

# Sligo Volunteer Centre

## Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 (5 years)



**Sligo  
Volunteer Centre**

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Sligeach

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# Introduction

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The Sligo Volunteer Centre has been in existence since March 2006, taking an active, lead role in promoting and developing excellence in volunteering in County Sligo. The Centre delivers a wide ranging service providing individual opportunities to people to volunteer their skills and expertise, supporting the work of Volunteering Involving Organisations (VIO's), and enhancing the development of the Volunteer sector in County Sligo. These areas of work include:

- **Reaching out to Sligo** – promoting volunteering (and its benefits) within County Sligo
- **Connecting Volunteers to Opportunities** – assisting potential volunteers to connect with opportunities
- **Reaching in to Volunteering Involving Organisation (VIOs)** – supporting organisations to offer quality volunteering opportunities
- **Building Community Connections** – with wider stakeholders working in the community and voluntary sector in the county

Within these areas of work, activities include maintaining our database of volunteer opportunities, supporting potential volunteers to find appropriate volunteer opportunities, our Garda Vetting Service, training for Volunteer Involving Organisations and the general support and promotion of volunteering activity within County Sligo. In addition, the COVID 19 pandemic has added significant but not insurmountable challenges. The importance of volunteering has been thrust into the limelight as communities and society endeavour to provide a coherent response to the pandemic. Volunteer Involving Organisations County Wide were supported through a variety of COVID specific initiatives including:

- Establishment of reserve Volunteer panels for essential roles eg. Meals on Wheel services, Homeless Hostels
- Speedy Garda Vetting response times
- Assisting VIO's to identify key areas of need eg. support to move services online, support to facilitate online meetings and support to access COVID related grant applications
- Establishment of panels of Volunteers for these key roles named above and matching them to those needs
- Increase in Online Peer support through increased Volunteer Managers Get Togethers through the lockdown period
- Development of 'How to Volunteer Safely' guidelines for Community Call Volunteers and Garda Vetting Service for the Community call

While the COVID pandemic challenged our traditional ways of working it also allowed us to innovate and develop new ways of supporting our existing cohort of service users, expand to new groups and respond to developing needs of both individual volunteers and the wider VIO's. Sligo Volunteer Centre continues to successfully impact on the volunteer community in Sligo.

Over the previous 5 years we have:

- Supported 2,269 Potential Volunteers to navigate volunteering locally
- Initiated 1,050 Volunteer Placements
- Promoted 616 Opportunities to Volunteer
- Processed 1,694 Garda Vetting forms

**Key achievements by year:**

<b>2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responded and adapted to the COVID 19 pandemic, supporting local groups throughout</li> <li>• Participated in the Community Call led by Sligo County Council and involving key local agencies</li> <li>• Adapted to COVID</li> <li>• Moved to a central premises</li> <li>• Declared Compliance with the Charities Regulator Governance Code</li> </ul>
<b>2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Won Best Governance Initiative in the Good Governance Awards</li> <li>• Collaboration with Sligo County Council, Sligo PPN, Sligo LEADER &amp; MSLETB to co host a large event for Community &amp; Voluntary organisations called Get Funding Ready. We also collaborated to develop a coordinated calendar of training events for the community sector in Sligo</li> </ul>
<b>2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported VIO's in Sligo through hosting Carmichael Centre Governance Workshops around the County</li> </ul>
<b>2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along with Sligo County Council, we co hosted the European Volunteering Capital 2017 in Sligo Town and County. There was a year-long programme of events and initiatives including Adopt a Charity and a large Opening &amp; Closing Ceremony attended by many representatives from various European Countries</li> <li>• Celebrated 10 years of Sligo Volunteer Centre</li> </ul>
<b>2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported 39 Garda Vetting Affiliates through the legislation changes</li> <li>• Ran a Headstart Programme for unemployed people supporting them to volunteer and sell their experiences on CV and in interviews</li> <li>• Acted as Hubs for the Charities Regulator as they managed the start of the process of registering Charities</li> </ul>

Sligo Volunteer Centre works within a National Volunteering Framework. The inaugural National Volunteering Strategy 2021–2025 highlights the challenges facing the Voluntary Sector. Difficulties with an ageing volunteer cohort, engaging new volunteers and responding to the need for more flexible volunteering roles emphasises the necessity for organisations to adapt to the demands of emerging volunteers and for Volunteer centres to provide the right support for these changes.

