



County Louth Volunteering Framework **2020-2023**

"Only a life lived for others is worth living"
- Albert Einstein



“Louth will be a prosperous, proud, safe and inclusive county where people want to live, work, visit and invest, and where there is equal opportunity for all”.

Vision as cited in Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022





Hands up who loves volunteering.

Volunteers pictured with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2019.
Photo credit: Robin Barnes

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Foreword

I am delighted to present the County Louth Volunteering Framework 2020–2023. Our County would not be as strong and vibrant as it is was it not for the continued effort and commitment of our dynamic volunteers. Our dedicated and selfless volunteers enable local people to engage in clubs, societies, and local groups, fundraise for local causes, support those most vulnerable, help and visit their elderly, lonely or isolated neighbours and support the causes in which they believe. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how central volunteering is to community wellbeing. The response of volunteers and our volunteering community during such unprecedented times was both magnificent and essential.

This volunteer effort by formal and informal volunteers must be recognised and appreciated. It helps to nurture and build inclusion and cohesion within and between our communities and helps create a sense of belonging in our County. Whether by raising vital funding for charity-based work, helping out at a big community event, delivering services, or sitting on a voluntary Board of Directors, our volunteers are a vital component in transforming our communities and places and making County Louth a better place in which to live, work, play or invest.

However, we cannot be complacent. We need to help address some of the challenges encountered by volunteers. The way in which people wish to volunteer has changed. In our busy world, many people are less able to commit to long term volunteering obligations and prefer one off engagements. In a growing digital age, some relish the idea of being able to volunteer remotely from home. Others still face challenges which we need to help address including things like transport, isolation, broadband issues, getting paid for volunteer expenses and garda vetting.

We need a County in which everyone who wishes to volunteer can do so easily, immaterial of their age, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or economic status enabling them to make a difference to others. Our society is getting older and is more diverse. We wish to widen and expand volunteer engagement creating a diverse volunteer base reflective of our diverse society.

Louth's Local Economic and Community Plan 2016–2022¹ vision states *“Louth will be a prosperous, proud, safe and inclusive county where people want to live, work, visit and invest, and where there is equal opportunity for all”*. Volunteering has been recognised as having a significant role in the achievement of this vision and its many outcomes and in promoting active citizenship. It is cross cutting and as such needs an integrated approach to its promotion and delivery. Promoting and supporting the value of volunteering both to the individual and to its positive impact on local communities is an important role of this Framework.

I wish to thank those individuals and organisations who have contributed to the development of this Framework, in particular Louth Volunteer Centre (LVC) which has managed the co-design process with the consultants. LVC, through its expertise and cutting-edge practice, has ensured that County Louth is one of the best places in the country to be a volunteer. I would like to recognise LEADER funding through the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020, Louth LEADER Partnership as Implementing partner and Louth County Council as financial partner, without which the development of the Framework would not have been possible.

Joan Martin
Chairperson
Louth LCDC



¹ <https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/publications/local-economic-community-plan/>

1.0

Background & Introduction



Purpose of the County Louth Volunteering Framework 2020–2023

County Louth Volunteering Framework will shape local policy and resourcing relating to volunteering into the future. The Framework charts a pathway for the promotion and support of volunteering over the next three years to the end of the current Louth Economic and Community Plan 2016–2022 (LECP) and the start of the new LECP. The Framework:

- examines what constitutes volunteering in County Louth;
- takes its lead from the recently published DRCD National Volunteering Strategy 2021–25;
- has been mapped back from and back to the Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP);
- has been led by need and evidence and developed using a co-design methodology involving key stakeholders;
- identifies and reviews challenges faced by both Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) and volunteers who wish to access volunteering opportunities in County Louth;
- defines key outcomes for volunteering;
- defines key priorities and high-level actions moving forward; and
- recognises the specific role played by volunteers during the recent pandemic.

This is the first County Volunteering Framework in Ireland and represents an opportunity to lead the way and model the embedding of volunteering in everyday life in County Louth.

Methodology

The Framework was developed using a co-design methodology which involved working with a small co-design group comprising key public sector and voluntary sector stakeholders from across Louth with an interest or involvement in volunteering and led by Louth Volunteer Centre.

The members of the co-design group are listed below.

Name	Organisation
Mary Deery	Louth County Council
Gráinne Berrill	Louth Volunteer Centre
Noirin Coghlan	Louth LEADER Partnership
Kayleigh Mulligan	Louth Volunteer Centre
Aderinola Ntemuse	RCCG Sanctuary for All Nations
Gráinne Carroll	Louth Public Participation Network
Sarah Daly	Creative Spark
Derek Crilly	Dundalk IT
Therese Hogg	Blu Zebra, facilitator
Triona Faapito	Louth Sports Partnership

The launch of the Framework was delayed due to the Covid 19 Pandemic which swept the world in 2020.

- A Co-design Working Group which provided advice on the consultation process, the survey and helped facilitate the Round Table Workshop with key stakeholders
- Desk Research on international, national, and local policies on volunteering
- A series of key stakeholder interviews
- Four focus groups in Drogheda; in Ardee; in DkIT and in Dundalk
- A focus group with statutory bodies
- A focus group with Louth Volunteer Centre staff
- A Round Table Workshop to which all of those consulted were invited
- A Volunteer e-survey (156 responses)

- A Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIO) Survey (100 responses)
- Six Co-design Working Group meetings
- A focus group with Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) and Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Members

In total over 350 people engaged in the consultation process through the stakeholder interviews, the focus groups and workshops and the e-surveys.

COVID-19 and the County Louth Volunteering Framework

Whilst the commissioning and much of the consultation phase of this Framework was carried out prior to the COVID-19 crisis it nonetheless reflects the volunteering experience emergent during and from the crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic internationally has shown how volunteers are agents of change providing practical action that improves lives and strengthens communities. COVID-19 has, however, amplified issues that were already prevalent in the sector such as the demographic of volunteers; diversity and inclusion issues and governance challenges.

The centrality of volunteers to the national and local response here in Ireland, particularly through the Community Call, the state organised and community-based support programme during Covid-19, further validates not only the importance of volunteers but also the need for Frameworks such as this to support and foster volunteering locally.



Extreme Makeover COVID-19!

COVID19 voluntary supports extended beyond doing grocery shopping and collecting prescriptions.

In June 2020 St. Oliver's 3rd/4th/6th Louth Troop in Drogheda received a call from Louth Community Call helpline– a lady with complex needs was leaving hospital having undergone cancer treatment. As she would now have to cocoon the request was for volunteers who would be able to clear a few brambles in her garden so she could at least sit there and enjoy the sunshine.

The “few brambles” was a major understatement! Over the course of two months the volunteers removed **18 tonnes** of waste from the garden and created an oasis of calm for someone in need. Troop leader Eoghan Khan noted *“We set up our COVID-19 taskforce to help people in our local community. Joining the Community Call gave us the platform to help those in need in our local area during the COVID-19 lockdown. Clearing the garden was a great activity for our young adult members to get involved in; at a time that was also very difficult for them they could get out and about and feel like they were making a difference”*



FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.volunteirlouth.ie/extreme-makeover-covid19>

2.0

About Volunteering in Ireland



1 million

people or 28.4% of
population aged 15+
volunteer



National Volunteering Strategy 2021–2025

Volunteering is changing and needs to be nurtured and supported to continue to have the immense impact on local communities that is currently the case. Volunteering and volunteerism are increasingly being recognised as central to prosperous, healthy communities. The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), established in July 2017 to provide a renewed and consolidated focus on rural and community development in Ireland, with a mission to “...support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities”, is the first government department to have Volunteering as a specific remit.

The **Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)** published Ireland’s first ever **National Volunteering Strategy for Ireland 2021–2025 on 5th December 2020**². The purpose of this Strategy is to recognise, support and promote the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish society. The Strategy also provides an opportunity for Government to acknowledge how important volunteering is to the well-being of the nation and to steer the delivery of an agreed and ambitious vision.

*“The Government recognises the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish society. It is intrinsic to the fabric of our communities”
National Volunteering Strategy 2021–2025*

The vision for the strategy is of “a society where volunteering is promoted, valued, facilitated and supported so that people can contribute to developing and maintaining vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities.”

It defines volunteering as “Volunteering is any time willingly given, either formally or informally, for the common good and without financial gain.”

To put it simply volunteering is doing more than you have to, because you want to, because you care.

This definition covers a wide range of ‘volunteering activities’ for example:

- formal volunteering taking place within organisations (including institutions and agencies);
- informal volunteering, that which takes place outside an organisational setting; and
- the individual who, in many cases, does not consider what they do as volunteering but sees his or her actions as ‘lending a hand’ or ‘being neighbourly’.

Common good is defined as

- Actions taken in order to benefit society as a whole.
- Volunteering undertaken with free will and outside of the immediate family.

Financial gain is defined as

- Volunteers are not financially better-off through volunteering and often volunteer at their own expense.
- Payment or reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses is not financial gain.

The National Volunteering Strategy contains five strategic priorities:

- To increase participation and diversity in volunteering including embracing new trends and innovation
- To facilitate, develop and support the Volunteering Environment so that it contributes to vibrant and sustainable communities
- To recognise, celebrate and communicate the value and impact of volunteers and volunteering in all its forms
- To promote ethical and skills-based international volunteering to deliver results for beneficiaries and to enhance Global Citizenship in Ireland
- To improve policy coherence on Volunteering across Government both nationally and locally.

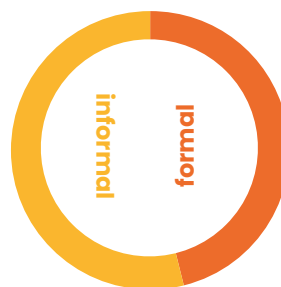
² <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/100239/8e18fb45-6e72-47f9-a1fb-7dcd59105c1a.pdf#page=null>

Some Facts about Volunteering in Ireland

According to the National Volunteering Strategy³



28.4% of the population or 1 million people aged 15 and over **volunteer**.



Formal volunteering through organisations happens in the **29,300 community and voluntary sector (CVS) organisations** in Ireland.

54.7% of volunteering is carried out directly by individuals and not through an organisation – this **is informal volunteering**.

45.3% of volunteering is carried out through an organisation – this **is formal volunteering**.

There are an estimated **81,500 volunteer directors and trustees** in the Community and Voluntary Sector.

9,700 organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector are registered charities, with volunteer charity trustees alone making up **51,000 volunteers**.



Volunteering also happens outside the Community & Voluntary sector with many employees volunteering on company time, donated by their employer – 2019 research by Amárach commissioned by CII, showed that **14% of respondents' volunteering was organised by their employer**. Business in the Community Ireland's Business Impact Map showed that in 2018, employees of 60 of the biggest companies in Ireland volunteered almost **265,000 hours**.



