

# An Ireland Where Volunteering Thrives

Volunteer Ireland Strategic Plan  
2023–2027



**Volunteer  
Ireland**  
Obair Dheonach Éireann



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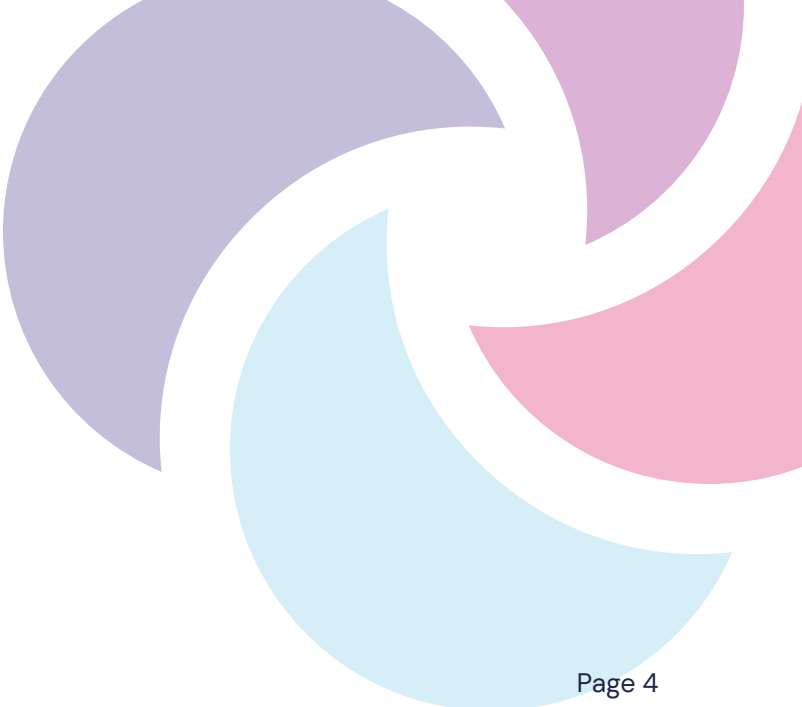
## **Foreword**

**Volunteer Ireland has grown and achieved a lot in the last five years. We were the leading force behind the government's National Volunteering Strategy, we played a critical role in the national response to Covid-19, and we increased statutory funding to volunteering from €3.1m to €5.3m between 2018 and 2022.**

**Looking ahead, volunteering faces many challenges. The way people want to volunteer is changing, many volunteer involving organisations are struggling to engage volunteers, and we need to actively work to ensure volunteering is inclusive and accessible. As an organisation, we have a strong foundation as well as a talented team in place, to rise up to these challenges.**

**This strategic plan is ambitious and will build on our strengths. It does not reflect a radical change from our previous strategy, but rather it is about evolving to a changing world and continuing to deliver for our stakeholders and volunteering. I look forward to seeing what Volunteer Ireland achieves over the next five years.**

**– Carmel Murphy, Chairperson**



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# Introduction

**We believe that volunteering is a force for good, and central to creating and sustaining an inclusive society. As the national volunteer development organisation our purpose is to value, support and strengthen volunteering.**

**As an organisation, we champion volunteering.**

**Our strategic goals are to advocate for volunteering; to support the Volunteer Centres; to develop meaningful volunteering; to raise the profile of volunteering; and to grow and sustain an excellent organisation, consistent with our values.**

# Highlights from Volunteer Ireland's Strategic Plan

## 2018 -2022



### The first National Volunteering Strategy published

Twofold increase in  
government funding to  
volunteering

## WE TRAINED 6,920



Individuals building their capacity and  
understanding of good volunteer management



## €8,134,247

Worth of media  
coverage

## 5,531

### EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

Contributing 24,662  
volunteer hours



## EIGHT

New Volunteer  
Centres opened



## 2,656

Thank you cards sent  
to Volunteer Ireland  
Awards nominees

# TWO MILLION

Volunteer hours  
recorded on I-VOL

### Partnered in 7 Erasmus+ projects

# Context

This strategic plan builds on the work of previous plans and our achievements as an organisation in recent years. This includes the publication of the first ever National Volunteering Strategy and the development of eight new Volunteer Centres so that there is now a Volunteer Centre in every county in the Republic of Ireland.

We began work on this strategic plan as the country emerged from the restrictions imposed in response to Covid-19. Volunteers came to the fore during the pandemic. We sat as partners with Government to plan and deliver vital services across all communities and sectors. This recognition of the key role and work of volunteers should not be forgotten.

As we emerged from Covid-19, volunteers were asked to step up again, to support the government in responding to the arrival of people fleeing the war in Ukraine and a growing number of people from other parts of the world affected by war, climate change and conflict.

This is not the only challenge faced by those who volunteer, and by those who support people and communities to volunteer. Economic challenges now loom large with high inflation and the cost of living crisis, which may have an impact on our funding streams and could challenge volunteering at many levels.

We are also living through a period of rapid and considerable social change. An ageing population, which at the same time is becoming increasingly diverse, creates opportunities and poses challenges for us, but they are challenges which we are willing and able to embrace.

