Volunteering Policy

Supporting Communities, Changing Lives

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.gov.wales

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Some of the photographs on the cover of this document were the winners and finalists of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action 2015 Photography competition.

1. Guide Dogs For the Blind Association
2. Tenovus Cancer Care
3. Music in Hospitals
4. CAIS
5. Cartrefi Cymru
6. Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

Welsh Government Volunteering Policy, Supporting Communities, Changing Lives

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Welsh Government Volunteering Policy: Supporting Communities, Changing Lives

This Welsh Government document sets out the actions the Welsh Government, the Third Sector Infrastructure – Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and Volunteer Centres – and the Third Sector Partnership Council will take to continue and to build on our support for volunteering. The Welsh Government will seek to promote and influence best practice and advocates that other bodies working with and supporting volunteers adopt the principles of this document.

Where the Welsh Government has provided hypothecated funding or funding through a framework agreement, grant recipients will be expected to have regard to this policy.

Section 1: Introduction

The context

Third Sector Scheme

In January 2014 a revised Third Sector Scheme ("the Scheme") was published, bringing the policy framework underpinning the Welsh Government's relationship with the Third Sector up to date. The Scheme sets out the Welsh Government's intention to maintain a Volunteering Policy which has provided the impetus for the development of this document, jointly with the Sector, through the Third Sector Partnership Council.

The Scheme also includes definitions of four cross cutting themes which are important to underpin any activity arising from the Scheme. These are: Sustainable Development; Welsh Language; Equality and Diversity and Tackling Poverty. There are also important issues in relation to volunteering and the definitions included in the Scheme should be referred to alongside this document.

Of equal importance in the development of this policy is the regard given to Human Rights within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (Persons with Disabilities). The Welsh Government has obligations to have regard to the UNCRC by virtue of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 and would encourage volunteers, the organisations they work with and the communities which benefit to both assert their rights and promote the rights of others.

A further important consideration which will underpin this document in the future will be the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill, which has been passed by the National Assembly for Wales. Although Third Sector organisations won't be subject to the public sector duties included in the Bill, the Third Sector and in particular the Third Sector Infrastructure will have a crucial role to play. The Third Sector, and in particular volunteering, remains at the centre of sustainable development. There remains a key role for the Third Sector – working with the Welsh Government to find innovative ways of making a positive contribution to the achievement of the seven well-being goals for Wales - whether this be providing employment opportunities, facilitating cohesive communities or helping people fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstance.

Volunteers make an enormous difference to people and communities all over Wales, benefitting almost every aspect of everyday life and enhancing the delivery of many public services and Government initiatives.

Volunteering is ultimately about helping others and having an impact on people's well-being but volunteers often get as much out of the experience as the individuals and communities they help. This policy sets out the vision, objectives and priorities for volunteering in Wales.

Purpose of this Policy

The Welsh Government recognises the benefits in providing funding and support to volunteering. The Welsh Government values volunteering as an important expression of citizenship and as an essential component of democracy.

The purpose of this policy is to:
- improve access to volunteering for people of all ages and from all parts of society;
- encourage the more effective involvement of volunteers, including through appropriate training;
- raise the status and improve the image of volunteering,

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is activity which:

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

If a person undertakes activity either on a mandatory basis or under threat or sanctions, such activity is *not* considered to be volunteering, even where it is for community benefit and not for financial gain. Both the individual and the wider community may well benefit from such experience – in some cases it marks the start of a life-long volunteering journey – and neither the person nor the activity should be denied proper recognition of their value. Nevertheless, it is very important to safeguard the principle that volunteering should be a matter of choice rather than compulsion. Further definitions of volunteering and its scope can be found at Annex A.

The scope of volunteering

There is a long and proud history of volunteering in Wales, built on long-standing traditions of mutual aid and support. In 2014, there were around 33,000 groups working to benefit their communities, run by over 277,000 people working voluntarily as trustees. Just under a million people volunteer in their community in some way equating to an estimated 211 million hours of voluntary effort. This is an enormously significant contribution by volunteers to the life of communities in Wales.