According to the 2019 Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) Report, **12% of people regularly volunteer for sport**, with 52% of all adults in Ireland having volunteered for sport at some stage in their lives.



In the same report, 39% of sports volunteers identified as coaches, with 20% identifying a transport role and 17% as an activity organiser.

In economic terms, the 2013 Quarterly National Household Survey conducted by the CSO outlined that the value of volunteer work amounted to over **€2 billion annually** (after annualising the hours and applying the national minimum wage at that time).



Research produced by Indecon (2018) has estimated that the economic value of volunteering in registered Irish charities is €649 million and that the charity sector supports 289,197 employees. These figures relate to registered Irish charities only and represent only a part of the impact of volunteering in wider Irish society.



In 2019 Indecon produced a second report on the impact of student volunteering. The report stated that **over 17,500 students from the 2017-18 academic year engaged in volunteering**, representing a value of **€28.4 million**.

³<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/100239/8e18fb45-6e72-47f9-a1fb-7dcd59105c1a.pdf#page=null>

Volunteer Ireland Strategic Plan 2018–2022⁴

Volunteer Ireland is the national volunteer development organisation and a support body for all local Volunteer Centres and Volunteering Information Services in Ireland. It believes that people can fulfil their potential through volunteering and that volunteering contributes to healthier and more resilient communities. It supports, promotes, and celebrates volunteering. Volunteer Ireland is a member of the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)⁵, the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)⁶ and Points of Light⁷.

Volunteer Ireland's Strategic Plan 2018–2022 has the vision of Ireland where everyone who wants to volunteer can volunteer to create a better society. Its aims are to⁸

- Advance Volunteering
- Celebrate Volunteering
- Strengthen Our Competency and Capacity
- Support the Volunteering Infrastructure
- Support Volunteering and Volunteers

COVID19 – the growth of informal volunteering

According to recent Ipsos MRBI statistics, commissioned by Volunteer Ireland, as outlined in Figure 1 below, three-quarters of the population volunteered their time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The most popular activities were informal volunteering activities – grocery shopping (40%), befriending someone who was lonely (31%) and collecting prescriptions (29%). Other popular activities included doing someone's cleaning or gardening (24%) and walking someone's dog or helping with a pet (12%).

Many people also did more than one type of activity, with over half of respondents (57%) doing three activities.

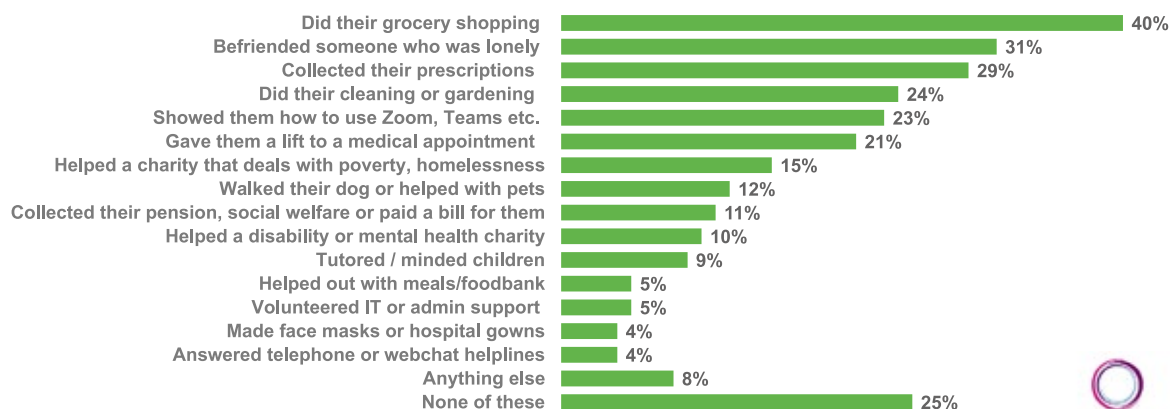
A significant statistic is the fact that 62% of respondents intend to volunteer post COVID-19, with 40% of those saying they would like to do so with an organisation.

Another significant development has been the rapid move towards micro volunteering, remote and digital volunteering worldwide since the Covid 19 pandemic. Volunteer Ireland's *"Stay Safe and Still Support the causes you care about"* is an example of this⁹.

Figure 1: Ipsos MRBI Poll 2020

VOLUNTEERING DURING COVID (NON-ASSIGNED)

Doing their grocery shopping (40%), befriending (31%) and collecting prescriptions (29%) were the main ways people helped others during COVID.



Q.2a And since COVID, have you helped someone outside your family, unpaid, in any of these ways?
Q.2b And since COVID, have you volunteered with any of these ways?
Base: All respondents aged 15+; 1,000

18 – © Ipsos MRBI | 20-071440 | Volunteer Ireland OmniPoll Research | October 2020

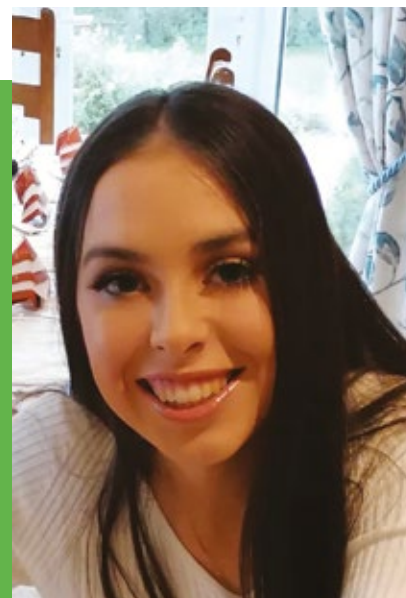




Microvolunteering story

Cards of Care

Louth Volunteer Centre developed a Cards of Care volunteering opportunity in partnership with nursing homes across Louth during the COVID 19 pandemic. Volunteers could participate as little or as often as they wish, writing to nursing home residents at significant times in their lives such as birthdays. Over 100 volunteers participated in the project, bringing joy to lives of nursing home residents across the County at a very difficult time.



Katelyn, aged 17 and from the Cooley peninsula, was one of the volunteers participating in Cards of Care and said *"I love microvolunteering, it's such a good way to get involved in the community and make a difference in people's lives. It's so easy to get involved and I am so glad I did!"*

The contribution of volunteers like Katelyn was very impactful for nursing home staff and residents. As one note of thanks stated:

"Thank you for all the lovely letters and cards from the volunteers. As most of our residents are in their nineties and even a hundred they love to get the mail. I hang the cards in their room and I read them the letters. Their rooms are becoming colourful and the cards give them joy."



FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.volunteerlouth.ie/microvolunteering-story>

⁴ <https://www.volunteer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Volunteer-Ireland-Strategic-FINAL.pdf>

⁵ The Centre for European Volunteering, (CEV), is the European network of over 60 organisations dedicated to the promotion of, and support to, volunteers and volunteering in Europe at European, national or regional level. It aims to be the leading voice in the values-based volunteering debate in Europe, influencing and sharing the current trends & challenges and those predicted for the future, developing and providing policy advice and expertise for European Policymakers so that volunteering policies and programmes developed at European level are effective and fit for purpose.

⁶ The International Association of Voluntary Effort (IAVE) exists to promote, strengthen, and celebrate volunteering in the myriad of ways in which it happens across the globe. With members in over 70 countries, it collectively shares a belief in the power of volunteers to make a significant strategic contribution to resolving the world's most pressing problems.

⁷ Points of Light is the world's largest organisation dedicated to volunteer service – inspires, equips, and mobilises millions of people to take action that is changing the world.

⁸ Volunteer Ireland (2018). Volunteer Ireland Strategic Plan 2018-2022. [online] Volunteer Ireland. Available at: <https://www.volunteer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Volunteer-Ireland-Strategic-FINAL.pdf>.

⁹ Microvolunteering – Volunteer Ireland; Volunteer from home – Volunteer Ireland

3.0

About County Louth and Volunteering in County Louth



About County Louth

County Louth is the smallest of Ireland's 32 counties in area (827 km²). However, it is the 18th largest, in terms of population. County Louth is the second most densely populated county in Ireland with a population density of 156 people per km², more than double that of the national average. The county has two of the largest towns in the country – Drogheda and Dundalk. The county also contains a number of substantial towns and villages including Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford. Louth sits on the Dublin–Belfast axis and shares a border with three other counties – Armagh, Monaghan, and Meath.

According to 2017 demographic profile statistics, the county faces challenges in a number of areas. Compared to State level, Louth contains lower levels of residents with a third level education, a higher proportion of births to women under the age of 20, a high registration rate of people with intellectual disabilities and an increasing number of people who are homeless.

A significant proportion of the population are young compared with the figures for the state, with a high percentage of young people across all categories up to the age of 20. This has led recently to the development of the **Mid Louth Action Plan for Young People 2019-2024**¹⁰. The plan's focus is dynamic and interactive and emphasises what is currently being accomplished on an inter-agency basis and what needs to progress over the next three years.

The total population of the county is 128,884 (Census 2016), rising by 4% since the previous Census in 2011. The majority of the population reside in the two largest towns and they account for 62% of all residents in the county. Of these, 14,451 people are between 12 and 19 years; 44,182 are between 20 and 45; 24,372 are between 45 and 59; with 22,117 aged between 60 and 85+. From an ethnic or cultural background perspective in 2016, 106,031 of the total population were classified as White Irish; 10,006 were classified as Other White; 3,570 as Black or Black Irish; 2,406 as Asian or Asian Irish and 771 as White Irish Traveller. 4,978 people either did not state or classified themselves as Other. Louth sits on the Dublin- Belfast axis and shares a border with three other counties - Armagh, Monaghan, and Meath.

The vision of the **Louth Meath Migrant Integration Strategy 2019 - 2022**¹¹ is that migrants are facilitated to play a full and active role in Counties Louth and Meath and that integration and cohesion are core principles of life. This Strategy recognises volunteering as a tool for the promotion of inclusion and civic engagement. A number of actions within the document relate to voluntary activity, both from the perspective of migrants engaging in volunteering in their local communities and other community members providing voluntary supports to migrants.



Ejiro's Story

Ejiro Ohare Stratton has been living in Ireland for over 30 years and Drogheda is now very much her home. She has a high-pressure job in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital where she works as an Assistant Director of Nursing. In 2019 Ejiro volunteered at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, the largest traditional Irish music and culture festival in the world, which was held in Drogheda.