Volunteering itself is changing. Now, many volunteers want to bring their skills, sometimes on an occasional or ad hoc basis, rather than committing to an ongoing or long-term role. This requires a new response by all of us who work to ensure that volunteering experiences are meaningful and sustainable.

We are lucky to work in partnership with a national network of 29 Volunteer Centres, that have a presence and reach in every county. An important part of our role is to support the Volunteer Centres, although our role and potential is not limited to this.

Harnessing the energy of formal and informal volunteering and balancing that energy with supporting quality and meaningful volunteering, is always a priority for us.

## Methodology

This strategic plan was developed using the Appreciative Inquiry methodology, over a period of months in the second half of 2022. Appreciative Inquiry is an approach to organisational change that focuses on strengths to build on. The promise of this way of working is that through engagement, the process itself generates self-determined change, and helps the organisation move towards a shared vision of the future and the actions needed to make it happen.

We conducted a review of Volunteer Ireland's achievements, facilitated Appreciative Inquiry workshops, interviewed key external stakeholders and undertook a document review.



# Who we are

**Volunteer Ireland is the national organisation that promotes, supports and advocates for volunteering in Ireland.**

**We work with a range of stakeholders to make volunteering accessible, inclusive and of high quality.**



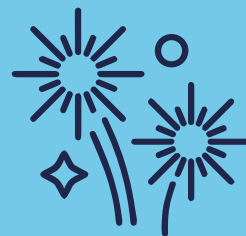
**We celebrate volunteering and communicate its impact to Government and the wider public.**



**We support the network of Volunteer Centres and work closely with them to ensure volunteering thrives at local and national level.**



**We build capacity in organisations and companies to create meaningful volunteering experiences.**



**We advocate for volunteering so that its value is recognised.**



## Vision

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**Our vision is an Ireland where volunteering thrives.**

## Mission

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**Our mission is to promote, support and advocate for excellent, accessible and inclusive volunteering.**



## Values

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Our values guide us and our work as an organisation. They are:

### Integrity

We place honesty and fairness at the centre of our activities and uphold the highest professional standards.

### Ambition

We challenge ourselves, bring innovation, and strive for excellence in everything we do, to achieve the best outcomes for ourselves and all our stakeholders.

### Inclusion

We recognise and acknowledge the dignity, worth and potential of people and their ideas, experiences and talents.

### Collaboration

We listen, seek and maintain partnerships, and actively participate in the exchange of knowledge and ideas.





# Our strategic goals

1. Advocate for volunteering
2. Support the Volunteer Centres
3. Develop meaningful volunteering
4. Raise the profile of volunteering
5. Grow and sustain an excellent organisation, consistent with our values

## Goal One

# Advocate for volunteering

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## Outcomes

*By 2027, we will see:*

1. Volunteering supported through the development and implementation of a second National Volunteering Strategy.
2. Changes to policy that positively affect volunteering (e.g. in areas such as education, health).
3. Barriers to volunteering reduced (e.g. insurance, Garda vetting).
4. Government demonstrating their commitment by investing resources in volunteering.

## Goal Two

# Support the Volunteer Centres

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## Outcomes

*By 2027, we will see:*

1. The national volunteering database enhanced to meet the needs of Volunteer Centres.
2. Proactive and responsive activities taking place to address the training and continuous professional development needs of Volunteer Centre personnel.
3. Enhanced capacity of Volunteer Centres through specialised support in advocacy, communications, training and capacity building, quality and administration.
4. Greater awareness among decision makers and funders of the vital role Volunteer Centres play as independent organisations that advance volunteering.

## Goal Three

# Develop meaningful volunteering

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## Outcomes

*By 2027, we will see:*

1. People having an opportunity to engage in volunteering that meets their needs and the needs of their community.
2. Volunteer involving organisations having the knowledge, skills and competence to engage volunteers.
3. Volunteer involving organisations encouraged and supported to engage a diverse range of volunteers.
4. Companies and organisations having the knowledge, skills and competence to engage in meaningful employee volunteering.

## Goal Four

# Raise the profile of volunteering

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## Outcomes

*By 2027, we will see:*

1. Greater understanding among public representatives, policy makers and decision makers of the impact and value of volunteering.
2. Increased awareness among individuals, families and groups of how their skills, interests and talents can contribute to their community through volunteering.
3. Increased awareness among under-represented groups that volunteering is a diverse and accessible activity open to all people.
4. Volunteering recognised and valued in the media and by the public for the contribution it makes to society.



## Goal Five

# Grow and sustain an excellent organisation, consistent with our values

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## Outcomes

*By 2027, we will see:*

1. Volunteer Ireland as an inclusive organisation whose staff and volunteers are reflective of Irish society.
2. Volunteer Ireland having sufficient funding and experienced staff to ensure sustainability, a high-quality service and the achievement of our goals.
3. Volunteer Ireland having maintained full compliance with all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, including the Charities Governance Code.
4. Volunteer Ireland being a safe, supportive and enjoyable place to work.





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