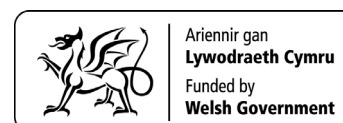


Wales Strategic Volunteering Project

Volunteering at the Board, Trustee and Management
Level in the Community Sport Sector in Wales:
Recommendations for building capacity and impact
2025



Introduction to the Wales Strategic Volunteering Project

The Wales Strategic Volunteering Project (WSVP) was delivered by Sported and funded by Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), and this report outlines a series of recommendations following the strategic review stage of the project.

The aim for the WSVP is to enhance the capacity and impact of board, trustee and management level volunteering for community groups across Wales delivering sport and physical activities, and it consists of two stages:

The project looks to connect with, and support, the Welsh Government's wellbeing of Future Generations Act. In particular, the project focuses on the skills and development of volunteers (a prosperous Wales), an inclusive and accessible volunteering sector (a more equal Wales), and a volunteer community promoting and protecting local communities as well as engaging in sports and recreation (a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language).

- 1. understanding and reporting on the landscape of volunteering at this level within community groups in Wales***
- 2. providing a series of recommendations to stakeholders within the sector on how best to achieve such an increase in capacity and impact***



About this report

This report details the findings from stage two of the project, providing practical and sustainable solutions to the challenges facing volunteering at the board, trustee and management level within community sport in Wales. These solutions are based on robust research conducted with community groups and strategic stakeholders across the voluntary sector during the first stage of the WSVP.

The report is structured upon five key areas of volunteering:



Recruitment



Upskilling



Reward &
recognition



Efficiencies &
innovation



Empowering pathways
for young people &
marginalised groups

Solutions outlined in each area are broken down by their likely relevance to the local, regional and national level so that the recommendations can be most easily implemented by organisations operating at those different levels.



National level solutions



- 1** *Develop and promote a national database of volunteering opportunities at the board, trustee and management level.*

Creating this national database would provide an accessible portal for individuals to find and apply for roles, as well as a central system for community groups to advertise these roles at their organisation.

- 2** *Encourage greater emphasis on the benefits of volunteering for career and personal development.*

Highlighting how volunteering at this level can support an individual's personal and career progression, as well as serve a community, could help attract more and wider applications for the roles.





Regional Level Solutions



- 1** *Support more connections between community groups and educational institutions in their region, including universities and colleges.*

By connecting students experienced in running their own societies with community groups looking for individuals knowledgeable and skilled in committee-level volunteering, this will help create pathways for recruitment.



Local Level Solutions



- 1** *Support community groups to develop recruitment and retention approaches that reduce time pressures on existing committee members and those interested in volunteering at this level.*

Suggestions for this could include more creative and lighter touch recruitment processes beyond simply submitting written CVs, providing greater clarity around role descriptions and responsibilities, and increased emphasis on handover support through hands-on experience of roles in advance.

- 2** *Develop Youth Boards that act as learning springboards for participants to move into committees at other organisations.*

This will provide young people with the opportunity to develop leadership and committee skills that they can take forward in applying for and delivering in volunteer positions.



National Level Solutions



- 1** *Support national stakeholders to develop, promote, and actively engage community groups with a centralised online learning platform.*

This platform would focus on tasks and responsibilities for volunteers and aim to provide an accessible way for volunteers to upskill in their own time. For groups, it would also be a source for templates and tools for common tasks, as well as a centralised bank of role descriptors to guide development and recruitment.

- 2** *Develop upskilling as an integral part of annual accreditation/affiliation processes.*

This could help ensure board, trustee and management skills are up-to-date (or, where necessary, enhanced) through existing, regular engagement between community groups and relevant organisations such as national governing bodies.





Regional Level Solutions



- 1 *Develop mentoring schemes across regions to support volunteers in board, trustee and management roles.*

Suggestions for this include businesses sharing knowledge and expertise relevant to committee-level volunteering, and sport and physical activity governing bodies (and their regional teams) creating schemes that actively support volunteers on a pathway towards volunteering in committee-level roles.

Local Level Solutions



- 1 *Empower young people to volunteer at the board, trustee or management level by tailoring opportunities, training and volunteer experiences to better meet their life experience and circumstances.*

Developing youth-focused committees and leadership roles/portfolios, as well as providing shadowing opportunities for them to learn and observe people currently in these roles, will offer young people opportunities to build their experience and confidence.





National Level Solutions



- 1 *Work with strategic stakeholders across Wales to create new or expand existing incentives and systems that recognise, reward and celebrate volunteers in board, trustee and management roles.*

Suggestions might include national governing bodies providing discounted or free entry to their events and activities, national stakeholders raising the profile of what volunteering at this level means by celebrating the volunteers' importance and impact, and a national awards category dedicated to board, trustee and management level volunteering within the community sector.