Ejiro spoke about how volunteering at such a big community event was a great leveller: *"We are all the same when we are wearing our red t-shirts, all are equal, it doesn't matter what we look like or what we do, we are all volunteers together. The experience of inclusion and community integration was felt by everyone who came to celebrate this great festival. When I am in my volunteer t-shirt I am just a member of the team, the same as everyone else, no matter what my colour or nationality is, I am there to help the people who come up to me. I love it!"*



FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.volunteerlouth.ie/ejiros-story>

¹⁰ Mid Louth Action Plan for Young People 2019-2024, Dunleer Community Development Board, 2019

¹¹ <https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/communities/programmes/joint-migrant-integration-strategy-for-louth-and-meath/joint-migrant-integration-strategy-for-louth-and-meath.pdf>

Under the Local Government Act 2014, each Local Authority is obliged to develop a **Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)**.

Louth County Council developed its plan for the 2016- 2022 period with the following vision that

“Louth will be a prosperous, proud, safe and inclusive county where people want to live, work, visit and invest, and where there is equal opportunity for all”.

The **Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)** was established as part of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014. The committee is a statutory committee and has statutory functions with regard to the preparation and adoption of the ‘Community’ element of the Local Economic Community Plan (LECP). Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) aims to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development in Louth and it implements and monitors the community elements of the Louth Economic and Community Plan (2016-2022). The membership of the LCDC includes members of the local authority, local authority staff, representatives of public bodies providing services in the area; representatives of local community interests; local community representatives; and representatives of publicly funded or supported local development bodies. Louth LCDC is responsible for the delivery of both SICAP and LEADER programmes. Louth LEADER Partnership provides the animation of both programmes and Louth County Council, as the administrative support to the committee,

provides the financial oversight. The LCDC will oversee the implementation of the Louth Volunteering Framework.

The **Louth Public Participation Network** aims to ensure communities in Louth have a say in local democracy. The Louth Public Participation Network is the main link through which the Local Authority connects with Environmental, Social Inclusion, Community and Voluntary Organisations. Louth PPN operates on two levels, on Municipal District level, dealing with local issues, and on a County Wide level, dealing with county issues

Volunteering in the context of the LECP

The value of volunteering in creative, inclusive, sustainable communities is recognised at statutory level in County Louth through the Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022. This plan with its integrated high level economic and community goals and objectives has a six-year lifespan and underpins policy and strategic development in County Louth.

The LECP identified a need for a Volunteer Strategy, now structured as this Framework ¹², to *“help volunteer organisations to develop their skills to enable them to engage people and leverage existing networks for greater engagement.”* The development of the Framework, along with other related volunteering linked actions, is highlighted within the **Louth LECP – Community Goals** as outlined in Figure 2.

¹² During the Framework development process and as part of a consultation meeting with the LCDC/ PPN it was agreed that a “Framework” was more appropriate format for the document than a “Strategy”. The co-design group subsequently agreed with this.

Figure 2: Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2016–2022 (LECP) Links to volunteering

Community Goal	Objective	Specific Action
Community Goal 1 – Strong, safe, and flourishing Communities Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent, and engaged communities.	Objective 1: Build Community Capital and collaboration in communities across the County	Specific Action: 1.1: “Carry out a mapping exercise of community services and programmes in Louth to identify gaps/duplication of services and implement mechanisms to address and better coordinate funding, planning and delivery of community services” Specific Action: 1.2: “Support programmes that involve knowledge sharing and collaboration amongst community groups and service providers” Specific Action: 1.3: “Expand the existing community directory to ensure that it is accessible, accurate and widely used by the public” Specific Action: 1.4: “Develop an arts strategy and programme that supports our artists, improves access to the Arts, enables opportunities for community participation and increases levels of public engagement” (No of volunteer opportunities in arts and culture organisations. Nos of volunteers and volunteer hours in arts and culture Organisations) Specific Action: 1.5: “Ensure that libraries create opportunities to improve literacy levels, enhance community life and support employment opportunities” Specific Action: 1.6: “Work with Tidy Towns, Chambers of Commerce and local residents’ groups to promote clean, safe and accessible open spaces, parks and playgrounds underpinned by pride of place and community ownership”. (Nos participating in national Tidy Towns and local Pride of Place competitions) Specific Action: 1.10: “Facilitate the development of community ‘hubs’/centres of shared learning in Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee to support community groups and organisations that involve volunteers in their work”
	Objective 2: Promote and support volunteering and participation within local communities to enable a vibrant, civil, and active society.	Specific Action 2.2: “Develop a volunteer strategy for Louth to address the barriers to volunteering, whilst promoting and supporting the value of volunteering to the individual and its positive impact on local communities ” Specific Action 2.3: “Develop credits and recognition system for DkIT students and students of local schools who volunteer in local communities” Specific Action 2.4: “Develop Louth community group volunteer recognition and reward initiatives and encourage more participation in national awards”. Specific Action 2.5: “Develop Quality Standard for effectively managing volunteers within community organisations in Louth”. Specific Action 2.6: “Promote, broker, facilitate and recognise strong corporate social responsibility initiatives among businesses to build and enhance community capacity”.

Community Goal

Objective

Specific Action

Community Goal 3: Prosperous, inclusive communities and places Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.	Objective 4: Access Increase and improve co-ordination, joint planning, and delivery between service providers and communities	Specific Action: 4.4: "Provide diversity and people first language training to service providers in welfare, LCC, health and education Settings" Specific Action: 4.5: "Ensure delivery of disability and mental health awareness training to staff, particularly frontline staff, including through NDA e-learning training module"
Community Goal 5: Nurturing children and young people Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood	Objective 2: Education: Empower children and young people to achieve their full potential in all aspects of personal development and learning.	Specific Action 2.2: "Increase young people's access to informal educational, recreational, and cultural activities and resources" Specific Action 2.4: Work to increase young people's civic responsibility through the promotion of voter education programmes and other initiatives. (No of young people taking up volunteering positions.)
Community Goal 6: An Age friendly society Goal 6: Embrace and foster the rich contribution our older people make to our communities.	Objective 2: Remove barriers to participation and provide more opportunities for the involvement of older people in all aspects of cultural, economic, and social life in their communities.	Specific Action 2.3 Encourage older people to engage in their communities by promoting active citizenship and the value of volunteering (Nos of older people involved in Tidy Towns, ICA, Arts, sporting activities, intergenerational Projects) 

Louth Volunteer Centre (LVC) secured funding through the LEADER Rural Development Programme to commission and develop the first County Volunteering Strategy in Ireland¹³. In response to the consultation process this evolved into the County Louth Volunteering Framework.

Louth Volunteer Centre (LVC) was established in 2003, originally as Drogheda Volunteer Centre and subsequently expanding to offer services across the whole County. The organisation is an independent, registered charity (CHY17034), led by a voluntary board. LVC is an affiliate of Volunteer Ireland and a member of the National Network of Volunteer Centres, who share a collective vision and mission of:

“A vibrant Irish society where every person feels connected to their community through active participation in voluntary activities” and “To promote the value of volunteering and increase the range and quality of volunteering in Ireland”.

Core funding for all Volunteer Centres is provided by central Government (the Department of Rural and Community Development) to Strengthen and Support Volunteering in their County.

During late 2020 and in the context of the COVID-19 crisis Louth Volunteer Centre undertook a strategic planning process which resulted in a new Vision statement.

Vision:

Our Community is enriched by the benefits of volunteering.

Purpose:

To advance the practices, processes and benefits of volunteering.

The organisation aims are to:

- Promote awareness of the benefits of volunteering
- Advance Louth Volunteer Centre as a facilitator of volunteering
- Increase quality in volunteering
- Advocate for diversity in and access to volunteering
- Strengthen the organisation’s competence, capacity and sustainability

In 2018 and 2019, Louth Volunteer Centre managed the Fleadh Volunteer Programme which involved over 1,000 volunteers across the two year period and was the largest volunteer programme ever delivered in the County.

This was an opportune time to consult with many new volunteers in the County and seek their views on how volunteering could be strengthened moving forward and these volunteers were surveyed and invited to participate in the consultation process.



¹³ See Appendix 1 for Terms of Reference

About Volunteering in County Louth

The following are some facts about volunteering in County Louth as supplied by Louth Volunteer Centre.

In 2019 there were c.384 organisations registered as Volunteer Involving Organisations in County Louth. The top causes for which Volunteering Involving Organisations (VIOs) work are outlined in Figure 3. These were self-identified by the VIOs:

Figure 3:

The top causes for Volunteering Involving Organisations (self-identified)

Sports/Outdoor activities	37	Addictions and Recovery	7
Arts, Culture and Media	36	Animals	7
Health/Hospitals/Hospices	35	Families/Parenting	5
Youth	33	Other...	5
Environment and Conservation	29	Overseas Aid/Development	5
Community Development	25	LGBT	4
Children	19	Men's Group	4
Emergency and Ambulance Services	15	Crime/Safety	3
Intellectual/Learning Disabilities	13	Women's Group	3
Older People/Active Retired	12	Sensory Impairment	2
Education/Literacy	11	Unemployment	2
Volunteering and Active Citizenship	11	Carers	1
Heritage/Museums/Galleries	10	Human and Civil Rights/Equality	1
Physical Disability	10	Law/Legal Support/Justice	1
Religion/Faith Based	10	Minority Groups	1
Social Inclusion	9	Politics	1
Mental Health	8	Prisoners/Offenders/Ex-Offenders	1
Homelessness/Housing	8		



Carlingford Lough Heritage Trust

Carlingford Lough Heritage Trust is a registered charity, which seeks to promote, foster and encourage the environmental, cultural, social and economic development of the town of Carlingford, County Louth and the areas of Counties Louth and Down which have a shoreline with Carlingford Lough. A major aim is to preserve the medieval built heritage of Carlingford for the enjoyment and enrichment of current and future generations.

