



Introducing Scotland's Voluntary Sector

A guide for MSPs



Scotland's vibrant voluntary sector

is a key asset in our communities, but one which is often underestimated and overlooked.

In this guide, we provide details of the size and scale of the sector, and the ways in which it can support you and your constituents nationally and locally. We hope that this will complement what you already know about the voluntary organisations in your constituency, or those which you have come across in other aspects of your life.

We also hope that this guide, and the conversations we have around it, help you to develop and maintain an ongoing relationship with the voluntary sector. Knowing the voluntary organisations in your local area is a great way to understand the ways in which they are supporting your constituents, and the issues they care about.

We look forward to working with you at a national level to help access the wide range of expertise available, and so you can help bring the voice of the sector into debates and decisions made by the parliament to improve the sustainability of Scotland's charities, social enterprises and community groups.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if there is any way in which we can help you.

With very best wishes,



Anna Fowlie
Chief Executive, SCVO

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Chief Executive, Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise –
on behalf of the TSI Network Scotland

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Summary

- Voluntary organisations are **charities, community organisations** and **social enterprises**.
- Across Scotland, including in your constituency, the voluntary sector is a major **employer**, a **partner** in delivering public services, and a vital **contributor** to society and the economy.
- Voluntary organisations **need your support** to continue to provide the vital services that people and communities in your constituency rely on.
- Many voluntary organisations can provide you with **experience, expertise** and **intelligence** to help you in your role in the parliament and in supporting your constituents.
- Even before COVID, the voluntary sector was **fragile**, and it is more so now. **Sustainability** needs to be vastly improved, including a greater degree of **financial security**, such as **multi-year funding**.
- Voluntary organisations and the people and communities they support **need your help** to make sure they are heard and represented in the parliament's work.

Contact us



To arrange a short meeting about Scotland's voluntary sector and how you can engage colleagues across the sector in your work, contact SCVO's policy team
policy@scvo.scot



To connect with your local Third Sector Interface (TSI) on issues in your local area, contact
info@tsi.scot

Scotland's voluntary sector

Voluntary organisations are a part of everyday life for most people. They are critical to Scotland's wellbeing, prosperity, and success. Not everyone will know when they engage with a voluntary organisation, but they do so in many different ways. For example, Scotland's voluntary organisations:

Provide good quality **jobs** and **support into employment**



Support **digital inclusion**, provide **childcare**, **social care** and **housing**, and support the most disadvantaged people and communities



Undertake **vital medical and environmental research**



Run most of Scotland's **theatres, museums, galleries, and sports clubs**



Campaign for change, ensuring the voices of people and communities are heard



Key facts

Scotland's voluntary sector is hugely diverse. It ranges from tiny volunteer-run community groups like village halls and play groups to major public service providers in social care and housing.

There are **40,000+** voluntary sector organisations in Scotland

4 in 5 Scots used a voluntary sector organisation last year

In 2018, voluntary sector turnover was over **£6bn**

Over **1m** people volunteered in Scotland last year

There are over **250,000** charity trustees across the country

Scotland's voluntary sector has **100,000+** paid staff

78% of charities in Scotland are local

In Scotland, we enjoy the benefits of 40,000+ organisations, including:

- More than **6,000** social enterprises
- **25,000** registered charities
- Over **100** credit unions

Together these organisations employ **over 100,000 paid staff** – the same number as the digital and technology sector in Scotland. The average turnover of charities with staff is around £1.3m. However, three-quarters of charities are run entirely by volunteers and have an annual turnover of less than £100k.

In 2018, **voluntary organisations had a combined annual turnover of over £6bn**; as a comparison, that is **more than three quarters of the tourism-related industries' £7.8bn** turnover that year.



The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national membership organisation for charities, community organisations and social enterprises.

SCVO believes that a thriving and effective voluntary sector is vital to Scotland's economy and society. SCVO supports the sector to achieve its ambitions through delivering services, by giving the sector a voice at a national level and promoting and supporting innovation and improvement. SCVO's purpose, therefore, is to support, promote and develop a confident, sustainable voluntary sector in Scotland. SCVO has a community of around **2,800 members**.

SCVO can give you an overview of the scale and breadth of the sector, the significant contribution the sector makes and the challenges voluntary organisations face, particularly as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. **SCVO represents the sector at a national level**, and can put you in touch with organisations across Scotland working on the specific issues that matter to you.

SCVO also provides advice and services to voluntary organisations that will be useful to organisations in your constituency. For example, for many years SCVO has delivered **digital capacity-building** support to the sector, including **support for digital inclusion**. The team at SCVO provide **payroll, IT and HR services**, and provide **support, information, advice and training** to members, the sector and the wider public. SCVO is the proud host and organiser of the **Scottish Charity Awards** and **The Gathering**, which is the largest event for the voluntary sector in the UK. SCVO's **Funding Scotland** service is the most widely-used grant finder among voluntary organisations in Scotland, supporting the sector to find the funding needed to make a difference in communities across the country.

Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs)

The TSI Scotland Network is a body of charities that support the voluntary sector across Scotland. There are 32 TSIs – or Third Sector Interfaces – in Scotland, one for each local authority area.

Each TSI is **embedded within the community** it serves and has a **deep, localised knowledge** of the voluntary sector in their area. TSIs have **trusted relationships** with voluntary organisations and community groups on a local level and across the whole range of policy areas. As a network, **TSIs work together** to enable and facilitate third sector involvement in creating a fairer society that is focused on wellbeing and seeks to tackle the climate emergency.