It is important to recognise that most of this activity takes place quite independently of the state, with no state funding. Most of the 33,000 groups are small, set up and run by people wanting to do something together for mutual or community benefit. They reflect the

fundamental right of people to organise and co-operate – active citizenship in action. They provide a wealth of activities – sporting, cultural, environmental, social and economic – that are part of the day-to-day lives of most people.

The benefits of volunteering

Volunteering is recognised by the Welsh Government and the Third Sector Partnership Council as a 'good thing' for Wales, to be supported and promoted. It has benefits for the individual in building their social networks, improved health, well-being and skills as well as creating a sense of belonging to an issue or a community. Communities benefit from volunteering in a variety of ways including through the creation of social cohesion in addition to increased social capital. Organisations benefit from the involvement of volunteers through their contribution to the achievement of the organisation's mission in addition to the flexibility and added value they bring in experience and skills. Public services benefit from involving volunteers to enhance and extend their services and from working with Third sector organisations to involve volunteers in new citizen-centred delivery models.

Whilst organisations are encouraged to work with volunteers, the Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that paid staff should not be removed in order to directly replace them with volunteers.

Additional information on the benefits of volunteering can be found at Annex B.

Key stakeholders

Key stakeholders in relation to volunteering in Wales include organisations with an interest in supporting, funding or working with volunteers. Specifically these include: the Welsh Government; volunteer involving organisations and the wider public sector; and the Third Sector Infrastructure.

A brief description of the interest of the three broad categories of stakeholder follows although there is additional information on their roles in Annex C. The actions set out in this document are identified with each of these categories of stakeholder.

Welsh Government commitment

The Welsh Government recognises the benefits in providing funding and support to volunteering. The Welsh Government values volunteering as an important expression of citizenship and as an essential component of democracy.

Welsh Government – key roles

The Welsh Government has an important role to play in establishing the leadership around best practice for volunteering, in its influence in the practice of volunteer involving organisations and also in the distribution of grants to the Third Sector Infrastructure.

Volunteer Involving Organisations – key roles

This category of stakeholder covers a wide range of employers and organisations from large private or public sector employers through to smaller local Third Sector

organisations, including those comprised only of volunteers. A defining factor would be that they involve volunteers or desire to work with volunteers around their own thematic areas of interest.

Third Sector Infrastructure – key roles

The Third Sector Infrastructure consists primarily of WCVA, CVCs and Volunteer Centres. These are autonomous independent organisations based across Wales which offer support, advice and training to the Third Sector both nationally and locally. These organisations have an important role to play in both influencing policy around volunteering and in delivering some of the mechanisms which advance volunteering such as the national volunteering grant schemes.

The annexes to this document provide additional explanatory information. Annex A sets out definitions of activities which can be considered to be volunteering. Annex B includes an analysis of the benefits of volunteering and Annex C sets out in more detail the important roles of the key organisations with a role to play in supporting volunteering – the Welsh Government; the wider public sector and volunteer involving organisations; and the Third Sector Infrastructure.

The pages that follow highlight the actions the Welsh Government will take in relation to its commitment to volunteering, the actions the Welsh Government will encourage volunteer involving organisations to take and the commitments of the Third Sector Infrastructure to the development of this policy.

Section 2: The purpose of this policy is to:

2a. Improve access to volunteering for people of all ages and from all parts of society

It is important to ensure that volunteering is generally accessible to all, including to those who may be excluded from employment and from other social environments. Volunteering is a means of bringing about social inclusion and there should be an equal opportunity for anyone to participate. Volunteering can provide opportunities to foster understanding and friendship between different groups within the community such as young people and older people and to combat isolation and prejudice. Many factors can act as a barrier to volunteering and are often unintentional.

Access to volunteering may be enhanced by a number of factors such as having in place appropriate volunteer recruitment policies and in particular engaging with hard to reach group and taking account of the higher support needs of certain volunteer, such as those with a disability or higher support needs.