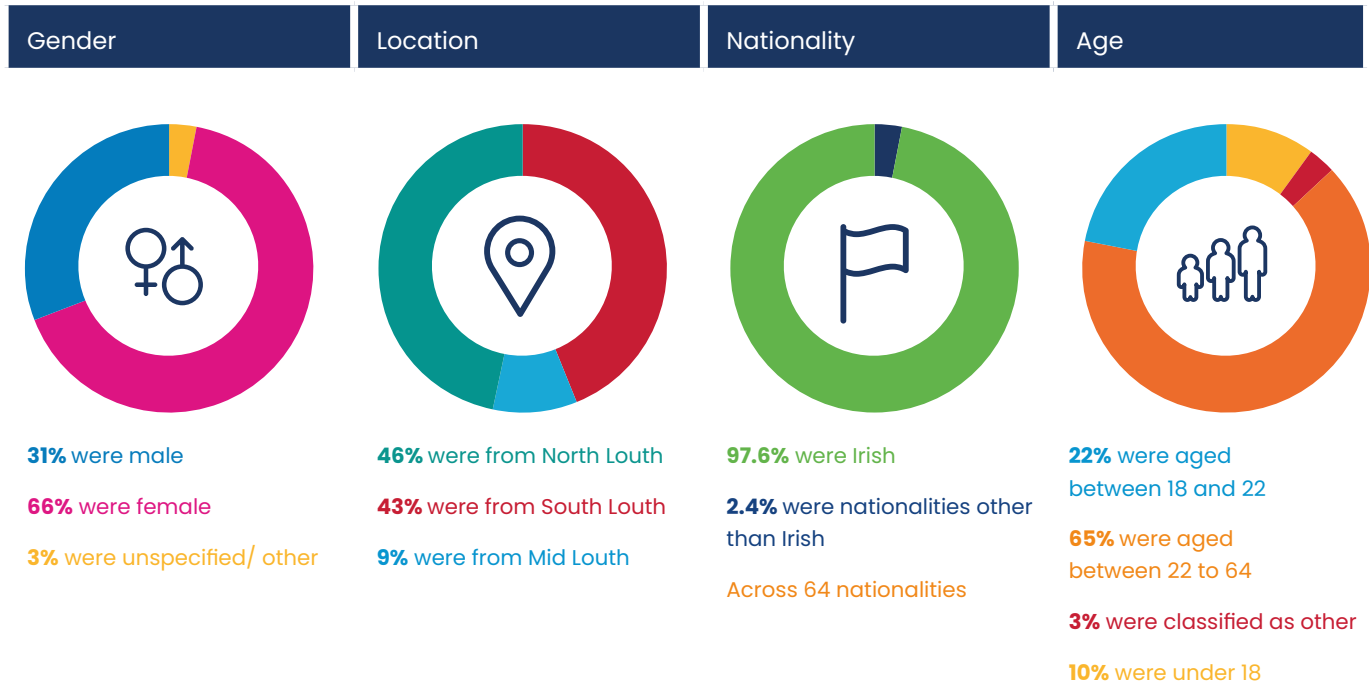
Megan Woods, Trust Manager outlined the importance of volunteers to the organisation: *"After a year of unemployment due to Covid 19, I was offered the opportunity to take on the role as Community Heritage Manager for Carlingford Lough Heritage Trust. A month into the job, I can unequivocally say that it has been a revelation to witness the sheer driving force of volunteerism. Busy working abroad and often on the move, I had never given too much thought to it. However, now I see the transformational*

power that volunteerism has. The ways in which our volunteers support us is manifold: our local tour guides who introduce visitors and locals alike to the rich history and heritage of our medieval town and castle; those who man the area's Information Centre; our musicians in residence who organise fantastic concerts in our Carlingford Heritage Centre; and the people who help us host those and other events. Other examples include our Zoom host on a Monday evening who has organised online talks about our heritage to keep us entertained at home during COVID 19 and the speakers who offered up their time to deliver those talks. We are fortunate to have several volunteers who assist us with IT support and social media. Indeed, a couple of them helped set up our webpage dedicated to our volunteers, which we published this week. Right now, we have individual volunteers working on fundraising projects; showcasing local oral histories; developing child-friendly tours; and applying for funding for archaeological projects. There are those who contribute week in week out with governance, finance, marketing, and a whole range of areas of expertise. We could not do what we do, without our volunteers."

In 2019 there were 5,624 volunteers registered with Louth Volunteer Centre.
 The profile of these is outlined in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4:

Profile of volunteers in County Louth in 2019 (LVC figures)



The Volunteering Ecosystem in County Louth

The Volunteering ecosystem in County Louth comprises a wide range of integrated and cross cutting stakeholders, many of whom are outlined in Figure 5.

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the benefits and indeed the necessity of a vibrant voluntary sector. It also emphasised the benefits of cross sectoral and cross community working as evidenced by the Community Call model in supporting and empowering volunteers and voluntary groups to respond to community need. The Framework needs to recognise this diversity and to build on the lessons learned during the COVID-19 period.



Figure 5: The Louth Volunteer Ecosystem

4.0

A view about volunteering from other parts of the world



Through our research we have reviewed, considered, and been informed by definitions of volunteering and volunteering strategies from across the world. Some common elements emanate from all of these international definitions and strategies namely:

Definitions

- The definitions of volunteering contain similar elements including volunteering by free will and choice; without remuneration; and for the benefit of oneself and others in the community
- Place is important in volunteering across most strategies.

These are explored in Figure 6 below. More detail is included in Appendix 4.

Figure 6:

Definitions of Volunteering from elsewhere

European Definition

The European definition of volunteering is set out in a European Council Decision (2009)¹⁴ and the European Commission's 'Communication on European Union (EU) Policies and Volunteering' (2011) as involving:

Volunteering is defined as all forms of voluntary activity, whether formal or informal. Volunteers act under their own free will, according to their own choices and motivations and do not seek financial gain. Volunteering is a journey of solidarity and a way for individuals and associations to identify and address human, social or environmental needs and concerns. Volunteering is often carried out in support of a non-profit organisation or community-based initiative.

It recognises that Volunteering is an important creator of human and social capital, a pathway to integration and employment and a key factor for improving social cohesion. It is a highly visible expression of European citizenship, as volunteers contribute to shaping society and helping people in need.

Northern Ireland

The Department of Social Development in Northern Ireland created a Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan in 2012¹⁵ that defined volunteering as

"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".

England

In England there have been a number of strategies and reports created on volunteering. The definition given in a report by NCVO¹⁶ is

"Volunteering is someone spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone who they're not closely related to".

Scotland

The Volunteering for All – Scottish National Framework was launched in 2019. The strategy defines volunteering as:

"Volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary.

Its vision is *"Volunteering for All – A Scotland where everyone can volunteer, more often, and throughout their lives".*

The European Union Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027 strongly supports inclusive volunteering. The European Volunteer Charter¹⁷ states that

"a volunteer is a person who carries out activities benefiting society, by free will. These activities are undertaken for a non- profit cause, benefiting the personal development of the volunteer, who commits their time and energy for the general good without financial reward ¹⁸".

Australia

The formal definition of volunteering in Australia is

"time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain, taking place within organisations (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way"

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1311_en.pdf

¹⁵ Join In, Get Involved: Build a Better Future – A Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland – March 2012. Available at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dsd/join-in-get-involved-2012.pdf>

¹⁶ https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/volunteering/Volunteer-experience_Full-Report.pdf

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/citizenship-programme/docs/volunteering_charter_en.pdf

¹⁸ European Volunteering Centre (2012). Europe Volunteering Infrastructure. [online] CEV – European Volunteering Centre. Available at: <https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/volunteering-infrastructure-in-euro>

Why volunteer

People volunteer for lots of different reasons many of which are similar right across the world including

- because they want to give something back to the community
- because they want to improve their employability
- to meet others; or have something to do.

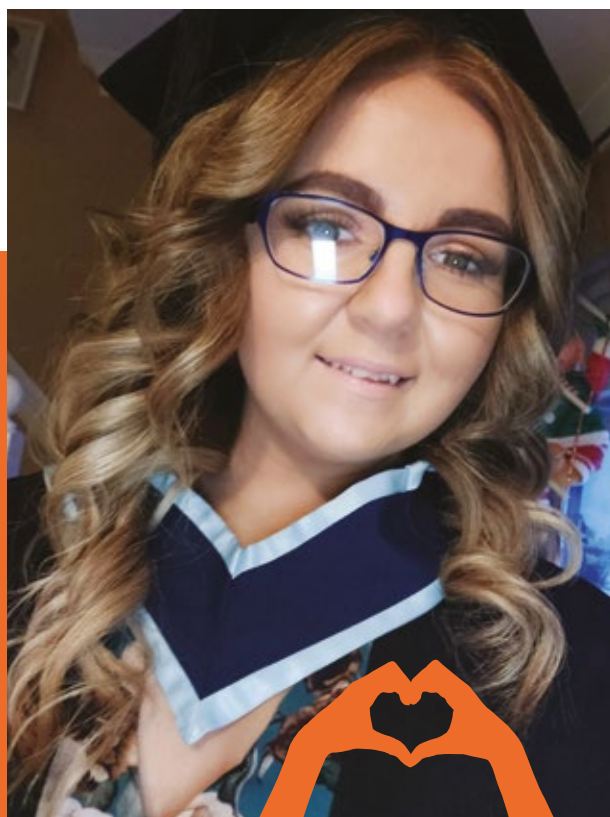
Life's most persistent and urgent question is: "what are you doing for others?"

Martin Luther King Jr

Shannon's Story

Shannon McLaughlin graduated from Dundalk IT with an honours degree in Youth Work in 2020. She is a voluntary leader in The Friary Youth Club in Dundalk. Shannon says:

"Before I ever got involved in volunteering, I was young, shy and very quiet and would never step out of my comfort zone. I wouldn't attend community events by myself and I wouldn't approach people on my own either. I got given the opportunity to become a voluntary leader in the Friary Youth Club when I was 16. This changed my life for the better! From taking on this role, it led me to volunteer in other voluntary projects and summer camps. I can honestly say that volunteering has led me to where I am today. From volunteering with young people, I realised my



passion for youth work, which I am now qualified in. In the past 7 years through volunteering, I've gained many life skills, such as communication, teamwork and organisation. My confidence and self-esteem esteemed has boosted massively and most importantly I've made friends and memories for life!



FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.volunteerlouth.ie/shannon-s-story>

Barriers

People across the world face similar barriers to engagement in volunteering and include

- **practical issues** linked to accessibility, time, rurality, the meeting of volunteer expenses, the lack of information and language barriers
- **structural issues** related to technology and broadband issues, bureaucracy, lack of induction or support, inflexibility from VIOs and tasks not linked to skills through to
- **emotional issues** linked to volunteer burn out and feeling undervalued, lack of confidence, stereotypes and now knowing what to expect

Benefits

The benefits of volunteering are also similar ranging from

- **personal development**, confidence, friendships, and life satisfaction
- **physical and mental health and well-being benefits** for both the volunteer and the beneficiaries
- **instrumental benefits** including new skills and knowledge and increased employability for the volunteer through to
- **social benefits** such as the building of bonding and bridging capital, creating more cohesive communities, and reducing isolation for beneficiaries and communities engaged in volunteering activities.

Challenges

Challenges were also similar across the world. Some of the challenges faced by many of the examples explored were

- how to encourage volunteering throughout people's lives
- how to embrace new technologies
- how to develop volunteer opportunities for the way in which people live their lives today and

in response to the changes in people's own health, employment, or family circumstances

- many people prefer to engage in one off opportunities rather than longer term commitments.
- being mindful of cultural differences that can impact on people's engagement in volunteering opportunities
- Identifying mechanisms to encourage youth volunteering
- getting people from lower income brackets or from disadvantaged groups engaged in volunteering
- getting people to start volunteering and to maintain that engagement over time.

