

Bury Volunteering Strategy 2023 – 2026

BURY
LET'S Do It!

*A place where people are inspired,
supported, and empowered to
volunteer.*



This Volunteering Strategy demonstrates a borough-wide commitment to the importance and continuing future impact of volunteering for Bury. It provides a framework of support and recognition for individual volunteers and organisations working with volunteers across the borough.

Volunteers are vital to Bury. They help deliver local services, build community cohesion, and drive social change.

Volunteers freely give their time for the good of their community and are supported by hundreds of local volunteer-involving groups and organisations.

These organisations and volunteers play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of local communities and are key to the success of the 'Let's Do It' strategy for the borough – where all are able to play a part in local communities and where we work together in a way that recognises and celebrates the assets and strengths of our communities and our residents.

Cllr Richard Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities and Finance, Bury Council

People volunteer for many reasons – to 'give something back,' help others in their community, meet new people, try something new or develop new skills. Whatever the reason, volunteering can have a huge impact on health and wellbeing, building strength in communities and bringing people from different backgrounds together.

Types of volunteering and the way people volunteer has changed – informal and 'micro' volunteering, (for short bursts of time), are now more commonplace. With the rise in digital solutions, groups have developed creative and flexible ways to deliver their services and the way in which their volunteers support members.

This strategy brings together insights gathered from VCSE sector groups, partners and volunteers. It provides our key commitments to enable volunteering to continue to flourish in Bury and the starting point for how we will work together as Team Bury to create a place where people are inspired, supported and empowered to volunteer.

Helen Tomlinson, Chief Officer, Bury VCFA

“Volunteers will get you through times of no money better than money and will always show compassion and empathy - and at times some who may be struggling themselves are willing to help with an open heart.” (Wajid Iqbal, Organic Soul, Bury)

We would like to thank the following partners who have contributed to the Bury Volunteering Strategy:

Bury VCSE Leadership Group, Bury VCSE Children's and Young People's Partnership, Bury VCSE Health & Social Care Network, Bury Volunteer Coordinators Forum, Bury Youth Service, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Bury Council Community Hub Managers and Champions and the Volunteers of Bury.

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is when someone spends unpaid time doing something to benefit others. Volunteering can be formal and organised by organisations, or informal within communities. It should always be a free choice made by the person giving up their time.

Everyone has the right to volunteer.

Volunteers can be any age from any background. They can be studying, unable to work, seeking asylum, looking for work, working or retired. They might also be people given time off to volunteer by their employers.

Why do people volunteer?

Every volunteer has their own reasons for volunteering:

- Helping and supporting others.
- Getting experience to get into work or change career.
- Supporting a cause, they are passionate about.
- To meet people or learn new skills.
- Give back to their community.

What do volunteers do?

- Raise funds.
- Be a trustee or school governor.
- Support community events.
- Campaign.
- Befriend.
- Give advice, guidance, or information.
- Conserve wildlife or the local environment.
- Administrative support.
- Driving.



*There are an estimated 26,000 volunteers in Bury, donating over 131,000 hours of their time a week**

*Volunteers contribute an estimated £63m to Bury's local economy**



There are a wealth of activities that volunteers are involved with across a range of organisations including VCSE sector, schools, hospitals and the local authority.

*Bury State of the Sector 2021

Benefits of volunteering

For the individual, volunteering can:

- Improve physical and mental wellbeing.
- Reduce loneliness and isolation through meeting new people.
- Provide new experiences and skills to help personal development and potential employment opportunities.
- Provide a sense of purpose.
- Be a positive, fun experience.

“Volunteering allows me to hear other perspectives... it motivates me to grow into an optimistic & open-minded individual.”

“Volunteering boosts self-esteem and makes you feel better about yourself.”