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY 2021–2025

### KEY POINTS REFLECTED IN OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

- ✓ Gathering evidence and data to document and illustrate the value of volunteering individually and as a sector
- ✓ Developing new types of volunteering (e.g. remote) to meet changing needs
- ✓ Furthering investment in the I-VOL database, a primary infrastructure supporting the work of individual Volunteer Centres
- ✓ Enhancing the diversity of our volunteer base
- ✓ Promoting inclusion and building the capacity of VIO's to sustain the evolving sector

Through our Strategic Plan 2021–2025, the Sligo Volunteer Centre will continue our lead role in realising a vision of volunteering as a means to strengthen and build communities in County Sligo. In preparing this Strategy, SVC conducted a desktop review of the previous Strategic Plan, inviting input from the wider community of service users, as well as key agencies, Volunteer Centre staff and board members. The National Volunteering Strategy has influenced the development of our strategic plan while ensuring an emphasis on local responses to locally defined issues within a national framework strategy. These include four strategic aims.

# Our Strategic Aims



To raise awareness of the many forms of volunteering and highlight its value for individuals, organisations and communities in County Sligo.

Deliver a support service where all stakeholders have timely access to relevant, high quality support, advice and information as required.



Strive for excellence in our service and endeavour to empower others by sharing our learning.

Pioneer a robust and future focused organisation that is responsive to challenges whilst sustaining the culture of volunteering in a vibrant civil society.



These strategic aims will guide and inform the work of Sligo Volunteer Centre in an important transitional phase as society emerges from the COVID pandemic. In working to realise these aims, SVC will continue to strive for excellence, supporting and strengthening communities in Sligo and building a sustainable volunteering culture.



# Context of the Strategic Plan

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## Who we are

Sligo Volunteer Centre (SVC) promotes and supports volunteering in County Sligo. Formed in 2006, after a pilot phase under Sligo County Council. SVC is a registered charity, and its legal form is a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), governed by a Board of volunteer Trustees.

Although we are an independent company, we are also part of a nationwide network of 29 Volunteer Centres, affiliated to Volunteer Ireland. We have considered this broader context while designing this plan and our plan is due a mid-term review in 2023, in line with when Volunteer Ireland is expected to have a new Strategic Plan. Our plan also is cognisant of the National Volunteering Strategy 2021–2025.

We have a core team of 4 part-time staff. We engage volunteers on a regular basis to support our work and benefit from TÚS schemes and similar on occasion. Volunteer roles within the Centre have included: Volunteer Liaison Officer supporting refugees and Asylum seekers in Globe House; Social Media Support Volunteer, Administrative Assistant and Outreach Volunteer.

We are proud to say that we are compliant with the Charities Regulator Code of Governance since October 2020 and we strive to maintain the highest standards in relation to governance and quality.

## Vision & Mission

### Vision

Where excellence in volunteering plays a meaningful and recognised role in empowered sustainable communities in County Sligo.

### Mission

To promote meaningful volunteering opportunities to all sections of the community and foster excellence in volunteer involving organisations hosting volunteers in County Sligo.

# Our Values

Our values are important to us at all levels of the organisation. They are at the heart of our work. We strive to be the best we can be in our field and to 'live out' the values that we hold dear.

Here are some of the words that came up when we were discussing values:



Diagram: Wordcloud of some of our values

Below we explore what we mean by some of our key values.

## Dignity

We value the dignity of everyone who engages with our service. This means that:

- a) All volunteers have the freedom to choose their own volunteering role. We recognise that this ensures their volunteering benefits both the giver and the recipient.
- b) We listen to potential volunteers when we make contact with them. We listen so that we understand their motivations for volunteering to ensure we can guide their choices towards roles and not for profit groups who meet their motivations.
- c) We support the Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) we work with to make their volunteering opportunities more inclusive, accessible and equal for all.
- d) We encourage and support volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations to also value the dignity of those they encounter and engage with through their volunteering and work in the same way.
- e) Treating all our interactions with confidentiality and privacy.