In most strategies reviewed, **a case for change** was outlined to encourage and facilitate more and more meaningful engagement in volunteering experiences for all. This change needed to be driven by an understanding that volunteering is good for the individual and society and to be taken forward in the context of wider social policy and intervention with a focus on outcomes.

The International Association for Volunteer Effort in December 2020¹⁹ recognised that due to rapidly changing societal trends, technological innovation, virtual landscapes, and a global commitment to enabling the Sustainable Development Goals for everyone, established boundaries for volunteering are being challenged and changed. In October 2020²⁰ it acknowledged that as technology evolves it is being harnessed to give greater access to volunteer involvement and enhance how volunteers carry out their roles. Virtual volunteering is a growing trend. New technologies such as artificial intelligence will bring further change and challenge as to how these new digital opportunities can also support and develop volunteering.

¹⁹ International Association for Volunteer Effort Volunteering 2030 – New Paradigms | International Association for Volunteer Effort (www.iave.org)

²⁰ International Association for Volunteer Effort Volunteering and the Digital World – Extending the Power of Volunteering through New Technologies | International Association for Volunteer Effort (www.iave.org)

Why volunteer

Volunteering happens all over the world but no matter where in the world, the benefits of volunteering all stem from the same factors, it will not only help the people in need but benefits the individual in many ways.

Volunteering enables people to play an active role in their society and contribute to positive social change.

Volunteering helps to break down social barriers and offer people an opportunity to socialise with people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

The 2019 World Happiness Report²¹ found that in a recent synthesis of literature including 17 longitudinal cohort studies volunteering was linked to greater life satisfaction, greater quality of life, and lower rates of depression.

These are summarised in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Why Volunteer?



²¹ <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2019/>

Valuing Volunteers

Research demonstrates that the well-being effects of volunteering are influenced by the choice of volunteering experience, the culture of the organisation that a person volunteers with and the personality, personal circumstances, and capacity of each individual volunteer.

This research demonstrated that it is the personal motivation and expectations of the volunteer that has a greater impact on well-being. It also demonstrates that it is important for a Volunteer Involving Organisation to be mindful and careful in their selection, briefing, training, and support of their volunteers.

Valuing volunteers can impact, not only on positive outcomes for the organisation but also on the well-being of the volunteer involved. Organisations that have a natural culture of valuing, training, and supporting their volunteers are more conducive to elicit well-being than those that are less supportive.

Types of Volunteering

There are many different types of volunteering²². Opportunities can range from community welfare, special needs assistance and youth work to adult education, advocacy, fundraising to name a few. Volunteer Ireland²³ breaks these into two main areas – **Volunteering Causes** and **Volunteering Activities** as outlined in Figures 8 and 9 below.

Figure 8: Most popular types of Volunteering Causes

Volunteering Causes



Figure 9: Most popular types of Volunteering Activities

Volunteering Activities



²² https://www.volunteer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Volunteer_Ireland-Report_FINAL.pdf

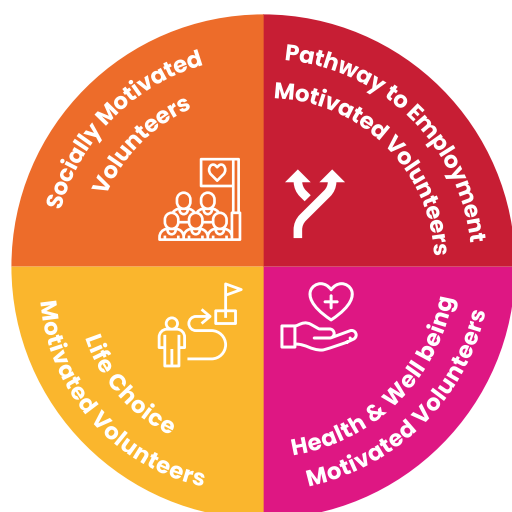
²³ <https://www.volunteer.ie/volunteers/volunteering-activities/>

Types of Volunteer Motivations

There are many different reasons or motivations behind why people volunteer. Some are outlined in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10:

Types of Volunteer Motivations



Patrick's Story

Patrick is a farmer from Hackballscross in Co. Louth. Mostly farming cattle, he manages the farm by himself. Although Patrick is busy with the farm and has little free time, he still finds ways to give back. Patrick helps out in many ways when he can with fundraisers, at festivals and events such as Dundalk St. Patrick's Festival and Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Drogheda or helping out at the Southern Area Hospice in Newry.

With such a busy life and lots to contend with on the farm, we asked Patrick why he goes out of his way to get involved.

"I get a lot of satisfaction out of it. It's a social thing – I work alone on the farm all day and when I do this, I meet a lot of different people and have a chat. It's always in the back of my mind, I don't have a lot of free time but when I do I try to do something. Even if I have to plan it a few months in advance so I know I'm free. If it's something you want to do, you make the time."



FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.volunteerlouth.ie/patrick-s-story>

5.0

What our research told us



Survey of Volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations

In developing this Framework, we undertook two online surveys, one with volunteers the other with Volunteer Involving Organisations. The results of these surveys are included in Appendix 6 and 7. In total 156 surveys were completed by volunteers and 100 surveys were completed by Volunteer Involving Organisations. Some highlights included the following:

Figure 11: Volunteer Survey Responses – Summary

Volunteer Survey Responses

“

What people like about Volunteering

- 78% give something back to the community
- 53% sense of belonging to community
- 21% volunteer to build up CV & work experience

What respondents do not like about volunteering

- 23% take too much on as a volunteer
- 18% feel they do not get the recognition for their work
- 17% could benefit from more training

How did you learn about volunteering?

- 37% learnt about volunteering through Louth Volunteer Centre
- 17% through a friend
- 17% through social media

Types of roles

- 52% volunteer for special events/activities
- 39% volunteer on-going roles performed regularly
- 20% in governance roles

What would make it easier to volunteer

- 44% feel more knowledge and information about volunteering would make it easier to volunteer
- 35% more online information and
- 27% more training

What type of skills have you gained?

- 71% Volunteers have gained skills in Teamwork,
- 50% Problem Solving and
- 48% Organisation skills

”



Figure 12: Volunteer Involving Organisation Survey Responses – Summary

Volunteer Involving Organisation Survey responses

“

How many volunteers do you currently involve in your work /activities

- 45% of organisations involve 0-10 volunteers in their work,
- 41% involve 11-50 volunteers with
- 15% involving 100+ volunteers

What proportion of your activities is delivered by volunteer?

- 53% of organisations' activities are 81-100% delivered by volunteer,
- 13% of organisations' activities are 61-80% delivered by volunteers and
- 18% of organisations' activities are less than 10% delivered by volunteers

In what types of roles does your organisation involve volunteers?

- 80% ongoing roles regularly weekly/monthly
- 58% for special events
- 46% for In governance roles

How do you find volunteers?

- 76% of organisations rely on word of mouth for volunteers,
- 59% personal approach and
- 47% through Louth Volunteer Centre

What benefits does your organisation gain from engaging volunteers?

- 65% of organisations use volunteers to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their organisation
- 65% use volunteers to increase the volume of activity in which they engage
- 63% state that volunteers bring new ideas and new ways of doing things

Have the services your organisation offers grown as a result of volunteer involvement?

- 65% of organisations services have grown as result of volunteer involvement and
- 24% have not grown

Has the income generated by your organisation grown as a result of volunteer involvement?

- 45% of organisations income has increased due to volunteer involvement and
- 43% have had no increase

The biggest barriers/ challenges faced by VIOs in recruiting, managing and placing volunteers?

- 54% stated lack of resources
- 51% stated volunteer commitment
- 33% stated not enough suitable volunteers

How equipped are VIOs to grow and diversify the volunteer base of VIOs

- Growing and diversifying the volunteer base are the biggest challenges faced by VIOs

”

Impacts following volunteering in Louth

A Volunteer Ireland Survey on the impact of volunteering on the individual was undertaken in 2019 and the following data was gleaned from it as it related to County Louth. This survey demonstrates the impact of volunteering on community connectedness and personal wellbeing for the volunteer:

- Feeling of making a useful contribution to community (87% volunteers stated this increased)
- Confidence in own abilities (81% volunteers stated this increased)
- Sense of motivation (79% volunteers stated this increased)
- Interest in doing more volunteering (77% volunteers stated this increased)
- Sense of self-esteem (76% of volunteers stated this increased)
- Mental health and wellbeing (74% of volunteers stated this increased)

Nicola's Story

Nicola Pierce had received a cancer diagnosis and was told she would have to receive radiotherapy in Beaumont Hospital. Living in Drogheda and not being able to drive this became a source of great stress for her. A chance encounter with two volunteers from Drogheda Hospice Homecare, who were participating in a flagday fundraising collection in the town led to Nicola contacting the organisation for support.

Nicola was matched with a volunteer driver who brought her to Beaumont hospital several days a week throughout the course of her treatment and this was really important for Nicola. She said *"To be honest I don't know if I could have undergone the treatment and recovered so well from it without the support I got from Drogheda Hospice Homecare. I had a stress free 5 weeks when I was expecting*



it to be so difficult. I could rest when I needed and was collected from my door and brought to the door of the hospital, whatever the weather – and given my treatment was in October/November that was so important for me. Truly, in the midst of a crappy year the compassion and care I received from those volunteers was a life changing experience for me."



FIND OUT MORE

<https://www.volunteerylouth.ie/nicola-s-story>



Modesta's Story

Modesta lives in Mosney Accommodation Centre, a large Direct Provision Centre with almost 800 residents on site. Modesta registered with Louth Volunteer Centre in 2017 as a way of finding something to be involved in locally. Modesta subsequently volunteered at a wide variety of community fundraisers and events including St. Patrick's Day events, Bagpacks, flagdays, the Maritime Festival and Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann and became known as a regular volunteer amongst local organisations.

Asked why she likes volunteering Modesta said *"I feel happy..I always meet different people with whom I can interact with and in so doing I make friends. When volunteering I become very active and to me it's important because it's part of exercise rather than just staying idle at my place..."*

David's Story

David has been volunteering in the community for many years, in fact he regards himself as a 'professional volunteer' raising funds and helping out many organisations. When asked why he volunteers David said

"I like to keep busy for my mental health and to keep involved in my community. I don't let my disability inhibit me from doing any voluntary work and get great satisfaction when I do voluntary work."



6.0

SCOT of Volunteering in County Louth



The Framework aims to build on our strengths, address challenges, take advantage of opportunities and minimise the threats to ensure that volunteering in County Louth is strong and resilient moving forward. The internal and external issues – strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats facing volunteering in County Louth identified through the research are outlined in this SCOT analysis carried out during the consultation process.

