

OUTSIDE Volunteer Strategy

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Our vision: Volunteering with OUTSIDE

Volunteering with OUTSIDE will be inclusive, joyful, collaborative and innovative. Volunteers will be appreciated for their valuable contribution and supported to develop skills, confidence and networks that will benefit them and their communities.

To deliver this vision, 3 priorities have been identified:

Quality experiences - Provide a wide variety of high-quality opportunities that promote inclusivity and support people to achieve their ambitions, a sense of belonging and community through volunteering. Radical hospitality and appropriate training will ensure volunteers feel valued, heard and equipped to contribute effectively.

Collaboration – Continue to develop volunteer involvement in projects so that initiatives resonate deeply with those involved. It will ensure that projects are shaped in a way that utilises the unique insights volunteers bring, enhancing the project's relevance to the individual places that make up the Staffordshire Moorlands. Volunteering with OUTSIDE will meet the needs of volunteers in the Staffordshire Moorlands and our volunteer offer will be responsive and adaptable to the needs of the area we serve.

Meaningful connections – Develop meaningful relationships with a range of individuals, organisations and community groups to broaden volunteering opportunities and the social demographics of those that volunteer with us.

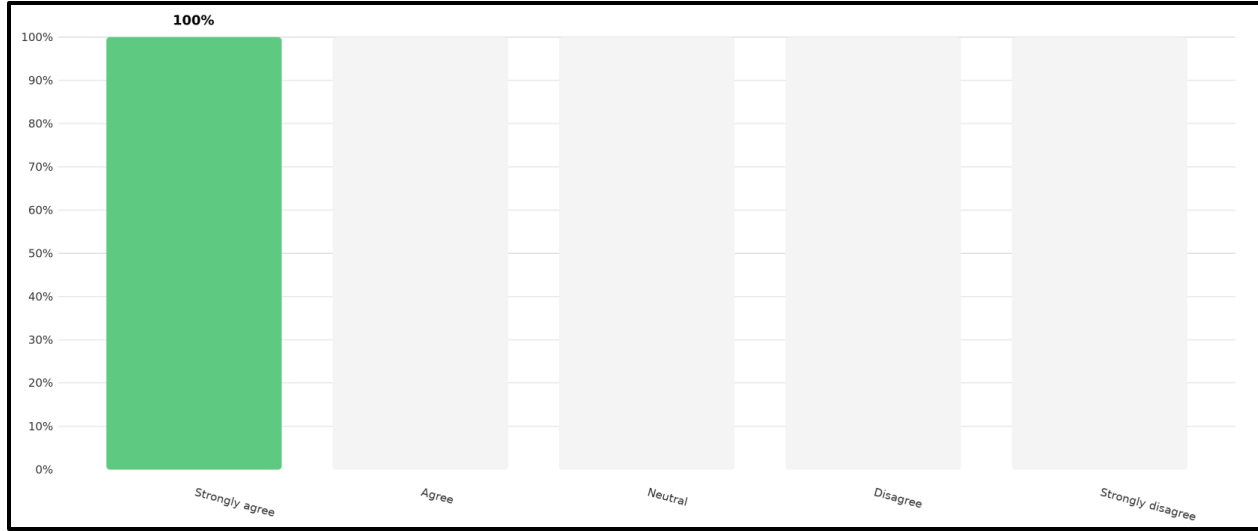
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Our volunteers have told us...

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I enjoyed my time volunteering with OUTSIDE?