Participation in volunteering is improved through grant schemes which support volunteering and the creation of good practice amongst volunteer involving organisations in terms of their volunteer policies and effective management of volunteers. The consideration of re-imbursement of expenses incurred by volunteers is an important element of removing the barriers to participation as well as taking into consideration the needs of the volunteer, such as family commitments, transport or the necessity of additional support from the volunteering location.

Local support through volunteer centres is also key in this regard to address the local footprint of volunteering including under represented groups and the availably of Welsh language provision.

Clarity around the arrangements surrounding state benefit and volunteering is essential if individuals are to be encouraged to take part in volunteering opportunities. In times of recession and relatively high unemployment there need to be valuable alternatives to work, by which people can increase their self-confidence and self esteem and also gain valuable transferable skills and work experience. This should valued in its own right as well as being a possible a stepping stone out of poverty / social exclusion and back in to employment.

2b. Encourage the more effective involvement of volunteers, including through appropriate training

Volunteers are active in many types of organisation ranging from schools, hospitals and libraries to health support groups and campaigning and animal welfare bodies. However, in a fast changing world, it is also important to explore new areas in which opportunities for volunteering may open up in future.

The effective involvement of volunteers, in an organisation, is dependent upon their roles, recruitment, induction, safeguarding, recognition, management and support and the

policies and procedures which impact on them. Appropriate resources need to be allocated to address all of these.

Volunteer involving organisations should seek advice and support from WCVA and local Volunteer Centres/CVCs when developing volunteering opportunities. WCVA and local Volunteer Centres can offer and signpost to training on effective management of volunteers which in turn will ensure volunteers are supported in their activity and host organisations benefit from the experience of hosting volunteers.

It is important for volunteers to understand the reasons for the activities they are undertaking individually and how these contribute to the work of the organisation and its achievements. This may help to improve results. In order to analyse this it is desirable to look at the impact that volunteers are having.

2c. Raise the status and improving the image of volunteering

The status and image of volunteering is raised by positive media coverage; proclaiming what volunteers achieve, including in governance roles; being open to a diverse range of people as volunteers and through volunteers themselves talking about their experiences. It is also important to celebrate and recognise volunteers to ensure they know that they are valued. This applies as much too informal as formal volunteers.

Section 3. In order to achieve these purposes, the following actions will be taken:

The Welsh Government will:

- Work with third sector infrastructure organisations to develop a shared understanding of the barriers to volunteering and identify areas for improving access.
- Support third sector infrastructure organisations and national grant schemes in order to improve access to volunteering by everyone and particularly by young people, under-represented groups; those vulnerable to social exclusion and those with higher support needs.
- Ensure that grant schemes and other funding include appropriate provision to reimburse volunteers' approved out of pocket expenses.
- Promote use of County Voluntary Councils and Volunteer Centres and www.volunteering-wales.net by the Welsh Government and its partners and by organisations seeking to recruit volunteers and potential volunteers.
- Ensure that as an employer it promotes volunteering, identifies new volunteering opportunities and publishes its own employee volunteering policy.
- Identify scope for increased volunteer involvement to help achieve its cross-cutting policies in addition to where the greater involvement in major public service areas may be achieved. Identify volunteering champions in each Welsh Government Department to support this work and to share good practice on involving volunteers.
- Encourage local authorities and public sector organisations to adopt and put into practice volunteering policies to support their engagement with volunteers.
- Develop mechanisms for considering the impact of legislation and regulations on volunteering, including UK Government regulations regarding state benefits.
- Work with the Third Sector Infrastructure and partners to continue to identify, promote and evidence the skills gained by individuals through the act of volunteering
- Work with the third sector infrastructure to build public recognition of volunteering by increasing publicity for the achievements of volunteers including through a range of social media.
- Promote volunteering, including through continuing to support a wide range of appropriate awards for volunteering.
- Ensure that grant schemes comply with any Welsh language standards that have been imposed on Welsh Government.