SCOT Analysis of Volunteering in County Louth

Strengths

- The accessibility of opportunities in Co Louth is good
- Strong tradition of volunteering in Louth
- Give something back – helping those in need
- Contributes to mental health & personal development
- Gives people an opportunity to help others
- Good for the County – civic participation
- Builds cohesion and integration
- Makes for stronger, better communities
- Helps create pride of place
- Agility of VIOs in emergency planning
- Supporting the delivery of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Volunteers gain valuable skills & experience
- Improves job prospects
- Range of large, medium, and small sized businesses and state and local government bodies who have many skills that could be shared with VIOs – CSR

Challenges

- Length of time it takes to get placements
- Lack of clarity on roles, responsibilities, and rights of volunteers
- For some, a lack of supervision and training
- Lack of awareness of benefits
- Sometimes volunteers feel taken for granted
- The cost / barriers – expenses, travel, technology, broadband etc.
- Time commitment can be a challenge for some
- Accessibility in rural areas – poor public transport
- Global pandemics like COVID-19 and Brexit
- Many VIOs are volunteer led – more support required
- VIOs under resourced – placing volunteers takes time and resources.
- Lack of short term, flexible volunteering opportunities
- Compliance issues e.g., GDPR, Garda vetting, etc. – smaller VIOs struggle
- High turnover of volunteers & finding right skills at the right time
- For VIOs, bureaucracy in accessing funding & higher insurance costs
- Planning for succession needs to be improved
- Not enough opportunities for young volunteers in TY
- Lower levels of participation among some target marginalised groups
- Many vital community services delivered by volunteers
- Lack of a joined-up approach between agencies
- Lack of research & insights on volunteering
- Lack of recognition of the value and impact of volunteering

Opportunities

- New DRCD National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025 & other national policies
- The Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 & other local strategies
- Increasing the visibility of volunteering and its contribution to other outcomes
- Recent good economic recovery in Ireland – Project 2040 investing in future growth
- Corporate Social Responsibility among businesses, public sector & local government
- Offer opportunities for volunteers to bring new skills to innovative social enterprises
- Role of VIOs in emergency planning and in improving the efficiencies of VIOs through shared services
- Getting more and earlier opportunities for young people to volunteer – TY year
- Covid 19 – opportunity to highlight the integrated and agile nature of CVS
- Target certain demographics to widen and deepen engagement
- Sharing of experiences & best practice through the PPN
- Ensure volunteering is for all – develop knowledge and awareness of benefits
- Maintain upsurge in volunteering through Covid – PPN and LVC collaboration
- Using technology & social media to promote volunteering/measure impact
- Move towards virtual volunteering – an opportunity for CVS
- Support with governance and succession planning for VIOs
- Supporting initiatives for the delivery of Sustainable Development Goals

Threats

- National and local elections and different emerging policies
- Brexit and cross border cooperation
- World politics
- Lack of political and financial support for VIOs
- Facing into a possible recession after Covid 19
- World based health scares
- Ageing population
- Lack of BME community engaged in volunteering
- Lack of people with a disability engaged in volunteering
- Lack of broadband in rural areas
- The global climate crises

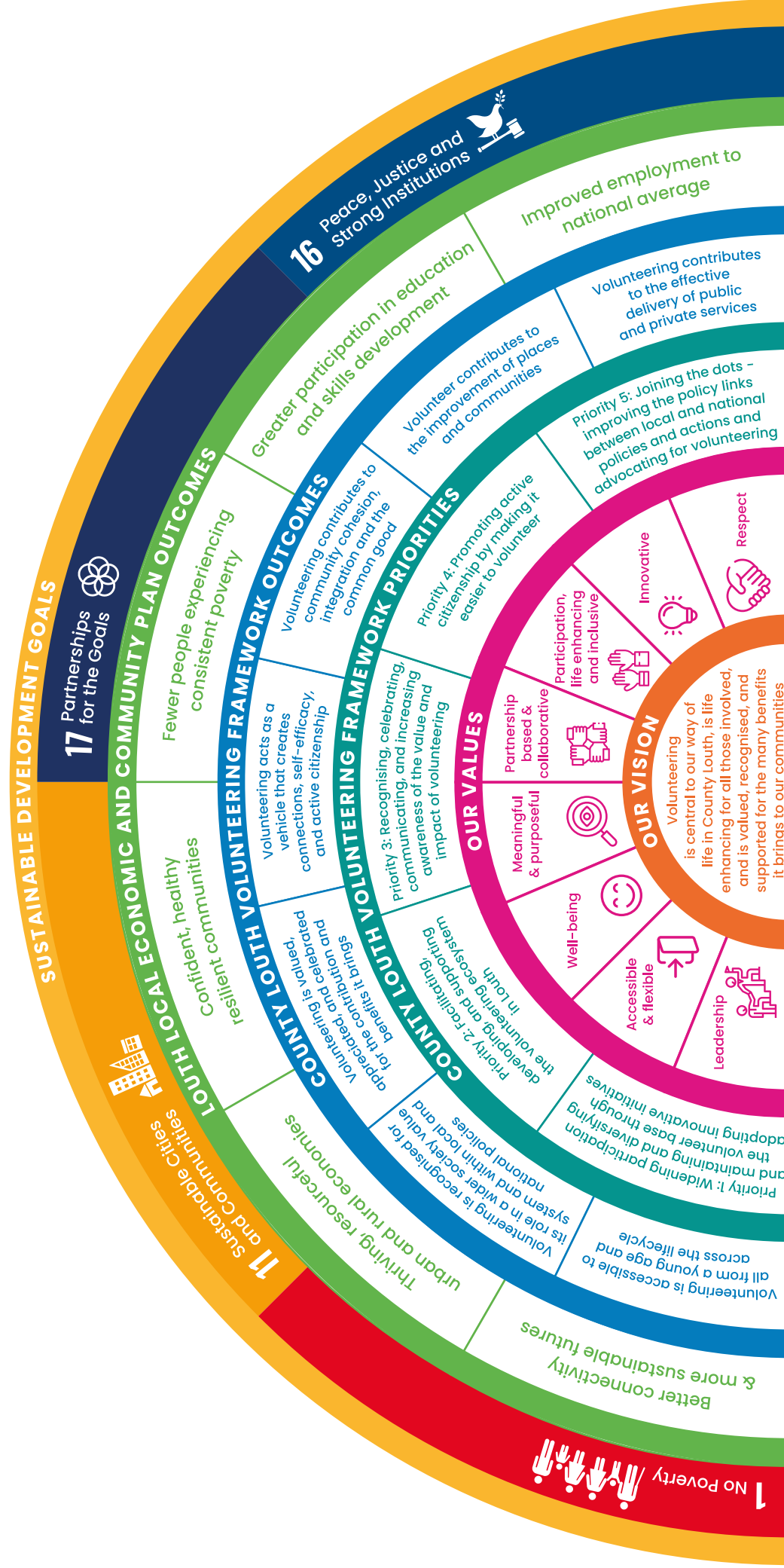
7.0

County Louth Volunteering Framework



County Louth Volunteering Framework

Vision, Values, Priorities and Outcomes



County Louth Volunteering Framework

This Framework was developed based on analysis of the SCOT, the e-survey results and the research undertaken resulting in the development of vision, mission, values, priorities and outcomes,

Framework Definition of volunteering

The County Louth Volunteering Framework accepts the Department of Rural and Community Development's (DRCD) definition of volunteering in the National Volunteering Strategy for Ireland 2021-2025.

"Volunteering is any time willingly given, either formally or informally, for the common good and without financial gain."

The County Louth Volunteering Framework also acknowledges that this definition covers a wide range of 'volunteering activities' for example

- formal volunteering taking place within organisations (including institutions and agencies);

- informal volunteering, that which takes place outside an organisational setting; and
- the individual who, in many cases, does not consider what they do as volunteering but sees his or her actions as 'lending a hand' or 'being neighbourly'.

The County Louth Volunteering Framework accepts what is meant by 'common good'

- Actions taken in order to benefit society as a whole
- Volunteering undertaken with free will and outside of the immediate family

The County Louth Volunteering Framework accepts what is meant by 'financial gain'?

- Volunteers are not financially better-off through volunteering and often volunteer at their own expense.
- Payment or reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses is not financial gain.



Framework Vision and Mission

Based on analysis of the SCOT, the e-survey results and the research undertaken the following vision, mission, values and strategic priorities and actions have been developed.

Vision for the Louth Volunteering Framework <i>Volunteering is central to our way of life in County Louth, is life enhancing for all those involved, and is valued, recognised, and supported for the many benefits it brings to our communities</i>	Mission of the Louth Volunteering Framework <i>To build a supportive environment and conditions that create accessible, meaningful, quality, and diverse experiences and opportunities for everyone within County Louth to volunteer. We support and demonstrate how volunteering contributes to creating vibrant, inclusive, sustainable, proud, and safe communities in our county and how it offers opportunities for all.</i>
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Framework Values

Louth LCDC wishes to deliver the County Louth Volunteering Framework based on the following core values as outlined in Figure 13 below. These demonstrate how we do things in our county and how we intend to work with others to embed volunteering ever further.

Figure 13: Louth Volunteering Strategy Value Base

Our Values ... which means

Leadership 	We are passionate about volunteering. We will listen to our volunteers and VIOs and ensure their voices are heard in shaping new volunteering opportunities in County Louth. We will garner this leadership to help increase the visibility of volunteering within our society
Accessible and flexible 	We promote accessible and flexible formal and informal volunteering opportunities for all, that people enjoy, that fit with their lifestyles and personal circumstances and in which they can create friendships and connections with others
Well-being 	We recognise that volunteering contributes to the quality of life and physical and mental well-being of our citizens. We encourage the sustainable use of our natural and built assets by VIOs as a way of contributing to the sense of health and wellbeing in our society and the strength of our civic society.

Our Values ... which means

Meaningful and purposeful 	We will strive to ensure all volunteering experiences are of a high quality, are meaningful and purposeful and contribute to the personal development and community benefits of those who engage.
Partnership based and collaborative 	Working together can enhance the role of volunteering in the delivery of services. County Louth Volunteering Framework requires collaboration and partnership across the public, community, voluntary and private sectors. This requires an increased understanding of how each sector currently supports volunteering and the conditions required within which new and enhanced volunteering opportunities can flourish. We will match the needs of our communities with the skills of our vibrant private and public sectors. We will encourage Corporate Social Responsibility measures within these sectors to increase the skills set available through and within County Louth's volunteering bank.
Participation, life enhancing and inclusive 	We recognise that everyone in our community has something to give - we just need to help them work out what that is and how to contribute their volunteer time to others. We need to create the conditions so that everyone can contribute from a young age and throughout their lives.
Innovative 	We will deliver our Framework in innovative ways that encourages more participation in volunteering at times and in places that suit peoples' everyday lives. We will test new ways of doing things and are not afraid to take calculated risks. We will build on the innovative thinking of our volunteers and co-design projects with them.
Respect 	We respect the time that volunteers give to others and the activities to which they contribute through volunteering. We encourage the fair treatment of all of our volunteers. We are open and honest with all our stakeholders. We value all types of volunteering - both formal and informal. We thank volunteers, we acknowledge and provide feedback to them about their contribution. We will ensure our volunteers are appreciated for their efforts in making County Louth a better place for our communities.

