

Leeds Volunteering Strategy

Making Leeds the best city for volunteers



Our vision

Leeds will be the best city for volunteering. A city that celebrates volunteering in all its forms, where it's easy for people to find ways to make a difference and get involved.

All partners work together to support an innovative and diverse volunteering environment.

Our values

The following values have been established by the Leeds Volunteer Managers' Network and have been used to underpin this strategy:



Enabling people to grow



Collaborative



Inclusive and accessible



Supportive



Innovative

Purpose

- This strategy sets out key areas for development:
- Volunteering infrastructure and support for volunteers over the coming five years.
- Address barriers to volunteering.
- Renew and enhance services in ways that enable innovative practice to emerge.
- Develop both *informal* and *formal* volunteering.

Context

- Volunteer numbers are reducing nationally and locally.
- People are limited in terms of time and financial resources and this reduces their ability to volunteer.
- The Leeds State of the Sector report 2022, shows just under 40,000 volunteers including trustees, this represents a decrease from just over 50,000 in 2020.
- In Leeds, we need to strengthen what we know about volunteering - improving this data set features as a strong recommendation within this strategy.

Local context and feedback




Communication



Support existing
volunteers



Clarity about
the role



Simple
application
processes

Better promote the positive impacts that volunteers bring to an organisation, including the skills and knowledge that they bring with them.

Better promote the training, skills and experience that can be gained through volunteering, including the qualifications that can be worked towards, this may also remove the preconception that all volunteers work in a charity shop for a couple of hours a week.

Sometimes when I see a volunteer role advertised it can be quite unclear exactly what it will mean doing. E.g. - "Food Bank Volunteer" - this could be going around picking up collections, it could be staffing the bank/centre itself.

It could be responsibility for finances and management of the bank or a frontline role. So charities could be more specific in their job descriptions for exactly what they're looking for.

Volunteering should not have a cost, I would expect expenses to be covered and this to be done as standard and to be an accessible process.

Charities have to make the recruitment process less complicated. No one wants to complete a lengthy form then go through interview for unpaid work. Please find another way to recruit volunteers. People want to put their time to good use but the recruitment process is a huge barrier.

Further recommendations included:



Flexibility



Recognition



Accessibility



Integration



Inclusion

Ambitions for change



1: Volunteers are at the centre of volunteering in Leeds, they shape and influence volunteering and are valued and recognised.



2: The Leeds volunteering offer is inclusive and creates equity. Our volunteer base is diverse and represents the communities we work with.



3: There are a greater number of volunteers who lead on innovative social action for the benefit of communities in partnership with organisation.



4: Volunteering is well resourced and resources are shared, resulting in strong and effective volunteer management.

Aspiration one

Volunteers are at the centre of volunteering in Leeds, they shape and influence volunteering and are valued and recognised.

Voices of volunteers are heard and we understand their needs and wishes.

Volunteers are valued and their contributions to meaningful social action are recognised.



Aspiration two

The Leeds volunteering offer is inclusive and creates equity. Our volunteer base is diverse and represents the communities we work with.

We reach reach and meet people 'where they are' creating a more diverse volunteer base that brings new skills, insights and lived experience.

Our inclusive practice is of a high standard and well resourced.



Aspiration three

There are a greater number of volunteers who lead on innovative social action for the benefit of communities in partnership with organisations.

We collaborate and share resources while working to ensure that volunteering is invested in so that we can create and support a strong volunteer base.



Aspiration four

Volunteering is well resourced and resources are shared, resulting in strong and effective volunteer management.

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Thank you

Thank you to everyone that has contributed to the development of this strategy and offered their support in achieving its aims.



Get involved

Choose an aspiration and lets make it happen



One: Volunteers are at the centre of volunteering in Leeds, they shape and influence volunteering and are valued and recognised.



Two: The Leeds volunteering offer is inclusive and creates equity. Our volunteer base is diverse and represents the communities we work with.



Three: There are a greater number of volunteers who lead on innovative social action for the benefit of communities in partnership with organisation.



Four: Volunteering is well resourced and resources are shared, resulting in strong and effective volunteer management.