Volunteer involving organisations are encouraged to:

- Develop an organisational volunteering policy which includes accommodating volunteer management; training; re-imbursement of expenses where appropriate and possible; and which promotes the benefits of volunteering within their organisations.
- Ensure that their volunteer policies and practices include consideration of safeguarding issues such as for children and vulnerable adults.
- Make proper provision to recruit volunteers from groups that are vulnerable to social exclusion including disabled people, those from ethnic minority communities, and those with higher support needs.

- Consider the language needs of the communities they work with and actively seek to promote appropriate volunteering opportunities through the Medium of Welsh and other languages where there is a need.
- Seek advice from WCVA and Volunteer Centres when identifying potential volunteering opportunities and to advertise their volunteering opportunities widely and through www.volunteering-wales.net
- Refer prospective volunteers to Volunteer Centres, if appropriate volunteering cannot be identified within the organisation.
- Offer a wide variety of roles and ways of involving volunteers, such as micro-volunteering; virtual volunteering; regular volunteering and interns
- Seek opportunities to involve their service users as volunteers to review and improve the quality and appropriateness of their services.
- Recognise the importance of measuring the impact of volunteers, such as through the use of the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (licenced by WCVA from NCVO) in Wales.
- Ensure that the good work of volunteers is communicated widely through the media and submit their volunteers' achievements to a range of Awards panels for consideration where appropriate

The Third Sector Infrastructure will:

- Ensure that ongoing access to volunteering opportunities is provided by www.volunteering-wales.net and Volunteer Centres in Wales.
- Ensure that Volunteer Centres/CVCs publicise and promote volunteering, including to hard to reach groups and to people with higher support needs
- Ensure that good practice in volunteer recruitment and management is enhanced through take-up of Investing in Volunteers and the provision of information to volunteer-involving organisations and others.
- Provide advice to volunteer involving organisations on good practice to include in their volunteer policies.
- Look at options for facilitating volunteer management training.
- Enable training in volunteer management, promote it and signpost people to it
- Ensure that they take due account of the language of choice of volunteers and of the people with whom they will come into contact in their volunteering role. Work with appropriate organisations such as the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office, Mentrau Iaith and other Welsh Language groups to identify volunteering opportunities for Welsh speakers, including people who want to improve their Welsh language skills.
- Provide administration for the national volunteering grants schemes with a particular focus on enabling the involvement of young people and people from groups that are under-represented in volunteering.
- Promote the importance of measuring the impact of volunteers, such as through the use of the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit (licensed from NCVO) in Wales.
- Work with the Welsh Government and partners to identify, promote and evidence the skills gained by individuals through the act of volunteering.
- Continue to run awards and celebrations, such as the Wales Volunteer of the Year Award and Volunteers Week
- Publicise volunteering by ensuring that it features prominently on websites and that volunteer stories are captured and told on websites, the local press and social media

- Comment on Government policies and regulations in relation to their impact on volunteering as necessary.

Forms of Volunteering

Volunteering takes many forms. Surveys tend to distinguish between 'informal' and 'formal' volunteering and volunteers of all sorts may contribute to the designed delivery of public services. It should be noted that some people may not agree that all of the examples below should be included within the definition of volunteering; they are included here for information but this annex should not be taken as definitive with regard to any such differences of opinion.

Informal Volunteering

Informal volunteering is undertaken by individuals for other people or community groups, although such individuals may not always regard themselves as volunteers. It includes help for neighbours, community action, participating in faith and community groups, helping out at local events. There are no formal processes for recruitment. This kind of volunteering is largely hidden within our communities but is strongly rooted within Welsh culture. It is to be celebrated and encouraged.

Formal Volunteering

Formal volunteering refers to situations where a volunteer's efforts are channelled through an organisation. Such organisations are sometimes described as 'volunteer involving organisations'.

Many volunteering opportunities are suitable for everyone, with appropriate induction and support. Some require volunteers to be trained extensively for their role (for example in advice work, youth work including scouts and guides, or emergency services). Some may require specialist expertise or prior qualification (for example many overseas volunteering opportunities). Volunteering may be a one off event, for a short period, or a longer term commitment.