Framework Priorities

The Strategic Priorities for the County Louth Volunteering Framework are outlined below. The priorities identified are all interconnected and interdependent and cut across the public, community, and private sectors. Delivery requires a co-ordinated, joined up and action-oriented approach by multiple partners. This will develop and open up new opportunities, through innovative thinking and with a view to address barriers and challenges identified in the research. Through working together much more can be achieved. The delivery of this Framework will require leadership and commitment.

Louth LCDC will commit to leading in the delivery of this Framework with Louth Volunteer Centre, LCDC partners and others as required.

Figure 14: County Louth Volunteering Framework Strategic Priorities



Framework Outcomes

The following are the outcomes that a successful delivery of this Framework should achieve. We will measure our activities and impacts against these outcomes to validate and evidence our work.

Figure 15: Louth Volunteering Framework Outcomes

Louth Volunteering Framework Outcomes

1

Volunteering is accessible to all from a young age and across the lifecycle

2

Volunteering is recognised for its role in a wider society value system and within local and national policies

3

Volunteering is valued, appreciated, and celebrated for the contribution and benefits it brings

4

Volunteering acts as a vehicle that creates connections, self-efficacy, and active citizenship

5

Volunteering contributes to community cohesion, integration and the common good

6

Volunteering has contributed to the improvement of places and communities

7

Volunteering contributes to the effective delivery of public and private services



Louth Local Economic and Community Plan Outcomes

The County Louth Volunteering Framework contributes to the outcomes of the Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2016–2022, namely:

Figure 16: Louth LECP Outcomes



Sustainable Development Goals

As per the National Volunteering Strategy, the Louth Volunteer Framework, through its objectives and actions, supports the Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2019–2020 (and its successor) as well as the Anti-Poverty, Social Inclusion and Community Development Action Plan identified in the Programme for Government. Our Framework priorities and outcomes are mapped to and support these goals.

Figure 17: Sustainable Development Goals



8.0

Recommendations and Proposed Implementation



Based on the research undertaken, the following recommendations and proposed implementation under each priority have emerged.

Figure 18: Recommendations and Proposed Implementation

Strategic Priority	Recommendations and Proposed Implementation
Widening participation and maintaining and diversifying the volunteer base and through adopting innovative initiatives 	Everyone has something to give but yet there is still much volunteering potential within our communities, as yet untapped. We recognise that sometimes people just need to be asked to volunteer, and more than often they will. We will build a greater awareness of the personal satisfaction and mental and physical well-being that people experience as a result of volunteering and promote this to new and potential volunteers. We want to empower young people by harnessing their energy, vitality, and skills to create new volunteering opportunities that link to their lives, the struggles, and opportunities that they encounter and their voices that need to be heard. We wish to broaden and deepen the volunteer base in County Louth, more reflective of the demographics of our increasingly diverse community and with a particular emphasis on those who are underrepresented in volunteering. In particular, we need more young people, men, ethnic communities, older people, those from disadvantaged communities, those from rural areas, and people from the travelling community as well as creating more corporate and public sector volunteering opportunities. We believe that this can contribute to a stronger and more cohesive community in County Louth. We will explore the idea of establishing a think Tank within the LCDC (inclusive of some VIOs) to discuss how volunteering could contribute to improved service delivery and how VIOs could be supported to contribute to innovative thinking around this – themes like better energy, sustainability, age friendly activities, emergency planning etc.
Facilitating, developing, and supporting the volunteering ecosystem in Louth 	The volunteering ecosystem in County Louth is wide and varied. We want to support the Volunteer Involving Organisations in our County to be the best that they can be. We will invest in their skills, competencies, and governance to do so. We will support the widening of the number and type of Volunteer Involving Organisations in County Louth. We wish to build on the huge bank of skills that lie within the corporate and public sectors and will encourage them to take a more proactive role in contributing to our volunteer ecosystem. We will explore the benefits of establishing a Louth Volunteer Involving Organisation Forum for chairs of VIO committees to share experiences and good practice on volunteering and to link formally with the LCDC through the PPN. We will establish a Louth Volunteering Framework co-delivery group. We will develop and deliver a practically focused Capacity Building Programme (online and face to face) for Volunteer Involving Organisation that is theme based (e.g., those involved in homelessness or sport) We will work with DkIT to develop modules linked to a new formal qualification in volunteering that can be built on over time and which can increase the skills and qualifications of volunteer managers and volunteers. We will consider how to introduce innovation into volunteer management. Examples could include engagement of an Animation Officer within LVC to encourage new volunteer opportunities and engage with existing groups like the Section 35 funded groups and the CSP funded groups to think differently about how they articulate their voices on policy matters and how they contribute to better service delivery locally given their hands-on experience. We will work collaboratively with the PPN, the Peace and Reconciliation Partnership, social enterprises, and Louth LEADER Partnership to increase volunteering opportunities. We will host funding clinics for VIOs throughout the year with a view to increasing the funding drawn down by VIOs in support of volunteers. We will increase the quality and openness of the volunteer experience through contributing to and implementing the code of conduct for volunteers.

Strategic Priority

Recommendations and Proposed Implementation

Recognising, celebrating, communicating, and increasing awareness of the value and impact of volunteering



Volunteering has the power and energy to affect change across a wide range of social, economic, environmental, and cultural aspects of our life here in County Louth.

Our County is full of friendly and giving people but sometimes the difference that their efforts make to society are not fully acknowledged or understood. We will identify actions that will recognise and celebrate this effort not only through one off ceremonies but through on-going communication with the wider society in Louth about what they do.

We will support the identification of a volunteer champion for County Louth.

The value, benefits and impact of volunteering needs to be more fully researched, described, and communicated so that its role is recognised by all. Together we will examine how best we can communicate this value through a range of different communication channels relevant to our diverse society.

Together, we will increase our evidence base on the value of volunteering and increase awareness among the public about the contribution that volunteering makes to the effective delivery of public services. We will work with VIOs to effectively measure the impact of what they do.

Promoting active citizenship by making it easier to volunteer



We aim to make it easier for people to volunteer in County Louth, addressing some of the barriers that people sometimes encounter. We recognise and acknowledge that these barriers are multi-faceted and cut across a range of issues. This includes addressing practical issues linked to accessibility, time, rurality, the meeting of volunteer expenses, the lack of information and language barriers; structural issues related to technology and broadband issues, bureaucracy, lack of induction or support, inflexibility from VIOs and tasks not linked to skills; through to emotional issues linked to volunteer burn out and feeling undervalued, lack of confidence, stereotypes and now knowing what to expect. We will provide capacity building support for VIOs and others in the private and public sector to address these barriers in a fair and equitable manner including the implementation of a code of conduct for volunteers.

We will support Volunteer Involving Organisations to access the right people, in the right places, at the right time and to have systems in place that make it easier for them to do so and within which existing and potential volunteers can easily engage.

We recognise that people volunteer at different times of their lives for different reasons and for different lengths of times. We respect this and will help VIOs to plan for these different types of engagement by their volunteers. We will support volunteers to engage in volunteering from a young age and throughout their lives and improve access to opportunities for all.

We recognise and will support VIOs to offer opportunities around the different types of volunteering in which people are interested e.g., short term projects; long term planned engagement; fundraising; virtual volunteering; event planning or stewarding; administrative work; social media support; befriending support; mentoring; advocacy; sitting on boards or committees; PR or research to name but a few. We will examine how best to improve volunteer matching skills.

We will support the continued publication of Information about volunteering opportunities in easy to access ways.

We wish to ensure that every volunteer has a great volunteer experience, is treated well, is managed fairly and appropriately, and is appreciated for their efforts.

Strategic Priority

Recommendations and Proposed Implementation

Joining the dots
– improving
the policy links
between local
and national
policies and
actions and
advocating for
volunteering



We recognise that volunteering is relevant to all sectors within County Louth – public, private and community and voluntary. We will work together to “join the dots” so that together we can maximise the benefits and the huge contribution that volunteering brings to our communities and the common good it creates. We wish to increase awareness of the central role volunteering plays in service delivery.

Through the LCDC we will build a more cross sectoral approach to volunteering with greater collaboration between different stakeholders to help address stubborn issues in our county.

We will find ways to more effectively use the lived experiences of our volunteers to inform policy and feed this up through the LCDC and on to government policy makers – recognising that the development and implementation of policy requires a cross cutting approach.

We will aim to increase understanding and awareness among our public representatives, services deliverers, policy makers, decision makers VIOs and volunteers of the impact and benefits of investing and supporting volunteering in County Louth.

We will support stakeholders to proof their actions against the Sustainable Development Goals.

We will support and inform those whose role it is to advocate on wider national issues and policies that make it easier for people to volunteers – e.g., public liability insurance costs etc.

We will undertake more detailed research on the impact of volunteering across Louth and within the volunteering ecosystem e.g., health; children’s services; sport; arts, older people etc.

We will identify key service areas across County Louth where an increase in collaboration between different agencies and VIOs could make a difference to service delivery and the quality of life of citizens here in County Louth.

We will promote cross border volunteering across relevant projects and the contribution this brings to cohesion and community relations.

We will develop a marketing campaign reaching people through their own networks and advocate for improved and more long-term funding for volunteering.

