



Tales from the TSI Network

Supporting Volunteering For All

All across Scotland

supporting the sector in inclusive volunteering – Volunteer Glasgow



Glasgow has seen large scale growth in the multi-cultural dynamics of the city, which is not yet reflected in the volunteer force. This is not due to prejudices within organisations. Quite simply they haven't adjusted yet to the rapidly changing demographic landscape - people who bring a massive untapped pool of resources, including highly skilled individuals keen to contribute to their local community.

In a bid to increase volunteering opportunities and support organisations to improve the diversity of their volunteer workforce, **Glasgow's Volunteering Charter** was launched by Volunteer Glasgow in June 2016. The team work closely in Glasgow and the west with national charity, Victim Support Scotland, which provides a range of support and information services to victims and witnesses of crime. The charity involves volunteers in almost all areas of its work and has signed up to deliver on the two Charter pledges - to create and expand appropriate opportunities for volunteering within the organisation, and ensure opportunities are accessible to all sections of the community reflecting the city's demographics.

How Volunteer Glasgow has helped the voluntary sector

When Victim Support Scotland first came to Volunteer Glasgow it had no clear focus for its volunteer programme, which had developed organically over the years and, as is often the case when that happens, lacked a bit of overall structure and focus. Its management wanted to make a root and branch review, adopting a more structured approach and streamlining its volunteer strategy. The charity knew it didn't have a huge problem attracting volunteers but wanted to appeal to a broader section of the community, including greater diversity in ethnicity and involving more young people.



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Volunteer Glasgow developed bespoke training for Victim Support Scotland’s senior management, staff and volunteers. As key to effective volunteering is defining roles effectively in the first place, the team facilitated their redesign, starting from scratch to tighten up and improve the structure from receptionists through to data processors. They also looked specifically at volunteer recruitment, as promotional posters did not reach out to the people who they felt were underrepresented in the organisation. These were redesigned to better reflect the new target audience.

Using its many years of experience, Volunteer Glasgow encouraged connections between the charity and, for examples, schools and colleges and organisations representing equalities groups such as the Scottish Refugee Council. While Victim Support Scotland had asylum seekers and refugees accessing its services they hadn’t previously tapped into the community as a source of volunteers.

With experience over the past few years of potential tensions between paid staff and volunteers, Volunteer Glasgow also facilitated sessions with staff to alleviate concerns and develop awareness of how important it is that both parties understand parameters and what is expected of them in their respective roles. Following this an online closed forum was devised for volunteers and staff, allowing them to feed into the decision-making process, as well as being kept clearly informed. Given the hundreds of volunteers that the charity works with, the forum now ensures information cascades seamlessly throughout the organisation, informing everyone simultaneously.

Volunteer Glasgow has supported Victim Support Scotland through pledge one and the charity achieved its Charter status last year. Ultimately, this has been about helping the charity increase its capacity to deliver services and support more victims, while ensuring that no one is exploited in the process.

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volunteerglasgow.org

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network of Third Sector Interfaces
www.vascotland.org