Within the modern landscape of volunteering, there are some newer and changing forms, for example:

Virtual Volunteering

Virtual volunteering is also sometimes called e-Volunteering, or online volunteering, is a term describing a volunteer who completes tasks, in whole or in part, offsite from the organisation being assisted, using the Internet and a home, school, tele-centre or work computer or other Internet-connected device, such as a Smartphone. Virtual volunteering is also known as cyber service, tele-mentoring, tele-tutoring, and various other names.

Micro-volunteering

Micro-volunteering describes an un-paid task that can be done via an internet-connected device or telephone network and in small periods of time, for example sending a text or a photograph. It is distinct from virtual volunteering in that it typically does not require formal application or training and the duration is short.

Employer supported volunteering

An employing organisation may permit a number of hours of paid work time for employees to engage in voluntary activity, either through the employer's own scheme or through the

employees' personal arrangements. The benefit to the employer is that it builds brand awareness and affinity, strengthens trust and loyalty among consumers and employees and enhances corporate image and reputation. In some instances, an employer will form a partnership with a third sector organisation or school and undertake a staff teambuilding project (typically redecorating/refurbishing) which also leads to a positive outcome for the community organisation.

Volunteering for accreditation

For young people, the Welsh Baccalaureate and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, include a volunteering element. A growing number of vocational courses (e.g. counselling) require students to gain relevant volunteering experience. Although volunteering is a compulsory component, which, it could be argued, compromises the principle that volunteering is undertaken by free choice, nevertheless such schemes often lead to participants deciding to continue volunteering beyond any compulsory involvement. Thus they embark on what may become their long term 'volunteer journey'.

Internships

Internships are for a defined period of time, to undertake a specific piece of work which is of benefit to the intern and to the organisation. These may be paid or unpaid and may take place within third sector, public or private organisations. Unpaid internships are a form of volunteering.

Volunteering as a work-related experience

An opportunity to volunteer may be sought by an individual as a means of gaining skills and experience to enhance a personal CV and build confidence in a working environment. This is work-related experience. Its purpose is to increase access to employment. Intermediary agencies may refer individuals to Volunteer Centres or volunteer-involving organisations with this in view.

Civic Volunteering

There are opportunities for residents in some communities to get involved in projects that relate to local civic life, for example town twinning projects, fair-trade movements and transition town initiatives.

The pioneering work of local activists can give rise to a range of volunteering opportunities including staffing stalls, running projects, organising events and campaigning. By and large these opportunities have no formal recruitment or management structures and are open to those who want to take part.

Social Enterprise

In 2009 the then Welsh Assembly Government commissioned a mapping of social enterprise in Wales. This defined social enterprise, in the same way as the UK Government, as 'a business with primarily social objectives, whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profits for shareholders'. Social enterprises may take a variety of legal forms such as registered Charities, Community Interest Companies, Charitable Incorporated Organisations, and Companies Limited by Guarantee.

The mapping exercise estimated that there were 105,000 volunteering opportunities within social enterprises in Wales, alongside 29,000 full time jobs and 20,000 part time jobs and

'about half the organisations engaged in social enterprise activity do not have full-time staff. Amongst those with full-time staff, only a quarter have more than ten full-time staff'.

The benefits of volunteering

Volunteering is recognised by the Welsh Government and the Third Sector Partnership Council as a 'good thing' for Wales, to be supported and promoted. It has benefits for the individual, for organisations and movements in which they are involved, and for communities more widely.

Benefit to the individual

Volunteering is associated with altruism – the desire to benefit people and causes we care about. Self-less, altruistic action is an expression of the best in our human nature. It is what Maslow calls 'self actualisation' – the fulfilment of our potential, once our more basic needs (for security, belonging etc.) are met. One can argue that the opportunity to express the best of our human nature is itself a 'benefit' to the individual.

There should be evident benefits in respect of an individual volunteer's human rights. Properly supported volunteers are more likely to become active right holders in respect of their own representation and engagement in communities, society and services. They will also become more active in both their access to their own rights and in the promotion and protection of the rights of others.

