

## Vision for Volunteering

### Speaker's Biography – Paul Reddish

Paul Reddish will be attending Councillors Forum to present the Vision for Volunteering to local government leaders.

Paul Reddish took up the post of Chief Executive of Volunteering Matters in September 2019. Volunteering Matters (former CSV) supports over 100 volunteering programmes throughout the UK, which in turn involves 30,000 volunteers. They support communities to lead social change in critical areas such as isolation and loneliness, skills development, youth social action and the improvement of mental health and well-being.



Paul recently chaired the national volunteering co-ordination response on behalf of UK Government, made up of all the key agencies across Government, Health and the Voluntary Sector in England, to COVID. This led to the large-scale deployment of volunteers across vaccination centres, schools and transport hubs in response to the pandemic.

### Vision for Volunteering

The [Vision for Volunteering](#) is a strategic ambition of what volunteering should look like by 2032. The Vision for Volunteering was launched on 6 May 2022 at the Volunteer Expo at Birmingham's NEC. The launch sparked widespread interest, and this is merely the start, with more engagement planned from conferences, articles in the sector press and with partners.

### What is the Vision for Volunteering and How Was it Developed?

Over the past year, charities, volunteers, public bodies and the private sector came together to create a Vision for Volunteering, which focuses on what volunteering should look like in 2032. Hundreds of people and organisations contributed to the Vision through workshops, interviews and submitting evidence. The result, the Vision for Volunteering, sets out principles for a diverse, innovative, sustainable, ambitious and person-centred future for volunteering in England. <https://www.visionforvolunteering.org.uk/>

The LGA was part of the overall Steering Group alongside the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which provided governance support for developing the Vision and was part of the discussions regarding the changes needed to adapt to upcoming trends, challenges and opportunities. The 10-year strategy has been led by five partner organisations; Volunteering Matters, National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM), National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and Sport England.

## **The 'Takeaways' for Local Government**

Volunteering, and a strong voluntary sector, lie at the heart of thriving communities – empowering and connecting individuals, and benefiting and strengthening both the individual volunteer and the wider community. Councils have a key role to play in this, across the vision's five key themes – awareness and appreciation; power; equity and inclusion; collaboration; and experimentation. In a [recent article in LGA First Magazine](#), Maddy Desforges CEO of NAVCA, set out four key 'takeaways' from the Vision for Volunteering for local government.

First, close, trusted relationships should be nurtured. The Vision for Volunteering envisages a shift away from 'imposed' partnership working towards community-led coalitions of interest.

Second, is that power is devolved to the most appropriate level. Our vision is for councils and organisations to support and champion communities to develop and drive their own collaborative activity, based on intelligence about what is needed in that community. This requires a clear understanding of the resources that communities already have, how those can best be used, and clarity on roles, responsibilities, and the outcome sought.

Third, infrastructure bodies can support councils to best utilise volunteers. Developing more awareness and appreciation of the role of volunteers is central to the Vision for Volunteering. We must collectively learn from effective partnership working in times of crisis and we stand ready to help councils unleash the potential of volunteering.

Finally, investment is essential. Relationship-building, empowering local communities and supporting volunteering – none of these come without investment. We know that there is pressure on councils, which confronted an estimated £9.7 billion in cost pressures and income losses in 2020/21, on top of more than a decade of deep funding cuts. At the same time, VCS organisations experienced increased demand for services combined with falling incomes.

## **What is happening with the Vision for Volunteering post launch?**

We are already working across the sector and with national and local government on next steps. The launch marks the start of the new phase of work – acting as catalysts and connectors of networks. We want to support and connect all those in the volunteering community/ecosystem who are inspired to improve volunteering.