



Volunteer Managers Network

May 2026

In this issue...

Introduction P. 1

Spotlight: supporting
volunteers working with
vulnerable people P. 2

Training for Volunteer
Managers P. 4

Vision for Volunteering P. 5

Other Business P. 6

Welcome to the latest edition of the Stoke-on-Trent Volunteer Managers Network Newsletter.

The Volunteer Managers Network is a space for people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent, an opportunity to share ideas, network and provide mutual support.

This newsletter enables us to reach those who haven't been able to attend our recent meetings, and to share any relevant information. Feel free to share amongst your networks with those you think may be interested.

If you're not already part of the network and you'd like to join, please email volunteering@vast.org.uk

Spotlight on: supporting volunteers working with vulnerable people

Irina Jurj – Victim Support

Irina is the Volunteer Manager at Victim Support, a charity that supports people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.

Victim Support have three services within Staffordshire: New Era (supporting victims of domestic abuse), Staffordshire Victim Gateway (supporting people affected by crimes) and Harmony (anti-social behaviour support).

To ensure volunteers are prepared to work with such sensitive cases, Victim Support offer extensive training. Over 8-12 weeks, volunteers access e-learning modules, attend virtual classes with a live trainer via Zoom, analyse case studies, and do extensive shadowing – sitting in on calls, meetings, and events, to learn from real people and real cases.

Volunteers have access to a variety of support – through the Employee Assistance Programme, volunteering network (for peer to peer support), mentoring, support from practitioner teams, and 1:1s with Irina.

“It’s important to acknowledge that them being affected by cases isn’t necessarily a negative – it shows that they’re empathetic,” Irina shared.

Lived experience is not a requirement to volunteer with Victim Support, but it is actively invited, and they find that a number of their volunteers are attracted to these roles because they or somebody they know has been through a similar situation.

With this in mind, within their recruitment process they ask scenario-based questions, and assess for emotional resilience by checking how they would regulate or unwind after a particularly difficult case.

Irina also shared how they retain volunteers, especially through the training period; keeping a volunteer’s personal motivations for volunteering at the forefront of engagement with them, and outlining expectations for both sides in a robust volunteer agreement. Acknowledging when a role may not be the right fit, for either the individual or the organisation, and seeing if there is another role which could be better suited for them.



[Find out more about Victim Support](#)

Spotlight on: supporting volunteers working with vulnerable people

Misha Biegus – Glow

Glow is one of four services that make up Honeycomb – Glow, Concrete, Revival, and Staffs Housing. Glow supports victims of domestic abuse, and Misha – as Glow’s Volunteer Coordinator – supports their team of volunteers.



With Glow’s small staff team of three people, and over 100 referrals received in the last quarter, volunteers are an essential part of Glow’s services.

Like Victim Support, Glow find that many of their volunteers are people with lived experience – often, volunteers have been through Glow’s support programme themselves. At Glow’s ‘Recovery Hub’ they offer a variety of support programmes for survivors of domestic abuse.

Misha stressed the importance of flexibility and informality with volunteers; not labelling initial conversations as interviews, and being mindful of volunteers’ lived experience. If a volunteer feels a role is suitable for them at the time, they can be referred into support until they feel ready to volunteer, or moved into a lower pressure role like supporting a social group – or a role in one of Honeycomb’s other services (for example, befriending services through Revival, working with older people).

Misha also discussed how important it is to make volunteers feel valued. Glow offer feedback opportunities for volunteers through their volunteer steering group, allowing to share what they’re enjoying about their roles, and any changes they’d like to see – for example, on request from volunteers in the steering group, Glow have introduced face to face training opportunities alongside their online training programme.

Volunteers also get to decide on celebratory and social activities – they regularly meet for meals, or day trips, and have a WhatsApp group where they can continue to socialise outside of their volunteering hours.

Volunteers are also invited to apply when paid roles are available, and Misha is proud that a number of volunteers have been able to step into these roles – many of them came from being service users, through volunteering, and are now in paid positions.

[Find out more about Glow](#)

News, Events and Updates

Training for Volunteer Managers!

VAST offer a variety of training opportunities. Some upcoming training suitable for Volunteer Managers includes...



4th June 2026 | 10:00am–12:00pm | Online via Teams

This webinar is a perfect starting point for anyone who coordinates and/or supports volunteers in any capacity, or for anyone who would like to start involving volunteers in their organisation, and is also suitable as a refresher for anyone already in a volunteer management role.

[Click here to book your space](#)



11th June 2026 | 9:45am–12:00pm | Dudson Centre

A strong, well-balanced trustee board is essential for any organisation aiming to thrive in a changing world. This practical and engaging training session explores how to strengthen your board's skills, culture, and decision-making by embracing diversity in all its forms.

[Click here to book your space](#)



8th October 2026 | 9:30am–4:00pm | Dudson Centre

Are you involved in coordinating or supporting volunteers? If so, this course is for you. Our in-depth Volunteer Management training is perfect for those looking to expand on their knowledge of volunteer management beyond our Introduction to Volunteer Management training.

[Click here to book your space](#)

See other training and networking opportunities on our calendar here:

[Click here to see the VAST calendar](#)

Vision for Volunteering

Our Vision for Volunteering

“Our Vision for Volunteering is to create a community where everyone comes together to make a positive impact. We believe that together we can create meaningful connections, foster empathy, and create a real sense of unity.



Putting the ‘unity’ in community, our mission is to inspire others to join in and help make the world a better place for all.”

What is the 'Vision for Volunteering'?

This Vision for Volunteering is a pledge, one where organisations like yours can show your commitment to developing and nurturing a community where volunteering thrives, and where every individual feels empowered to make a difference.

It’s a pledge to uphold and promote the values and principles that underpin our shared vision for a stronger, more connected community across Stoke-on-Trent.

What are the themes?

Our Vision for Volunteering statement identifies four key themes which fit the ethos of volunteering in Stoke-on-Trent:

Investing in
volunteers

Community
Connections

Experimentation
and Innovation

Encouraging
Individuality

Who's the Vision for?

YOU! It’s for you. It’s for your organisation and your Volunteer Manager(s) or coordinators(s). It’s for your volunteers, to be able to make their volunteering journey a positive, smooth, rewarding, and fulfilling one.

The Vision for Volunteering is for any volunteer involving organisation – no matter how big or small, old or new! We would love to have a wide range of organisations involved in the Vision for Volunteering.

[Click here to read the vision for volunteering](#)

[Click here to find out more, and sign up to get involved!](#)

Other business...

Upcoming training and networking events



[Click here to see the VAST calendar](#)

VAST Volunteering Quality Standards

Our free scheme provides a framework which organisations can work towards accreditation based on their volunteering policies and procedures, and the way they work with new and existing volunteers.

Our vision for the quality standards scheme is to instil consistent volunteer-related best practice across the whole of the local voluntary sector through structured and proactive support.



[Learn more about the Quality Standards](#)

Future Meetings

Our meetings rotate between face to face or virtual, with the confirmed details and agenda coming out two weeks before each meeting. You will now need to book your space at the meetings on our website. You can book future sessions below:

- **5th August 2026 (venue TBC)**

If you have any suggestions for the agenda, or can offer a free venue, please email volunteering@vast.org.uk.