9.0

Implementing the Framework



Implementing the Framework

The County Louth Volunteering Framework 2020–2023 is cross cutting and requires commitment and support from a wide range of stakeholders. In order to move forward it is recommended that

- A co-delivery group under the auspices of the LCDC is established which would meet once a quarter to drive the implementation of the Framework
- The LCDC should appoint a chairperson
- The LCDC should agree a Terms of Reference and a mechanism for selecting membership
- Louth Volunteer Centre should act as secretariat for this group
- The LCDC should encourage its partners to adopt the vision, value base, outcomes and priorities of the Framework and work with the LCDC and LVC to create a delivery plan
- The Public Participation Network should act as the conduit through which the VIO Forum communicates with the Council and other statutory bodies on the LCDC
- Louth Volunteer Centre should act as secretariat for the VIO Forum

LCDC should:

- Develop initiatives with its public sector partners to support volunteering, with a focus on improved service delivery and support that helps sustain vital local volunteering infrastructure



Louth Volunteer Centre should:

- Support initiatives across the VIO and private and public sectors that encourages volunteering for all and addresses the barriers faced by Volunteers and that improve the capacity of VIOs
- Promote the national volunteering database – the I-VOL website and App



Volunteer Involving Organisations should:

- Adopt the Louth Volunteering Framework and work with the LCDC and LVC to create a delivery plan that achieves the vision
- Take an active part in the VIO Forum and the co-delivery group if requested
- Build links with other VIOs, public and private sector bodies and the general public
- Seek ways of measuring the impact of their work
- Examine ways to increase and diversify their offer and their volunteers



Businesses and public sector employers should:

- Adopt the Louth Volunteering Framework and work with the LCDC and LVC to create a delivery plan that achieves the vision
- Support staff to consider volunteering as part of their personal and skills development
- Engage with local VIOs which increase their links within the community
- Proactively share their skills with local VIOs

The Framework should align itself with the Sustainable Development Goals National Development Plan 2018–2020 (and its successor), National Volunteering Strategy 2021–2025, the Strategy for Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities 2019–2022, the National Social Enterprise Strategy for Ireland 2019–2022, and the Migrant Integration Strategy.

Delivery Plan

Some indicative high-level actions identified through the consultation and engagement process for this Framework are outlined in Annex 1 and can be used as required as the building blocks of the Delivery Plan moving forward.



Annex 1: High Level Indicative Actions



The following indicative actions reflect the wide range of suggestions identified through the consultation and engagement process for this Framework. These should be considered when developing the delivery plan moving forward.

Figure 19: High Level Indicative Actions

Strategic Priority

High Level Indicative Actions

Widening participation and maintaining and diversifying the volunteer base and through adopting innovative initiatives



- Increasing awareness of the value of young people in volunteering positions and the need to and value of reducing the volunteering age
- Establish a Task and Finish Group with CYPSC, Secondary Schools, Foroige and Youth Work Ireland, Louth with a view to increasing the number of young people including Transition Year students placed with Volunteer Organisations with a view to making this a longer-term volunteer commitment.
- Provide relevant volunteer support materials for students and teachers on volunteering with a VIO and for VIOs on how to engage with young people
- Deliver workshops for TY Co-ordinators on benefits of volunteering
- Seek a volunteer advocate in each school
- Develop a youth volunteering social action programme with associated resources, focused on issues that matter to young people, designed, and developed by, for and with young people with a view to shaping change in their lives and communities and creating role models who can inspire others. Initiate in a range of settings including schools, in youth groups and through community development groups/ tidy towns etc
- Advocate for greater recognition of volunteering and its value and benefits as part of the school curriculum
- Advocate for a Credit system for volunteering engagement for students – integrated into curriculum across all subjects – continuous assessment
- Continue to deliver talks in schools, PTAs, and youth clubs on the value of youth volunteering
- Engage with the re-established Migrant Intercultural Network to develop a BME volunteer engagement programme
- Engage with Age Friendly Louth to support initiatives that remove barriers to participation and provide more opportunities for the continued involvement of people as they age in all aspects of cultural, economic, and social life in their communities according to their needs, preferences, and capacities
- Engage with Travellers support groups in Louth to identify barriers to volunteering and how this could be addressed
- Work with the PPN and Council's community services to identify ways of encouraging more local volunteering in rural towns and villages and in estates
- Designate a Volunteer Week for County Louth, information open days for those needing new volunteers, taster volunteer opportunities and a "join a board" as volunteer director drive
- Establish a Task and Finish Group of the LCDC to discuss how to encourage more employee volunteering from within the public sector through providing volunteer policy templates and inspirational case studies
- Work with the local chambers of commerce to encourage private sector companies to develop volunteer policies and encourage more employee volunteering through providing volunteer policy templates and case studies
- Examine how Chamber of Commerce could introduce a shop discount scheme for volunteers to encourage more volunteering in Louth
- Establish a Task and Finish Group of the LCDC to discuss how to encourage more employee volunteering from within the public sector through providing volunteer policy templates and inspirational case studies

Strategic Priority

High Level Indicative Actions

	• Work with the local chambers of commerce to encourage private sector companies to develop volunteer policies and encourage more employee volunteering through providing volunteer policy templates and case studies • Examine how Chamber of Commerce could introduce a shop discount scheme for volunteers to encourage more volunteering in Louth • Establish a think Tank within the LCDC (inclusive of some VIOs) to discuss how volunteering could contribute to improved service delivery and how VIOs could be supported to contribute to innovative thinking around this – themes like better energy, sustainability, age friendly activities etc.
Facilitating, developing, and supporting the volunteering ecosystem in Louth 	• Establish a Louth VIO Forum for chairs and others on VIO committees to share experiences and good practice on volunteering • Establish a Louth Volunteering Alumni to keep people in touch with the latest thinking and encourage them to volunteer again as new opportunities emerge • Engage in the Louth Volunteering Framework co-delivery group • Establish a Peer-to-Peer Support/ Mentor Programme/ buddy programme on sharing skills about volunteering • Develop and deliver a practically focused Capacity Building Programme (online and face to face) for VIOs that is theme based (e.g., those involved in homelessness or sport) and with a focus on all aspects of volunteering including promotion, volunteer recruitment and retention, financial management, governance, management, leadership, and succession planning • Encourage VIOs to develop “volunteer placement job descriptions” for volunteer roles • Provide a shared “Louth Volunteer Manager” service to VIOs to support on issues like compliance, being “volunteer ready” and on good governance • Ensure a good rota system/ buddy system is in place within VIOs to ensure volunteers do not get burnt out • Provide training on good governance to trustees, as well as matching service to recruit new board members • Introduce some social media training for VIOs – delivered once a year • Support VIOs in County Louth to develop Codes of Practice that outline the role and responsibility of the volunteer and the VIO within the VIO so as to clarify expectations and improve working relationships • VIOs to embrace relevant Volunteering Ireland Quality Standards and continuous quality improvements into their work and offer relevant support to VIOs where appropriate • Encourage all VIOs to have a covering expenses budget to ensure this does not become a barrier to engagement
Recognising, celebrating, communicating, and increasing awareness of the value and impact of volunteering	• Profile and measure Louth’s volunteering activities to identify where gaps exist and to explore how these are best addressed • Collect the CSO data from the national household survey each year on volunteering in Louth. Set benchmark and drive improvements from this data on a yearly basis • Undertake more detailed research on the impact of volunteering across Louth and within the volunteering ecosystem e.g., health; children’s services; sport; arts etc. • Undertake more detailed research with those who do not volunteer currently to get a more detailed picture of what actions could support them to engage in volunteering • Develop a marketing campaign reaching people through their own networks on the value of Volunteering to Louth highlighting “unsung heroes” • Organise “meet the volunteer days” in local towns and villages

Strategic Priority

High Level Indicative Actions



- Organise volunteer fairs in schools, DkIT
- Organise one large-scale high-profile volunteer recruitment event each year
- In partnership with council and the PPN deliver a county wide recognition awards event each year to celebrate and thank volunteers for their contribution
- Increase awareness among council and other government agencies about how volunteering can be woven more effectively into their service delivery plans but not at the expense of people's jobs
- Advocate for some contributory developmental funding from Council and other LCDC Partners for VIOs (alongside other funding) to enable them to deliver their volunteering programmes (e.g., covering elements like cost of training and development, recruitment, mentoring, shadowing others, and on-going management and support), and where it is demonstrated that it links to improved service delivery of council services
- Identify key service areas across County Louth where an increase in collaboration between different agencies and VIOs could make a difference to service delivery and the quality of life of citizens locally
- Increase awareness among VIOs about different types of volunteering opportunities including virtual volunteering, micro volunteering, corporate volunteering partnerships, one off as well as longer term volunteering
- Produce an annual report on volunteering in Louth and its impact
- Publish the results of the Tidy Towns report on the impact of Tidy Towns funding in Louth (circa 1.4m of economic value)
- Promote cross border volunteering across relevant projects and the contribution this brings to cohesion and community relations
- Raise the profile of the role that volunteers play in the development and delivery of town and village and sustainability-based plans

Promoting active
citizenship by
making it easier
to volunteer



- Promote the national volunteering database – the I-VOL website and app
- Encourage VIOs to upload all opportunities
- Develop a Campaign to recruit volunteers in Louth
- Improve pipeline planning by VIOs to enhance the volunteering engagement process with potential volunteers
- Advocate for streamlining of pre-volunteering requirements like Garda Vetting
- Advocate for insurance cost reduction through the Alliance for Insurance Reform and investigate collective buying of insurance options for VIOs in Louth
- Undertake focus groups with underrepresented groups of volunteers (men, youth, BME communities, people with a disability) and identify ways of matching their skills with opportunities among VIOs in Louth
- Through the PPN, develop a Volunteer Matters campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the value and importance of “giving something back”
- Increase awareness of the diversity of existing volunteer opportunities in the County through short case studies on the LCDC Partner websites
- Diversify the type of VIOs engaged in volunteering in Louth.
- Develop a Louth Skills and time match programme for volunteers and VIOs in Louth and explore how technology (volunteer management software) could be employed to assist with this.
- Build a mobile app for volunteers to access and provide information to volunteers

Strategic Priority

High Level Indicative Actions

Joining the dots
– improving
the policy links
between local
and national
policies and
actions and
advocating for
volunteering



- Through the LCDC, increase awareness of the central role volunteering plays in service delivery and of the impact and benefits of investing and supporting volunteering in County Louth.
- Through the LCDC build a more cross sectoral approach to volunteering with greater collaboration between different stakeholders to help address stubborn issues in our county with a focus on prevention
- Identify key service areas across County Louth where an increase in collaboration between different agencies and VIOs could make a difference to service delivery and the quality of life of citizens here in County Louth.
- Use the lived experiences of our volunteers to inform policy and feed this up through the LCDC and on to government policy makers
- Support VIOs to proof their actions against the Sustainable Development Goals
- Support and inform those whose role it is to advocate on wider national issues and policies that make it easier for people to volunteers – e.g., public liability insurance costs etc.
- Undertake more detailed research on the impact of volunteering across Louth and within the volunteering ecosystem e.g., health; children's services; sport; arts, older people etc.
- Promote cross border volunteering across relevant projects and the contribution this brings to cohesion and community relations.
- Develop a marketing campaign reaching people through their own networks and advocate for improved and more long-term funding for volunteering

Appendices

See separate document available to view at www.volunteerlouth.ie/home/volunteering-framework



Contact Details



Louth Volunteer Centre
www.volunteerlouth.ie



Leader
www.countylouthleader.com



Louth LEADER Partnership
<https://louthleaderpartnership.ie/>



**Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland**

Government of Ireland
<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-rural-and-community-development/>



LCDC/Louth County Council
www.louthcoco.ie