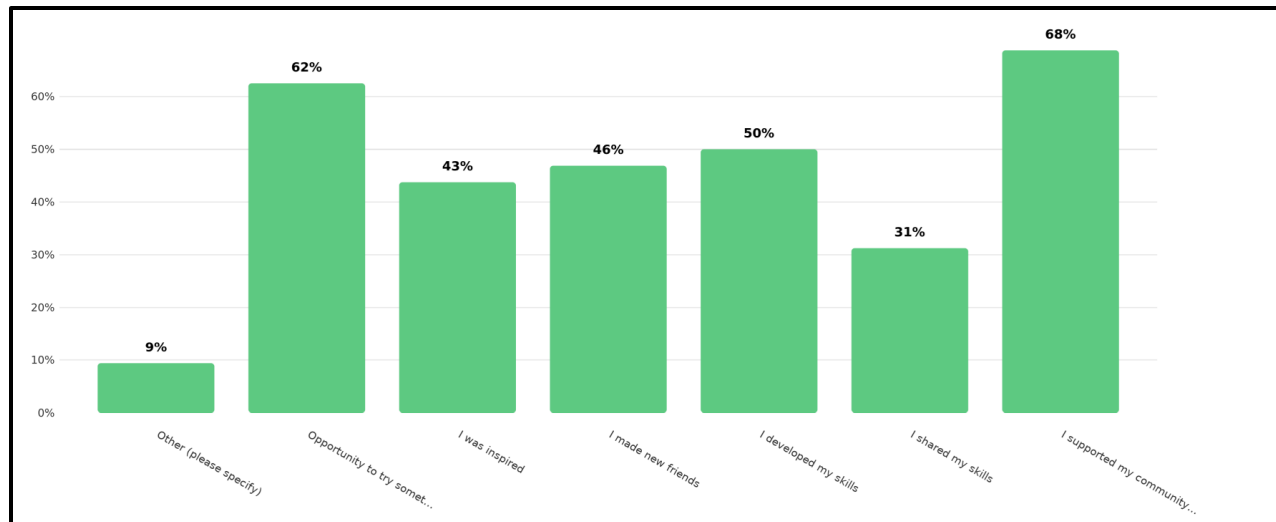


Our volunteer surveys have told us...

95%+ of volunteers said their experience was good or excellent.

95%+ of volunteers said they would volunteer for future activities.

What did you gain from volunteering with outside?



“A new and wonderful group of volunteers to meet, skills to take on, and working as part of something that benefited children and families. One in the high spots was the team of event organisers, who made us feel included, useful, valued and who worked hard, had a positivity, and worked together seamlessly to produce such a creative event. They are leaders to follow.”

What our volunteers say about their experiences

“This was my first event so I felt a little out of my depth until I was welcomed by such a lovely team who instantly bubble with energy and a warm enthusiasm helping me to feel at ease. Thursday night I couldn't sleep – far too excited!”

“I am so pleased to have had the privilege to help out at this marvellous event. The team are just so welcoming and thoughtful.”

“Lovely to meet such a fabulous team – I've found 'my people' and my passion!”

“I loved meeting other volunteers, the venue and the authors/performers.”



What can OUTSIDE offer to volunteers?