People volunteer also for more practical reasons – because to do so will work in their favour. This fact is well recognised and is sometimes known as 'transactional volunteering'. One example of this is Time Banking, where an individual can gain time credits for giving their volunteer time (e.g. through an organisation or community group) and can exchange these credits (e.g. at cinema and leisure facilities or for a place on courses or events). Understanding a volunteer's aspirations and motivations is crucial to successful volunteer management. Volunteering is recognised as being a two way benefit – to the organisation and to the individual.

The most common benefits to volunteers include:

- Building of social networks and relationships, creating a sense of belonging;
- Enjoyment of purposeful activity, including 'serious leisure' activities such as sports coaching;
- Experience and skills gained – *e.g.* for employment or career advancement, or simply the challenge of something new;
- Improving health and wellbeing;
- Personal development, including building confidence and self esteem;
- experiencing autonomy; developing an experience of and commitment to equality and fairness; improving individual dignity and decreasing individual vulnerabilities
- Self help and mutual support - for example those whose lives are touched by chronic illness, tragedy or caring responsibility draw benefits from association with others who have similar experiences; and
- A sense of giving something back to society

Benefit to organisations

Many organisations are entirely run by volunteers, and would not exist without them. Where organisations involve both paid staff and volunteers, the most common benefits to the organisation are that:

- Volunteers' involvement can improve open and inclusive strategic planning processes
- It may be volunteers' activity that achieves the organisation's mission, with paid staff providing back up support.
- Volunteers add to and complement the work of paid staff. They allow flexibility in service provision and experimentation with new approaches.
- Volunteers may bring added value, through their personal qualities, experience and the time that they give to the client group.
- As representatives of the community served by the organisation, they bring a local voice and add credibility to an organisation. Their ideas and involvement test and enrich an organisation and improve an organisation's links to community and service beneficiaries.
- Volunteers increase the potential for organisations to be more attractive to funders.

Organisations should also benefit from promoting human rights based approaches to achieving their outcomes. Critical to this would be providing human rights focused support to both an organisation's paid staff and its volunteers.

Working with volunteers is a core part of the work of many different organisations. But to ensure that the benefits are long-lasting, volunteer services need to be carefully planned and managed. The involvement of volunteers has obvious cost benefits to an organisation. However, volunteers and volunteer services should not be regarded as a cheap alternative to properly funded services with paid staff. There should be good reasons for volunteers' involvement (for example, one of the above) other than simply cost-cutting. Volunteers are not cost free. There will be a resource implication, either for the volunteer involving organisation or sometimes for the volunteers themselves. Organisations need to plan and budget for expenses relating to recruitment and training, support, involvement and recognition of volunteers.

Benefit to the wider community

Volunteering builds social capital in the following ways:

Service provision –Volunteers can strengthen existing services. They play a very important role in healthcare, working in a range of settings and providing a variety of services alongside paid staff. For example, the Police Service utilises volunteers in a range of roles, freeing up officers and staff to perform key operational duties and providing significant benefits to both the service and to local communities. A vast number of other services and community activities depend upon volunteers, for example in sports, youth, faith groups, festivals, culture, the natural environment, politics and advice/support services. Hence, volunteering helps to develop a strong civil society and resilient and vibrant communities.

Increasing social well-being - There is increasing interest in assessing not only economic well-being but also personal and social well-being. Well-being is about satisfaction and happiness, but also about fulfilment and connection with community.

Active voluntary involvement in the community significantly contributes to improved well-being.

Democratic participation - Volunteering is an expression of democracy – people exercising their right to associate and act for change. Where volunteers are involved with formal organisations they can contribute a citizens' voice to policy decisions. They can also contribute to the shaping of public services. In Wales, third sector organisations, through their networks, engage with the government through biannual meetings with Welsh Ministers and in the Third Sector Partnership Council and through other means.

Inclusion and social cohesion - Volunteering is accessible to all, including those who may be excluded from employment and from other social networks. It can provide opportunities to foster understanding and friendship between factions within the community and to combat isolation and prejudice. Asylum seekers, for example, are able through volunteering to begin to integrate into the wider community.