TSIs are here to help MSPs understand the local picture of the voluntary sector in their constituencies. They can tell you what the **needs, services and challenges** are in specific local authority areas. They can also help you **build connections** with voluntary organisations so that you can see the difference they make first-hand.



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Investing in the voluntary sector

There are lots of myths and misconceptions about voluntary sector funding. For example, two thirds of sector income is earned rather than donated.

Around
25%
of income comes from
public sector contracts



Around
25%
of income comes
from grants



Around
25%
of income comes from
donations, sales and trading
through activities like
charity shops



Around
20%
of income comes from rents,
including public buildings
and housing



Scotland's voluntary sector is a major provider of public services, from health and social care to education and housing, with **£2bn** in income coming from the public sector annually, including:

£1bn
from local authorities

£500m
from Scottish Government

£300m
from other public bodies
such as Creative Scotland

£200m
from NHS/Health
& Social Care

£60m
from European sources

There is currently no national assessment of the true added value of public investment in the sector, but many individual charities have carried out Social Return on Investment research to highlight the significant benefits of their work. Most recently, **Children's Hospices Across Scotland** reported that its services generated **£6.24 in public value in return for every public pound invested**¹.

Despite this, many voluntary organisations delivering public services **struggle with short-term funding arrangements** that make it challenging to plan for the future. As a result, charity managers frequently raise **concerns about the amount of time they spend trying to raise money** rather than delivering vital services. Some estimates suggest that leaders of small to medium charities spend a quarter of their time chasing funding. **Short-term funding also creates stress** for staff and beneficiaries.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/25j33bwe>

How can you help?

Scotland's voluntary organisations are facing a huge demand for their services at a time when their future is more uncertain than ever. People and communities who benefit from voluntary organisations need you to advocate for these services to make sure that they are able to play their part in the fairer, greener, healthier and more inclusive society we all want to see.



Get to know voluntary organisations in your constituency.

Together, you can make sure the people that voluntary organisations support are heard and represented throughout the parliament and its work. By finding out more about local voluntary organisations you'll also find great sources of support for your constituents.



Hear from voluntary organisations, locally and nationally, about the issues they care about, and learn from their expertise.

Many voluntary organisations produced manifestos for the election where you can find out about their key areas of interest and ways in which you can help.²

The massive difference the Scottish Parliament working together with the sector can make is evident in SCVO's limited edition book celebrating 20 years of the Parliament³.

² <https://tfn.scot/news/holyrood-2021-what-the-voluntary-sector-wants>

³ <https://scvo.scot/20-years-delivering-change>



How can SCVO help you?

SCVO's policy and public affairs team has a wealth of knowledge on the voluntary sector and is happy to meet with you or your team. The policy team focuses on areas affecting organisations across the voluntary sector:

- Coronavirus and the post-pandemic recovery
- Europe and the post-Brexit landscape
- The sector's role in the economy
- The sustainability of the sector and funding
- The sector's role as an employer and driver of fair work
- Improving partnerships between local and national government and the sector
- Shaping the regulatory environment in which the sector operates.

SCVO's Policy Network also connects 200 policy and public affairs colleagues across the voluntary sector, and can connect you to organisations working on the issues you and your constituents care about.

Contact policy@scvo.scot

Other teams in SCVO provide advice and support to voluntary organisations which will be helpful to your constituents. Find more information on P14.

How can the TSI Scotland Network help you?

Individual TSIs have a deep knowledge of the sector in their local area and their staff are happy to meet with you and your team.

TSIs work across a range of thematic areas, including but not limited to health and social care, children and young people, volunteering, climate emergency, equality and funding. Their unique value lies in being embedded in local areas and having trusted relationships with their members.

To connect with your local TSI, contact info@tsi.scot



How can SCVO help your constituents?

SCVO has a wide range of practical support services available for voluntary organisations in your constituency.

SCVO's online **Coronavirus Information Hub** is also open to all and includes all the latest guidance and information to help voluntary organisations recover:

scvo.scot/support/coronavirus

Support for SCVO members includes:

- 1:1 information and advice services
- HR and employment support service
- Legal, VAT and tax support
- 30% discount on training programmes
- Full access to funding information from Funding Scotland

Membership is free for voluntary organisations with an income of less than £100,000.

SCVO also offers **payroll** and **IT services**, and **affordable managed** desk space in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness.

Find out more about what SCVO membership can do for your constituents at scvo.scot/about/membership

How can the TSI Network help your constituents?

Each TSI has a range of practical services available to all voluntary organisations in your area.

The support offered by individual TSIs varies depending on local needs, but can include:

- Governance (applying for charity status, working with boards, training etc.)
- Funding, fundraising and sustainability services (1:1, group-based and peer support)
- Volunteering (volunteer recruitment, retention, networks)
- Social enterprise (support at different stages of the life cycle, networks)
- Connections with local voluntary organisations and linking into public sector partner structures.

You can find your local TSI and see available services by visiting the Network directory at tsi.scot/tsi-directory





Beyond SCVO and the TSI Network

We know that you will have interests in particular subjects – whether it's disability rights, the environment, housing, learning, social care, sport, or transport, for example.

In Scotland, over 60 national intermediary organisations support and represent members who share a common interest or purpose in areas including youth work, the environment, health and social care, the arts, sport, and heritage.

Some intermediaries support hundreds of groups, and others provide tailored support to a small number of organisations. Collectively, intermediaries directly support thousands of member organisations, and indirectly they reach thousands of local communities and individuals across Scotland.

SCVO runs an Intermediaries Network to bring intermediaries together to discuss issues of shared interest. You'll find a copy of SCVO's Intermediaries Directory on the SCVO website:

scvo.scot/intermediaries