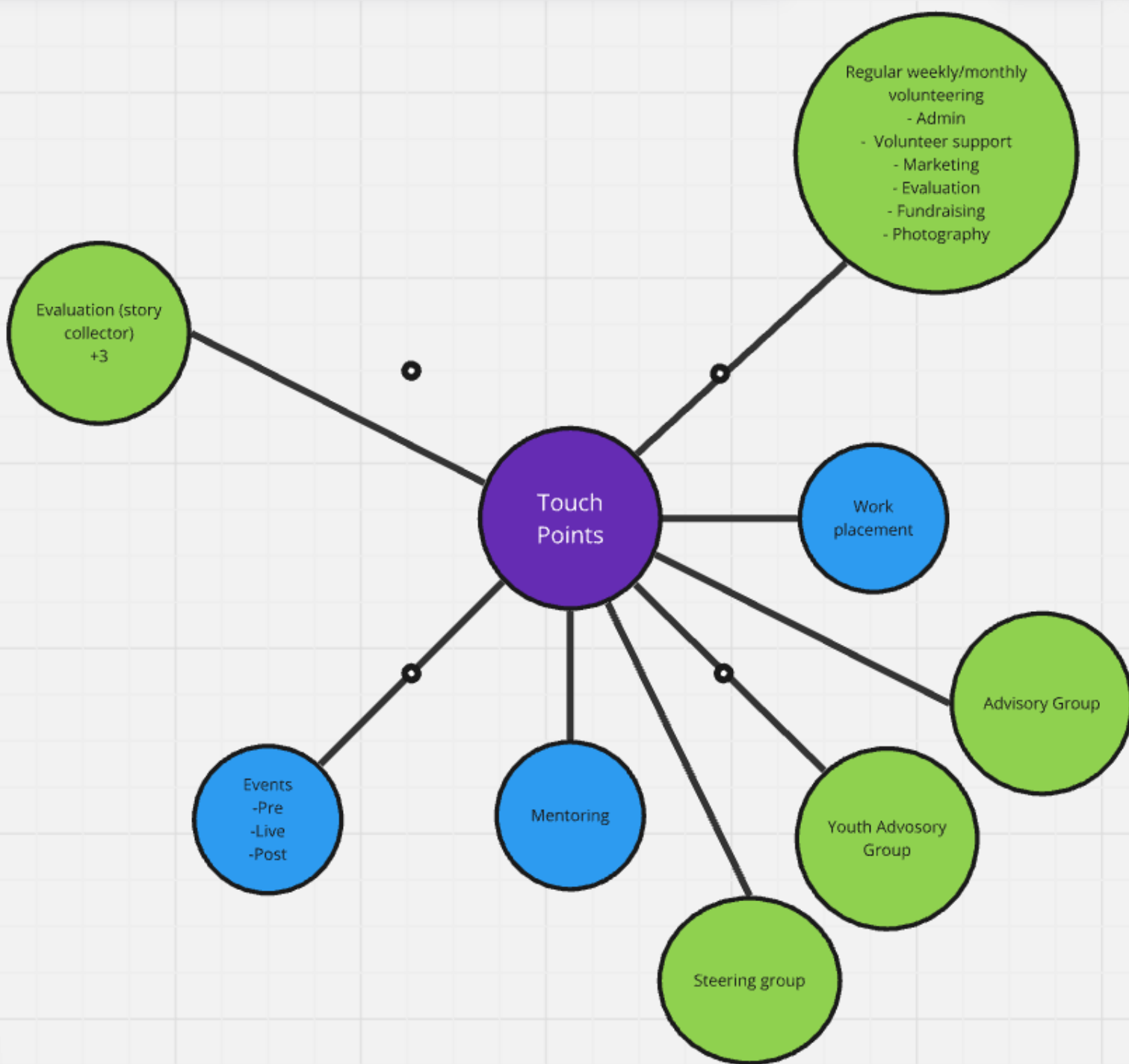
Personal/emotional benefits

- Confidence
- Belonging
- Open to different opportunities
- Responsibility
- Creativity
- Sense of purpose
- Joy
- Social networks

Volunteers surveys tell us that perceived benefits of volunteering and the motivations for engagement can shift as a consequence of the volunteering experience. Our data and case studies show that the biggest motivator for volunteering is ‘to support the local community’ and that this remains as the greatest perceived benefit.

For some volunteers the perceived benefit shifts to include ‘feeling inspired’ or that they recognize the ‘opportunity to try something new’.





Touch points

In what ways do we engage with volunteers?

Our team interact with volunteers in a variety of ways. It is important that our interactions are consistent with our aims and priorities to build up strong relationships and deliver the goal of radical hospitality and inclusivity. This will be achieved through consistency in communications, reflecting on working practices, evaluating and acting on feedback.





What role do volunteers play at **OUTSIDE?**

To deliver our vision for volunteering it is important we understand the range of ways volunteers engage with **OUTSIDE**.

- Steward events
- Marketing and promotion of events
- Advocate for the project
- Inform and enhance geographical spread
- Volunteer hours (2023/2024 = 1167 hours)
- Shape the programme (Advisory Groups)
- Evaluation (story collectors)
- Case Studies
- Research
- Inform decision making
- Enhance capacity
- Lived experience



What do volunteers offer to OUTSIDE?



- **Local knowledge** – Volunteers have a broad knowledge of the Staffordshire Moorlands including challenges and issues, opportunities and other existing organisations or community groups, venues and facilities, heritage and tradition.
- **Energy and enthusiasm** for local projects in their area.
- **Diversity** – Volunteers bring a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives from across the Staffordshire Moorlands
- **Community ambassadors** - Volunteers can extend the organisations reach and contact with the community.
- **Organisational feedback** – Volunteers offer a diverse and place focused insight into the work of OUTSIDE.
- **Skills and experience** - Volunteers contribute a range of skills, knowledge, and experience that can complement the existing skills of the team and highlight areas for progression and development.
- **Raising awareness** - Volunteers act as advocates to raise awareness challenges and issues and promote positive change both influencing the work of OUTSIDE and promoting OUTSIDE within their communities.
- **Mentoring** - Volunteers can share their knowledge and expertise to mentor and educate others both in the moment and as part of organised skill sharing.



What can OUTSIDE offer to volunteers? What sets OUTSIDE apart as an organisation working with volunteers?

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Kindness and radical hospitality

- Volunteers are not required to have any prior experience to get involved. Full training will always be provided for all roles.
- Any volunteer with enthusiasm, interest or a need warmly welcomed
- Volunteer Kit - Volunteers will be supported to participate. This includes access to warm winter coats, hi-vis jackets, t-shirts, hats, gloves and umbrellas while volunteering
- Volunteer information pack will be given to all volunteers ahead of time. The pack will outline what to expect and a clear point of contact.
- We are committed to ensuring that our volunteers are not out of pocket for any reasonable expenses incurred during the course of their volunteering with OUTSIDE.

Professional benefits and experiences

- Signposting to resources, support and further opportunities
- Training – both existing and bespoke
- Visits and trips to foster ambition and aspiration
- Experience
- Support networks
- Introduction to other artists and work
- Support and access to a range of volunteering opportunities
- Opportunities to gain new skills
- Opportunities to share skills and knowledge with others





Resources

What resources do we have available to us to engage and support volunteers?