## Integrity

Integrity is of utmost importance to this organisation at all levels – from on the ground staff to the Board of Trustees. This is demonstrated and lived by:

- a) Nurturing a culture of Good Governance in our organisation, and by leading the way on complying with initiatives such as the Charities Governance Code.
- b) Creating a culture of openness in our internal and external communications. This means ensuring there is a constant communication flow from the bottom up and the top down so all staff have input to the organisation. It also means ensuring we regularly communicate with our stakeholders and the wider community, as well as welcoming their feedback and communications about our work.
- c) Only pursuing projects and partnerships that are in line with our values and aims and objectives.
- d) Reflecting our values through our work.



## Excellence – quality and excellence, best practice

We strive towards excellence and promote a culture of transparency in all that we do. We also promote excellence amongst the Volunteer Involving Organisations we support and our wider volunteering community. This is demonstrated by:

- a) Our work in achieving the national Quality Standard Award for our organisation in 2012, 2016 and again in 2020.
- b) Advocating for the sharing of learning that will benefit others in the field. We do this by signposting and facilitating networking of Volunteer Involving Organisations through our Volunteer Co-Ordinators Get Togethers; by facilitating sessions like our Tips and Tricks series in 2020 to share knowledge.
- c) Advocating to constantly improve and seek change in the national landscape of volunteering in Ireland and beyond. We do this by supporting newer staff to the national network – we were key support people for the newly established Leitrim Volunteer Centre; encouraging staff to be active members of national forums, working groups and consultations that can seek change and improvements in policy issues and quality issues impacting on volunteering in Ireland.
- d) Seeking challenges that will establish Sligo and Sligo Volunteer Centre as leaders in the field of supporting volunteering. We do this by seeking avenues to demonstrate the value of our work. In 2017 we led a successful bid for Sligo to be the European Volunteering Capital and in 2019 we were successful in winning Best Governance Initiative Award in the Good Governance Awards.
- e) Being aware of and always working to incorporate best practice in specific fields into our work e.g. ensuring our communications methods meet NALA guidelines, ensuring staff are trained and up to date in their awareness of Equal Opportunities, protection of children and vulnerable adults and other such principles that underpin our work.
- f) Inviting feedback on our service annually and taking feedback on board. We hold ourselves accountable to our wider community, including volunteers, the communities and Volunteer Involving Organisations that we engage with, as well as our funders and stakeholders. We use this feedback to inform improvements and to ensure that we are accountable to those we aim to serve.
- g) Working with Volunteer Involving Organisations to foster excellence in these organisations.



*"There's a very social side to it, we call ourselves the Samaritan family."*

Sean Forde- Samaritans Volunteer

## Collaboration

We value the spirit of collaboration, and the sense of community spirit and cohesiveness that it brings. We endeavour to work alongside the community we serve to achieve the best outcomes. We do this by:

- a) Ensuring our Board of Trustees is representative of the wide variety of groups and backgrounds in our wider community.
- b) Working to build a culture of collaboration with our Board, our staff and our community. In this, we work with a wide range of third parties, and we strive to recognise inclusivity and diversity.
- c) Partnering with our local Public Participation Network (PPN) on relevant events and promotions.
- d) Collaborating with our stakeholders and wider community, including Sligo County Council, County Sligo LEADER Partnership Company, IT Sligo, Sligo business community and more.
- e) Co-hosting training and events, particularly in rural areas, and inviting input from the local community, e.g. Tubbercurry Old Fair Day Expo, co-hosting training with Family Resource Centres. Seeking out community venues for events where possible.

## What we do:

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Volunteering means different things to different people depending on their perspective, role, culture, traditions etc. We try to support the different facets of volunteering that exist. We offer a person centred service where we endeavour to understand the motivations of the individual and support them to engage in volunteering in a way that works for them. Our service helps them navigate a path to volunteering.

We are mindful that there are different realities within Volunteer Involving Organisations also. The VIOs we work with range from being completely volunteer led, to having a paid Volunteer Coordinator in post – and everything in between.

We apply a tailor made approach to Volunteer Involving Organisations who we support, and strive to work with them to harness the potential of their volunteer programme, making it relevant and sustainable.

We aim to connect these two sides – the potential volunteer and the need in the community.