For the volunteer-involving organisation, volunteering can:

- Provide access to skills, experience and knowledge and build on resources the organisation already has, to help achieve its goals.
- Support you to reach more people. Volunteers are often part of the communities you work or fundraise in. By giving them a great experience, you can inspire them to become your greatest advocates.
- Help people connect with others, learn new skills and gain confidence. It can help find routes to employment and can improve health and wellbeing.
- Volunteers can bring new opinions, ideas and approaches to your work. This can help you adapt, stay relevant to what people need from your organisation and find new ways to improve.

“I would recommend to anyone unsure about what career they want or for those struggling to get experience to try out volunteering.”

“As a volunteer one of the best things I like is meeting people and making connections.”

For the wider community, volunteering can:

- Bring a community together socially.
- Develop solutions to local challenges.
- Strengthen communities and improve community cohesion.

“We want to make our volunteers feel part of the team, it’s about teamwork, support and helping each other.”

“When I was offered the opportunity to become a trustee, it was a great opportunity to give back to the sector by sharing some of the knowledge and experience I had acquired over the years.”

Volunteering values



These four key values have been developed to ensure volunteering continues to thrive in Bury.

They are based on the principles of diversity of opportunity, freedom of choice - that volunteering must not exploit the volunteer or directly replace paid staff.

Volunteers should be respected, engaged, and supported, feel needed, appreciated and most importantly, that they are making a difference. This should be underpinned with encouragement, help and training.

We recognise that our communities cannot survive without volunteers so they must be valued, championed, engaged and supported in a positive and mutually beneficial way.

Volunteering is diverse

- We will encourage and support volunteering opportunities which are representative of the diverse communities of Bury and actively challenge and address barriers to participation in volunteering.
- We will champion the role of young volunteers in supporting active citizenship and becoming future leaders in communities.
- We will work collaboratively to promote the benefits of trusteeship across the public, private and VCSE sectors – creating opportunities for people to use their skills and experience to benefit the broader community.

Volunteering is about freedom of choice

- We will work collaboratively to maximise opportunities for people to engage in meaningful and flexible volunteering opportunities.
- We will encourage innovation in volunteering to address the different ways in which people volunteer, e.g. micro volunteering and to support future humanitarian and civil emergencies.
- We will ensure the principle of 'freedom of choice' is embedded into our volunteering practices, that volunteering must never exploit the volunteer or directly replace paid staff.

Volunteers are engaged and supported

- We will encourage employers to support their employees to volunteer through Employee Supported Volunteering schemes and flexible working practices.
- We will champion volunteering good practice across all volunteer-involving organisations to enhance the volunteer experience and ensure volunteering is supportive, safe, and rewarding.
- We will ensure that information on volunteering opportunities is clear, accessible, and promoted widely.

Volunteers are valued and recognised

- We will celebrate the impact of all types of volunteering (formal and informal) on the individual, organisation, and community.
- We will recognise the key contribution volunteering makes to our economy and in the creation of more social value for Bury.
- We will use opportunities such as National Volunteers Week as well as awareness and inclusion events to say 'thank you' to volunteers.

This volunteering strategy sets out Bury's strategic commitments for the next three years and builds on current volunteering programmes which support the Bury community.

To be successful, we also need to recognise that volunteering requires resourcing and although volunteers give their time freely, there is a cost to the volunteer-involving organisation. For example:

- Managing volunteers.
- Training volunteers and providing on-going learning and development.
- Equipment and resources, e.g., IT, transport costs, out of pocket expenses and specialist clothing. Volunteering should not cost the volunteer anything.

Involving volunteers should be part of an organisations' operational and resourcing plans to ensure positive and meaningful experiences for everyone involved.

Team Bury partners will continue to work with public, private and VCSE sector organisations in Bury to champion the implementation of the strategy across the borough. An action plan, led by Bury VCFA will determine priorities, timescales, and resource requirements, ensuring the strategy is a 'living' document which organisations across all sectors commit to, in order to deliver our ambitions for Bury.



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Bury VCFA are here to support volunteer-involving organisations and those wishing to recruit new volunteers. Bury VCFA provides a range of guidance to help organisations deliver quality, safe and meaningful volunteering opportunities as well as supporting individuals looking for volunteer opportunities.

For more information contact

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