Partnerships that can help us deliver our strategy

- Simply Connect
- Your Housing
- Universities specifically Keele, Staffordshire and Manchester
- Leek College
- Support Staffordshire
- Culture North volunteers
- Existing volunteers
- Libraries team

Resources

- Volunteer induction and volunteer info packs
- Excel spreadsheet
- Budget for travel and access
- Social media
- Whatsapp
- Volunteer video
- Print
- Surveys - data



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How will we achieve our aims and ambitions as a volunteer organisation?

- Strengthen our volunteer infrastructure to create a consistent approach to volunteer management across the organisation through purposeful and consistent communications. We will deliver a monthly newsletter to volunteers highlighting upcoming opportunities including voluntary roles, training, workshops and experiences.
- Expand volunteering opportunities including regular roles, visits and trips, sign-posting, and access to opportunities and training that are both bespoke or existing with local or national organisations including first aid.
- Increase awareness of volunteering opportunities and the benefits through case studies, story collecting and sharing these with a broader and more diverse public.
- Data collection and analysis - Gather a broader range of data about volunteers including age, sex, ethnicity. Using existing data to plot volunteer locations to develop a fuller picture of where our volunteers are located in the Staffordshire Moorlands. Analysis of this data will help to highlight gaps in our volunteer demography, allow us to identify some of the barriers to participation and to target underrepresented groups for volunteering, and to build numbers where we already have success.



Actions and focus areas for increased capacity

Introduce regular weekly/monthly volunteering covering areas such as:

- Admin
- Volunteer support
- Marketing
- Evaluation
- Fundraising
- Photography

Increase advisory group involvement

Increase steering group involvement

Increase youth advisory group involvement

Work placement – Offer at least 1 additional work placement opportunity with the organisation

Evaluation (story collectors) – collect at least a further 3 volunteer stories

Increase volunteer hours to above 1167 hours over the year

Offer training either existing or bespoke

Visits and trips (3 additional)



Actions: What are our aims?	When will we deliver them
<p>Volunteer strategy feedback gathering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite OUTSIDE team to comment on their experiences and contribute to the volunteer strategy and its implementation. - Bring together a volunteer focus group to evaluate and contribute to volunteer strategy 	Oct-Nov
<p>Communications</p> <p>Monthly volunteer newsletter – Streamline communications and share upcoming opportunities with OUTSIDE and with other organisations in the Staffordshire Moorlands.</p>	Sept – first issue went to volunteers on 30 th September 2024
<p>Website development – Add more detailed description about volunteer offer and what makes volunteering with OUTSIDE different/unique</p>	Nov-Dec – Updated and ongoing
<p>OUTSIDE volunteer induction pack – Pack will outline opportunities, what to expect and FAQs, in tone it will stress the mutual benefit of volunteering with OUTSIDE</p>	May 2025
<p>Improve Accessibility through radical hospitality</p> <p>Acquisitions - Purchase branded coats, hats, gloves and umbrellas to add to existing hi-vis jackets and t-shirts</p>	Nov-Dec - Completed
<p>Expenses policy – produce a comprehensive how-to guide issued to all volunteers and included with the induction pack</p>	October - Completed
<p>Increase volunteering capacity</p> <p>Frequent (weekly/monthly) volunteer opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admin/survey roles – sustainability volunteer champion - collating data on carbon footprint; accessibility volunteer champion; marketing support - Develop a series of ongoing volunteer activities for volunteers to complete at home e.g. crafts that can be utilised during events 	Ongoing
<p>Increase volunteer hours to above 1167 hours over the year – Increase engagement and participation across events, advisory groups and through frequent volunteer opportunities.</p>	March/year end

Actions: What are our aims?	When will we deliver them?
<p>Training and Experiences</p> <p>Identify training needs and interests of volunteers and provide access to existing or bespoke training opportunities.</p> <p>Identify training by local and national providers for volunteers and any professional development opportunities including first aid, accessibility and environmental awareness</p>	<p>Ongoing – First training session took place in March 2025. A programme of bi-monthly training to follow</p>
<p>Work placement (1 additional) – Provide a work placement opportunity with the organisation</p>	<p>Ongoing – Student placements with Buxton and Leek College and Keele University taking place March – July 2025</p>
<p>Visits and trips (3 additional) – offer diverse and meaningful visits or trips to volunteers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Data and evaluation</p> <p>Demographics analysis - Gather a broader range of data about volunteers including age, sex, ethnicity. Use existing data from postcodes to plot volunteer locations and develop a fuller picture of where our volunteers are located in the Staffordshire Moorlands.</p> <p>Use data analysis to highlight gaps in our volunteer demography, identify barriers to participation and target underrepresented groups for volunteering, and use it to build numbers where we already have success.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Evaluation (story collectors) increase capacity by 3</p>	<p>Ongoing – 3 stories have been collected. Increase target to 5.</p>