### The benefits of volunteering.

**Social Inclusion:** Volunteering is a way of encouraging and supporting members of society on their journey towards reaching their full potential. Our work encompasses supporting those more marginalised in society to integrate through volunteering. We work with Volunteer Involving Organisations to promote equal opportunities and diversity in their programmes.

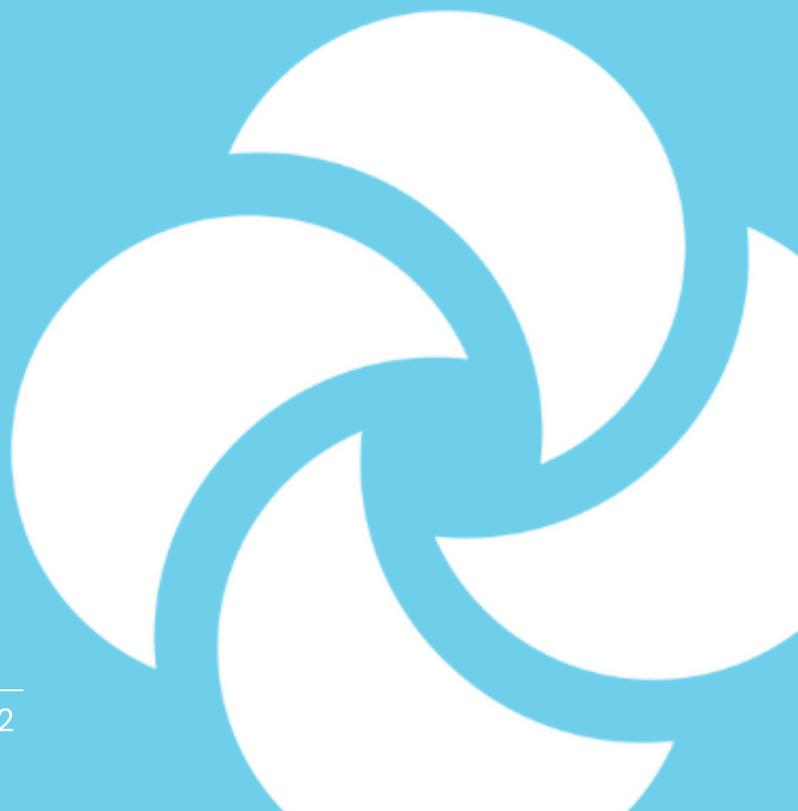
**Health & Wellbeing:** Volunteering has proven benefits on both Mental & Physical health. (The Impact of Volunteering on the health and wellbeing of the Volunteer: May 2017; [https://www.volunteer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Volunteer\\_Ireland-Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.volunteer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Volunteer_Ireland-Report_FINAL.pdf).)

Linking closely with social inclusion work, we often support potential volunteers whose health would benefit enormously through volunteering. This is often done formally through health support workers, referrals from other agencies and happens informally as well. In the post COVID era, we are also conscious of the impact the pandemic has had on our society and the need to restore purpose, confidence, wellbeing and connection in our communities.

**Personal Development:** Volunteering is empowering. Our service supports those who wish to volunteer to fulfil personal development goals. This can be those who are job seeking – either through a period of unemployment, beginning their career or changing career. We handle referrals from our local INTREO office. We also support as well as students from local 2nd and 3rd Level institutions, who may be exploring careers, gaining experience or enhancing their skills. We aim to support capacity building at a personal and organisational level to encourage active citizens leading to an active civil society.

**Accessibility:** A positive to emerge from the COVID period is the expansion of online opportunities to volunteer, and a broadening of opportunities to offer. Remote working and remote lifestyle has made Volunteer Involving Organisations rethink the need to have every volunteer role in a physical space. People can give their marketing skills, graphic design skills etc. virtually. With more meetings happening virtually too it offers that flexibility for people to engage in groups they might not ordinarily have engaged with. This even extends to the diaspora and connecting people from afar.

**Engagement with the wider policy context:** We see volunteering and our work aligning with a variety of national and international policies and strategies. We are excited to have a part to play in the inaugural National Volunteering Strategy 2021–2025, and also see our work aligning with Sharing The Vision, Department of Health 2020; The Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021–2025 and Local Development Plans, such as the Sligo 2030: One Vision, One Voice which is currently in Development. We also align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – particularly under Goal 3: Good Health & Wellbeing; Goal 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities and Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.



