positive and valuable outcome.

To create equity and inclusion in volunteering

We will actively challenge and address barriers to volunteering.

What we want to achieve together:

- ★ To remove barriers and increase volunteering opportunities for young people, older people, Disabled people and diverse communities (including refugees and asylum seekers).

- ★ To encourage more volunteer-involving organisations to develop flexible volunteering opportunities, including remote and micro-volunteering.
- ★ To encourage more volunteer-involving organisations to make volunteer recruitment more accessible and flexible.
- ★ Work with VCSE organisations and public bodies to ensure that out of pocket expenses for volunteers are budgeted into volunteer programme developments.

We will know that we have been successful when:

By 2028 there will be an increase in the diversity of people volunteering, the flexibility of opportunities available, and consistent expenses funding across Salford based programmes.

Governance

Governance of this strategy will be through Vocal VCSE Leaders and our public sector partners.

Appendix 1

Salford Volunteer Charter

One of the actions from the original Volunteering Strategy was to develop a Volunteer Charter.

This Charter was developed by volunteers from the city of Salford with input from volunteer-involving organisations in Salford.

The Charter sets out the commitment of organisations in Salford to acknowledge the rights and responsibilities of volunteers, and to recognise that they are an essential and invaluable part of the work they do. By signing up to the Charter organisations are sending out a clear statement that people volunteering in Salford do so within a positive and supportive environment.

The Charter was launched in February 2011.

Definition of Volunteering

This **Charter** is based on the following definition of volunteering:

“any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment.”

Salford Charter Volunteering Principles

This Charter recognises the following basic principles:

- ★ Volunteering is mutually beneficial.
- ★ Volunteering is independently chosen and freely given.
- ★ Volunteering is enabling and flexible wherever possible.
- ★ Volunteering is of community or social benefit.
- ★ Volunteering is offered to not-for-profit activities.



Volunteer rights

This Charter maintains that volunteers have the following rights:

- ★ Volunteering is open and inclusive to all and every effort should be made by organisations to understand volunteers' needs and try to offer an appropriate opportunity.
- ★ Recruitment procedures should be fair, efficient and consistent.
- ★ Volunteers have a clear understanding of their tasks and responsibilities.
- ★ Volunteers have access to initial and ongoing training and development opportunities.
- ★ All volunteers have support from a named supervisor throughout their volunteering.
- ★ Volunteers are provided with ongoing support and supervision appropriate to need.
- ★ Volunteers are aware of how to raise a concern and how it will be handled.
- ★ Volunteers should not be put under any moral pressure to do work which is against their principles, or for which they are not adequately trained.
- ★ Volunteers should be given the same protection under health and safety regulations and relevant insurance policies as paid staff.
- ★ Volunteers should not be used to replace paid staff.
- ★ Travel and other out of pocket expenses are reimbursed wherever possible.
- ★ Volunteers have influence in their organisation and are informed about organisational issues.
- ★ Volunteers are treated fairly and should not be discriminated against.
- ★ Volunteers' contributions are appreciated, valued and recognised.
- ★ Volunteering should be a rewarding and fulfilling experience.

Volunteer responsibilities

This Charter maintains that volunteers have the following responsibilities:

- ★ To speak up if they feel their rights aren't being respected.
- ★ To treat information obtained whilst volunteering in a respectful, confidential manner.
- ★ To be reliable, carry out their agreed role, attend on time and give proper notice of change of circumstances.
- ★ To be sensitive to users wants and needs.
- ★ To inform their named supervisor of any serious incidents or potential dangers.
- ★ To ask questions if they are unsure.
- ★ To recognise that they represent the organisation and therefore to act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- ★ To attend regular relevant training and support sessions.
- ★ To support other volunteers and staff in their organisation.
- ★ To accept the organisation's aims and objectives.
- ★ To keep activities safe and in-line with policies on legislation.
- ★ Seek to be enthusiastic, positive and committed.



If your organisation would like to sign up to the Salford Volunteer Charter please contact Volunteer Centre Salford

Telephone: 0161 787 7795

Email: volunteer@salfordcvs.co.uk