Regional Level Solutions



- 1** *Harness corporate volunteering schemes within communities to provide additional capacity*

Individuals experienced in leadership and committee roles or with specific skills relevant and necessary for committee-led organisations, could be recruited through volunteering schemes that exist within regions across Wales.

Local Level Solutions



- 1** *Empower youth roles with genuine responsibility within an accepting and supportive environment, such as through voting positions on boards for young people.*

Providing these supported roles will give young people the experience and responsibility of decision-making, whilst also guiding them through the processes to assist them in their development and growth.

- 2** *Increase recognition of the lived experience and skills young people bring to these roles beyond more traditional longer-term office-based experience.*

Recognising and valuing the skills and experiences that young people bring where they differ to those traditional experiences can help the young people and organisations to grow in confidence and progress.





National Level Solutions



- 1** *Work with national bodies to simplify and streamline the administrative processes and requirements for community groups.*

This will free up volunteers' capacity at board, trustee and management level (especially for groups affiliated to NGBs) because it will reduce the tasks assigned to them that are in addition to the day-to-day running of their group.

- 2** *Change the language and scope of volunteer positions to encourage young people to engage with them.*

By making the role titles more appealing or targeted to young people, such as using the term 'Young Ambassadors' in place of more formal role descriptors, may encourage them to apply rather than discount themselves based on traditional role titles and descriptions.





Regional Level Solutions



- 1** *Create capacity-sharing schemes that provide opportunities to recruit volunteers to the same role across multiple organisations.*

This would enable volunteers to share their expertise more widely and maximise their capacity and time by focusing on specific tasks/roles that are in demand across groups.

- 2** *Develop networking opportunities across regions that bring volunteers in board, trustee and management roles together*

Empowering collective learning and troubleshooting of challenges by bringing committees and specific roles together to act as a support and guidance network can develop individuals and organisations alike through knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Local Level Solutions



- 1** *Develop and encourage accessible processes that fit around volunteers' other responsibilities and recognise what volunteers can do with the time they have.*

Practical steps in supporting volunteers at this level include recruiting for positions that engage with volunteers' time in small steps so that responsibilities can be developed to fit into volunteers' available time, and ensuring calls and meetings are as accessible as possible through flexible timings and use of technology.



Volunteering Component: Empowering Pathways for Young People and Marginalised Groups



National Level Solutions



- 1 *Encourage greater emphasis on the benefits of volunteering for career development and skills*

Helping those from marginalised groups to understand that volunteering at the board, trustee and management level can support their own personal and career progression as well as the local community, providing further rationale for them to consider and apply for these roles.

- 2 *Highlight success stories and create campaigns that showcase the journeys and achievements of individuals from marginalised groups who have succeeded in board and committee roles.*

Providing visibility and promoting these roles as attainable for individuals within marginalised groups by ensuring marketing materials, advertisements, social media content, and promotional videos feature diverse representation.



Volunteering Component: Empowering Pathways for Young People and Marginalised Groups



Regional Level Solutions



- 1** *Support more connections between community groups and educational institutions in their region, including universities and colleges, that help meet volunteer recruitment and learning needs at the committee-level.*

Creating pathways for individuals at educational institutions to access opportunities, benefitting them in their development and growth whilst also supporting young people in community groups to learn more about committees and governance from those around their own age.

- 2** *Establish development programmes aimed at individuals from marginalised groups, incorporating peer support, mentorship, and formal training.*

Specific guidance and training that is available to marginalised groups can help them to feel supported to enter into roles that they otherwise may not.

- 3** *Provide awareness, knowledge and support for current board and committee members to emphasise the importance and benefits of diversity and inclusion in their organisations.*

Ensuring that current position holders are aware of the need and ways to make advertising, recruitment, on-boarding and delivery within these roles accessible and appealing to individuals from marginalised groups.

- 4** *Establish strong support networks to ensure ongoing development, support, and retention of diverse board and committee volunteers within the sports sector.*

This will help to make sure that recruitment, participation and support in these roles for individuals from marginalised groups is sustainable, whilst also making sure that those not from marginalised groups are educated to be aware of different challenges and processes that might impact on individuals from marginalised groups.

Volunteering Component: Empowering Pathways for Young People and Marginalised Groups



Local Level Solutions



- 1** Empower young people to volunteer at the board, trustee or management level

By tailoring opportunities, training, and volunteer experiences to better meet their life experience and circumstances, young people can be supported to access these roles. This could include developing youth-focused committees and leadership roles/portfolios that provide younger participants with opportunities to build experience and confidence in leadership and governance.



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