## How we engage with Stakeholders

We have identified a lot of stakeholders that engage and interact with our service. Below we have outlined what we do for and how we interact with these different stakeholders.



### Reaching Out to Sligo

Our role is to ensure that every person and volunteer involving organisation in Sligo is aware of volunteering and the role our service plays in promoting and facilitating volunteering in Sligo. We reach out to Sligo by:

- Offering a drop in service in our central office
- Managing a national online database called IVOL where all volunteer opportunities are hosted
- Promoting volunteering, its benefits etc across a wide range of Social Media Platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In)
- Hosting an up to date website to connect and inform people about volunteer opportunities and our services for Volunteer Involving Organisations
- Holding and attending public information events to promote volunteering, such as the Community Expo as part of the Tubbercurry Old Fair Day Festival
- Working with other agencies to promote the benefits of volunteering and collaborate with them where possible to increase the offer to our community

- Maintaining connections with local media to highlight the positive benefits of volunteering and promote existing opportunities when possible
- Taking part in fairs and events locally to promote volunteering opportunities and highlight the benefits of volunteering – eg. Participating in IT Sligo’s Career’s Fair
- Offering our expertise on committees, boards and advisory groups locally where input is aligned with our own aims and objectives

## Connecting Volunteers to Opportunities

Once people connect with our service to actively explore volunteering we:

- Contact each individual by phone to discuss their personal interests and motivations and assist them to decide on a volunteer opportunity
- Deliver Volunteer Information Sessions – Informal group session, where we let people know what to expect from volunteering, how to get started, how to navigate Garda vetting, references etc.
- Offer One to One Appointments where we steer people towards roles that aligns with their motivations for volunteering
- Signpost people to other community services, unrelated to volunteering, when the need presents itself
- Keep people informed of new volunteering opportunities through newsletters, text alerts and targeted emails



## Reaching In to Volunteer Involving Organisations

We support Volunteer Involving Organisations in their work to offer quality volunteering opportunities, refer volunteers for these opportunities and sustain them/retain them when they have them.

Once VIOs register with us, we offer:

- One to one tailored support (coaching) from beginning a volunteer programme through to finding and keeping volunteers
- Advice on how to market & advertise Volunteer Opportunities
- A referral service through targeting, online advertising and a text service for once off opportunities
- A suite of training for Volunteer Involving Organisations including: Finding & Keeping Volunteers, Dealing with Challenging Situations, New Landscapes in Volunteering and Volunteer Leadership Training
- Ongoing contact with not for profits through check ins, newsletters and events
- A regular Volunteer Co-Ordinators Peer support forum facilitating networking (Volunteer Co-Ordinators Get Together)
- A Garda Vetting service to small organisations who have no other route to this service
- Support to organisations to engage a volunteer to take on the role of Volunteer Co-Ordinator within their organisations
- Responsive training or support sessions based on the needs we are hearing from Volunteer Involving Organisations
- Working alongside agencies such as Sligo County Council, Sligo PPN and Sligo LEADER Partnership to signpost the needs and challenges to ensure they are met

## Building Community Connections

We believe that collaboration and sharing is the key to a good foundation within the community and voluntary sector locally, regionally and nationally. We strive to build connections through our work in the following way:

- Closely linking with Sligo County Council and Sligo PPN on events that benefit the community as a whole
- Being part of a local Training Partnership, led by Sligo PPN and including Sligo LEADER Partnership, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim ETB and ourselves. The aim is to co-ordinate training calendars and offers to ensure no gaps or duplications in the community sector
- Respond to Corporates and local business needs when approached about Corporate Social Responsibility projects and link them to appropriate community projects
- Attending relevant local consultations at a local planning and policy level to ensure the voice of volunteering is heard
- Being part of national working groups, representing Sligo and the region to ensure that the voices of the local volunteer community are included
- Leading National events at a local level eg. National Volunteering Week
- Partnering with local agencies to deliver specific time bound projects responding to community need eg. DVAS and CRITICAL
- Highlighting and sharing the work of other agencies who may be relevant to our stakeholders through Social media platforms, cohosted events, newsletters etc.