Volunteering as a key ingredient in work with communities to reshape services

There is increasing interest in Wales in involving communities in reshaping services. Working jointly with communities has the potential to create opportunities to improve services, as professional expertise is combined with the expertise, experience and insight of people who use services, volunteers, and community organisations. The Third Sector has expertise in knowing how to enthuse and motivate people and in enabling people to mobilise and create community ownership and structures.

Putting people at the centre of services in this way means there is no one right way of doing things and no universal delivery mechanism that will fit all examples. Constructive and trust based relationships will be key to whichever model of working with communities and citizens is taken forward.

The Welsh Government believes that the most effective and efficient public services will be achieved if the people using them, delivering them and commissioning them work together in the planning, designing, delivery and scrutiny of services. The Third Sector has a crucial role to play in supporting and empowering people to contribute to all four elements, and volunteers can have a vital part in each of these.

Supporting volunteering in Wales

Key stakeholders of the agenda around volunteering in Wales include the Welsh Government and the wider public sector, volunteer involving organisations and the third sector infrastructure. The key roles of each are shown below:

Welsh Government – key roles

Annex B sets out the benefits of volunteering to individuals, society and the wider community and it is these wellbeing benefits that the Welsh Government is keen to continue and promote further. The Welsh Government has a number of roles in relation to this volunteering policy not least in establishing best practice through the execution of its own support for staff within the organisation itself. The Welsh Government may also ensure that the funding it distributes to volunteer involving bodies also supports this volunteering policy where applicable. Of particular relevance will be the Terms and Conditions for Assembly Sponsored Government Bodies, Funding for the Partnership Agreement with the Third Sector Infrastructure (WCVA, CVCs and VC) and for public services more generally. The Welsh Government may also utilise its considerable influence to encourage best practice in other volunteering involving organisations – such as large private employers.

Volunteer involving organisations – key roles

Volunteer involving organisations can cover a wide range of employers and organisations from the large private sector through to the smaller Third Sector as well as public service organisations such as local authorities or Local Health Boards. A defining factor would be their use of volunteers or desire to work with volunteers to develop around their own thematic areas. Working with volunteers is an excellent approach to identifying with and connecting to the issues of a wider community. However, in order to get the best from volunteers and to ensure the individuals are benefiting from their experience, volunteer involving organisations should consider how the volunteers will be managed and in particular what resources are available for training and the appropriate development.

Third sector infrastructure – key roles

The Welsh Government, in its broader relationship with the Third Sector in Wales, provides funding to support a range of national, regional and local organisations through the Partnership Agreement. The aim of supporting these organisations is to ensure sustainability of support to the Third Sector generally. Of specific interest to this policy is the funding provided to the Third Sector Infrastructure bodies including WCVA, CVCs and VCs as well as for volunteering grant schemes. Although sometimes referred to as Infrastructure bodies these organisations are independent and have their own sets of priorities and identified outcomes which address need in their local area.

Funding provided to the Infrastructure through the Partnership Agreement will be sympathetic to this policy where appropriate and in addition the Infrastructure bodies will utilise their own considerable local, regional and national influence to further the identifying and sharing of good practice in a number of ways. This includes providing information and advice in supporting and managing volunteers including through including through Websites, publications and bulletins and Investing in Volunteers. The Infrastructure has a

central role in volunteer recruitment and placement including through physical and online methods. The funding for volunteering grant schemes provided through the Welsh Government is managed by the Infrastructure and the local intelligence on what works, what is needed and in particular how best to engage with underrepresented groups is of particular relevance to the longer term success of the broad aims of this policy. Youth volunteering programmes in particular provide a foundation in volunteering for young people, which can also be a stepping stone to lifelong volunteering activity. The Infrastructure overall has a key role to play in developing local and national policies around volunteering and works with the Welsh Government and public services to improve practice and to identify quality volunteering opportunities. Volunteer Centres in particular provide enhanced support for volunteers with additional needs and work proactively with private, public and third sector bodies to create new high quality volunteering opportunities and to encourage volunteering more generally in the local community.