*"While volunteering, I found a love for helping people and mainly youth."*

Patricia Blee

## In their Voices – Sligo Volunteering in Action

Here are the experiences of some of the volunteers who have availed of our service, as well as some of the Volunteer Involving Organisations who have used our service.



**You gain self-worth and satisfaction from contributing. I would strongly recommend volunteering to anyone who has not yet become involved.**

*Des Kennedy – Volunteer & Volunteer Co-Ordinator St. Vincent De Paul*

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***"You gain self-worth and satisfaction from contributing"***

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**I volunteered to gain more skills and to help build more confidence being out and about and meeting new people.**

*Teresa Conway – Volunteer with Havin a Laugh, NCBI and Foroige*





Sligo Volunteer Centre are a very important link to organisations who work in the charity sector, along with assisting with volunteer recruitment they host events during the year which are great networking opportunities and in the past have enabled me to build important relationships within the sector.

*Monica McElhinney, Focus Ireland, Sligo*

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***"Sligo Volunteer Centre are a very important link to organisations who work in the charity sector"***

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The biggest and longest volunteer role that I am still performing was advertised through Sligo Volunteer Centre. During COVID I also started going to online events that the VC have been offering. When we ran events before COVID, we also advertised through the Volunteer Centre and we know that we always have a place to go to when we have questions around vetting etc.

*Connie Nell - Sligo Environmental Network*



# Sligo Volunteer Centre Strategic Plan 2021-2025

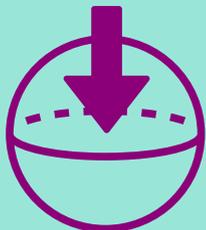
## Strategic Aims

The following are our strategic aims for the period of the plan. Each aim has two parts – firstly what it means to our own service delivery and secondly what it means to how we deliver in the wider sphere.

**Strategic Aim 1: To raise awareness of the many forms of volunteering and highlight its value for individuals, organisations and communities in County Sligo.**

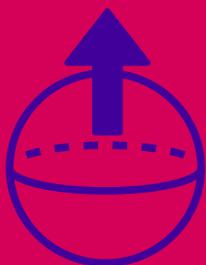
We work closely with our stakeholders to promote meaningful and effective volunteering in Sligo as well as promoting the benefits of volunteering. We foster collaboration between our VIOs and we commit to developing relationships with our local and national partners.

### Within our own service this will involve:



1. **Taking a 360 degree view of volunteering.** This includes raising awareness of our services, the benefit of volunteering to individuals and the benefit to VIO's to have volunteers.
2. **Developing and actioning a Marketing Strategy** focusing on target groups and mechanisms to reach out including our website, social media channels and more traditional methods of communication.
3. **Capitalising on opportunity.** Sligo has been identified as a top location to conduct remote work (<https://switcher.ie/mortgages/best-locations-work-from-home/>). This brings new skills to the area; re-imagines traditional volunteering and brings an opportunity to broaden our base.
4. **Maximising our new office space:** Now that we have a more visible office location, we will use the opportunity to maximise signage, ensure that there is a front of house presence to disseminate information and that drop ins and walk in enquiries are managed.

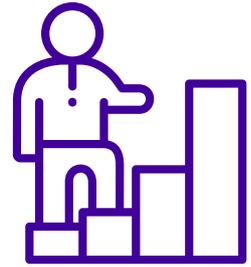
### In the wider sphere this will involve:



5. **Continuing to engage with emerging policy areas as well as with key stakeholders,** with the aim to bring volunteering to the table and be an expert voice. An example in progress is liaising with Sligo County Council on a Social Inclusion baseline.
6. **Continuing to signpost our service users** – both potential volunteers and VIOs to other relevant & supplementary services in the community, with the aim to enhance the volunteer experience.

## We know we are making progress when:

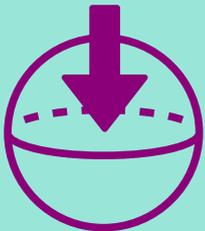
- The services offered by Sligo Volunteer Centre are more widely known, understood and accessed
- There is a broader base of potential Volunteers and VIOs availing of our service, as determined by our database
- Increased collaboration between Key Stakeholders which leads to greater benefit to volunteering
- Local strategies and plans are cognisant of volunteering and the voice around the local needs of volunteering and VIOs are included



## Strategic Aim 2: Deliver a support service where all stakeholders have timely access to relevant, high quality support, advice and information.

We firmly believe that volunteering should be available to all who wish to volunteer. Likewise VIOs deserve up to date and relevant information appropriate to their capacities.

### Within our own service this will involve:



1. Continuing to deliver our services in a **transparent and respectful** manner where inclusion is paramount.
2. Ensuring **opportunity of access** by broadening the range and profile of volunteers and volunteer opportunities, as well as a multitude of ways that we interact with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations.
3. Successfully piloting the delivery of the **Community Volunteers Programme**.
4. Putting an achievable plan in place to meet the needs of our **rural areas**.

### In the wider sphere this will involve:



5. **Raising the capacity within VIOs** to ensure that they are supported with their volunteer programme to enable them to provide enhanced services to their communities.
6. **Using our insight to advocate for policy change** where we see that it may improve access to volunteering. This includes championing the delivery of actions relating to the National Volunteering Strategy.

## We know we are making progress when:

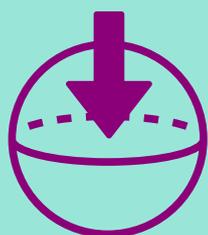
- We have a specific action plan to target different geographical areas & target groups
- Potential volunteers have access to a wide variety of volunteer opportunities across every area of County Sligo
- A successful Community Volunteers Pilot is completed. This involves 26 Community Volunteers being recruited, trained and deployed to events & activities from 2022 onwards
- Broad offering of peer support or formal training which will raise the capacity of VIO's
- Along with our colleagues around the Country, we are leading out locally and delivering actions relating to the NVS



## Strategic Aim 3: Strive for excellence in our service and endeavour to empower others by sharing our learning.

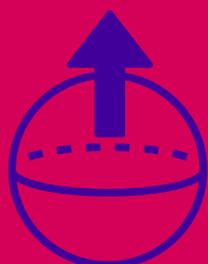
Excellence is central to how we operate. We achieve or exceed regulator and stakeholder expectations in governance and internal procedures. We are respectful of others' contributions, we work to the highest standards and strive to use our experience to assist others to get there. We recognise that achieving and maintaining excellence is a constant and evolving journey that we are committed to.

### Within our own service this will involve:



1. **Maintaining the highest standard of accountability and governance** by reporting to relevant oversight bodies in a timely manner.
2. Continuing our commitment to participating in and contributing to the **Quality Standards process** for the volunteer infrastructure in Ireland.
3. **Modelling good governance** and encouraging others to strive in this space by participating in initiatives like the Good Governance Awards (GGA) and promoting the benefits of doing so to others.
4. Giving people the **space to explore and enhance capacity building** by leading out on regular Volunteer Co-Ordinators Get Togethers.

### In the wider sphere this will involve:



5. Endeavouring to come up with **creative ways to fill gaps** that emerge in the sector – either by leveraging our networks and expertise, or working with the relevant stakeholders who can deliver.
6. Working with stakeholders on **Volunteer Recognition** initiatives to highlight excellence.

## We know we are making progress when:

- All corporate and governance obligations are honoured
- Continued improvement of performance in the achievement of the National Volunteering Quality Assurance Framework
- Continued improvement of performance in the Good Governance Awards Annual Report section each year
- 40% of Engagements with VIOs include support on Governance/Training/Capacity Building

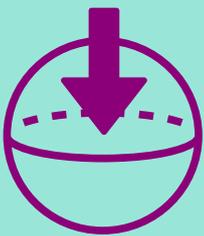


## Strategic Aim 4: Pioneer a robust and future focussed organisation that is responsive to challenges whilst sustaining the culture of volunteering in a vibrant civil society.

Sustainability underpins all that we do. Within our own organisation by sustainability we mean the financial sustainability of our organisation and the ability of the organisation to be robust and responsive to change and challenges. We are also conscious of technological changes, social changes and economic changes that also set the pace/direction/tone of our work. The promotion of the place of volunteering in civil society is also considered here.

### Within our own service this will involve:

1. **Working to increase our contribution to environmental and climate goals.** This may be at organisational level, or liaising with our colleagues across the national network on innovative ideas and linking with local actions that will have an impact on our local community.
2. Ensuring the **financial sustainability** of our organisation that will enable it to meet future challenges.
3. **Planning for the future and being future focused.** This includes succession planning, re-imagining volunteering and the opportunities it brings and ensuring our service delivery and offering is up to speed in a modern world.
4. **Engaging in whole sector discussions and campaigns** that aim to strengthen the community sector and all who work and volunteer within it eg. The We Act Campaign.



**In the wider sphere this will involve:**



5. **Aligning our work with a number of national policy areas** including Rural Development Policy areas, Mental Health policy areas etc.
6. **Continuing to push for change at a national and policy level** where our unique viewpoint gives us insight into gaps, barriers etc. Areas may include Garda Vetting legislation, barriers to youth engagement etc. National Focus – gaps, pushing for change etc.
7. **Regular communications with TD's and engagement with politicians** to ensure that the needs of volunteering are met and understood.

**We know we are making progress when:**

- We are embedded in some positive local actions that make a positive impact on our world and its future in relation to climate goals
- Sustainable funding and finance is secured and accounted for. This will enable our organisation to effectively plan for the future
- There is a greater understanding amongst public representatives, policy makers and decision makers of the impact of volunteering and the needs
- We are actively rolling out actions from the National Volunteering Strategy that contributes to a vibrant civil society



*"I attend the volunteer manager get-togethers when I can and these are great for getting ideas, seeing what other organisations are doing and making new contacts."*

Bernadette Crilly, Director of Services, Neurology Support Centre

## Our measurables in our SMART Goals are:

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- Strategic Aim 1:**
- 5 % Increase of volunteer registrations each year (starting at a base of 450 engagements per annum in 2021)
  - 5% Increase of VIO engagements each year (starting from a base of 196 in 2021)
  - 25% Increase of VIO registers each year (starting at a base of 11 in 2021)
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- Strategic Aim 2:**
- 10% of newly registering VIO's each year to be from outside Sligo Town
  - 20% of Volunteer Opportunities each year to represent areas outside of Sligo Town
  - 50% Increase of Volunteer Opportunities on offer by the end of the plan (starting with a base of 92 Volunteer Opportunities in 2022)
  - 26 people signed up to Community Volunteers pilot and participating in at least 5 Community Events per annum (by end of 2023)
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- Strategic Aim 3:**
- 100% of corporate and governance obligations are honoured
  - Additional areas of Charities Governance Code are addressed and met
  - Aim for 6% Increase in score in the National Volunteering Quality Assurance Framework (starting at a base of 84%)
  - Aim for a 10% increase in score in the Good Governance Awards Annual Report section by the end of 2025
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- Strategic Aim 4:**
- Develop an action plan for at least 1 National Volunteer Strategy Action, and aim to be the lead Volunteer Centre to roll it out (in line with the approach to the NVS)
  - Increase the diversity of funding stream to the organisation by sourcing at least one additional funding stream in line with our strategic aims
  - Embed Sligo Volunteer Centre and the National Volunteering Strategy in Sligo 2030
  - Ensure that Sligo Volunteer Centre are lead agency on Volunteering related actions in Sligo 2030

# Glossary

Glossary of terms	
CRITICAL	An initiative to support people emerging from and experiencing domestic violence circumstances compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.
DVAS	Domestic Violence Advocacy Service.
GGA	The Good Governance Awards – recognising and encouraging adherence to good governance practice by not-for-profits in Ireland.
IVOL	The national volunteering database <a href="http://www.I-VOL.ie">www.I-VOL.ie</a>
MSLETB	Mayo Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board.
NALA	The National Adult Literacy Agency.
Not for Profit	An organisation organized and operated for a collective, public or social benefit, in contrast with an organisation that operates as a business aiming to generate a profit for its owners.
NVS	National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025. <a href="https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/100239/8e18fb45-6e72-47f9-a1fb-7dcd59105c1a.pdf#page=null">https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/100239/8e18fb45-6e72-47f9-a1fb-7dcd59105c1a.pdf#page=null</a>
SCC	Sligo County Council.
Sligo PPN	Sligo Public Participation Network – a network of community and voluntary groups based in county Sligo.
VIO	Volunteer Involving Organisation – an organisation that recruits and utilises volunteers.
VMGT	Volunteer Managers’ Get Together.