



Kilkenny Volunteer Centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Cill Chainnigh



Strategic Plan 2026–2030

Foreword

As Chairperson and Centre Manager of Kilkenny Volunteer Centre, we are pleased to introduce this Strategic Plan, which sets out our direction for the next phase of our work and our continued commitment to strengthening volunteering across County Kilkenny.

As we move into this next phase, we do so with a clear understanding of the needs in our communities and of the positive impact that well-supported volunteering can have for volunteers, for the organisations that involve them, and for the people and places we serve.

Since our establishment in 2021, we have grown from a fledgling organisation into an established and embedded part of the community infrastructure in Kilkenny. Over the past five years, we have worked closely with volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs), and community partners across the county, learning what works well, where the gaps are, and where our support makes the greatest difference.

One of the strongest messages coming through our work is that volunteering is not one-size-fits-all. People come to volunteering in different ways, at different times in their lives, and with different needs. For some, it is about giving back locally; for others, it is about building confidence and skills, meeting people, improving wellbeing, or finding a stronger sense of belonging. This understanding has shaped how we see our role: not just connecting people with opportunities but supporting accessible pathways and quality experiences that enable volunteers to thrive and stay involved.

We also know that the VIOs we work with operate in a changing environment and often have limited capacity. When organisations are supported to recruit, welcome, train, and retain volunteers well, the benefits are significant: services are strengthened, programmes become more sustainable, and communities receive more consistent and higher-quality supports. Enabling VIOs to provide positive volunteer experiences remains a central focus of this strategy.

This Strategic Plan builds on what we have learned to date and sets out a focused approach for the coming years, placing volunteers at the centre of our work, creating more inclusive pathways into volunteering, strengthening participation and engagement, and supporting local organisations to involve volunteers effectively. Underpinning this is a clear aim: to grow volunteering in ways that make a tangible difference in people's lives and strengthen community resilience across County Kilkenny.

A consistent theme running through this plan is the importance of being realistic about what we can deliver. As a small team, we must focus our time and resources carefully, prioritising quality, directing support where it is most needed, and developing our work in a deliberate, sustainable way.

We are also conscious that the context for volunteering continues to change. There is

increasing demand for flexible and short-term opportunities, alongside the need to reach people who have not traditionally been involved. We will respond in a practical way, working closely with partners across the county and adapting our approach as needed.

Taken together, these insights have informed this strategy and the priorities we have set for the years ahead.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this strategy, our volunteers, VIOs, partners, Board and staff. Your insight and experience have helped shape a plan that is both realistic and forward-looking.

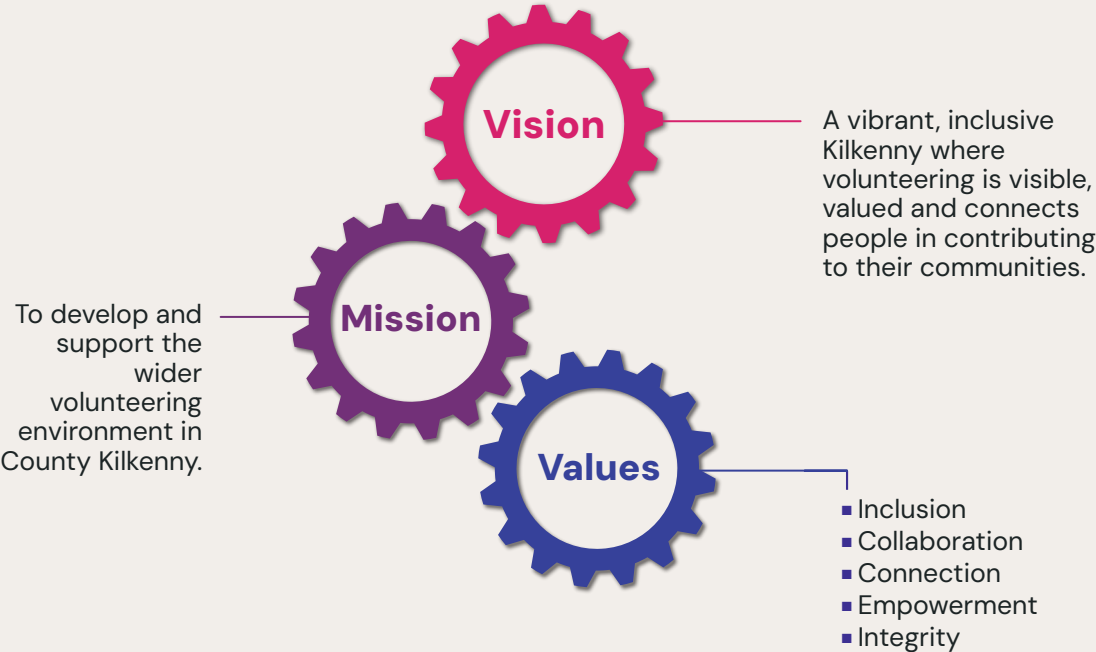
We extend our thanks to Ann Clarke & Associates for their support and guidance throughout the development of this strategy.

As we move into the next phase, we are committed to building a volunteering environment in Kilkenny that is accessible, inclusive and sustainable, one that supports and empowers volunteers, strengthens the capacity of local organisations, and delivers positive outcomes for the communities we serve.

Alan Curtis
Chairperson

Salena Grace
Centre Manager

Summary of Strategy 2026-2030



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Nurturing and supporting volunteers
2. Empowering Volunteer-Involving Organisations to give volunteers a good experience
3. Working smart and sustainably

Summary

This Strategic Plan sets out Kilkenny Volunteer Centre's (KVC) direction for 2026–2030. Our focus is to sustain high-quality volunteering supports, widen access and inclusion, strengthen the capacity of volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs), and ensure KVC remains resilient and well-governed. We will prioritise activities that deliver impact, are sustainable for a small team to deliver, and respond to the needs of volunteers, VIOs and communities across County Kilkenny.

What Will Be Different by 2030

By 2030, more people across County Kilkenny will be able to access volunteering that fits their lives, including flexible and inclusive opportunities. Volunteers will report consistently positive experiences and will be supported to stay engaged in volunteering. Volunteer-involving organisations will be better equipped to recruit, welcome and retain volunteers, resulting in stronger local services and community initiatives. KVC will remain a high-quality, well-governed and sustainable Volunteer Centre, using data and appropriate technology to improve delivery while prioritising quality over expansion.

Headline Commitments (2026–2030)

- Maintain a welcoming, professional and accessible service that connects people with meaningful volunteering opportunities.
- Widen participation by creating practical, inclusive pathways, including flexible, short-term and remote opportunities, and targeted support for people experiencing barriers.
- Build VIO capacity to deliver high-quality, inclusive volunteering by providing guidance, training, networking and feedback to improve volunteer experiences.
- Operate sustainably by protecting service quality, strengthening partnerships, measuring impact, and using appropriate technology and governance practices to remain resilient.

Overall Impact Expected By 2030

By 2030, KVC expects to have strengthened community resilience in County Kilkenny by increasing access to meaningful volunteering, improving volunteer experiences and engagement, and building the capacity of VIOs to involve volunteers well. This will support more sustainable community services and initiatives, while ensuring KVC remains a high-quality, well-governed and sustainable Volunteer Centre.

- For **volunteers**: more accessible and flexible pathways, and consistently positive experiences that encourage repeat involvement.
- For **VIOs**: improved volunteer management practice, stronger ability to recruit and retain volunteers, and enhanced volunteer experiences.

- For **communities**: stronger local services and community initiatives supported by volunteers, with increased participation across diverse communities.
- For **KVC**: sustained quality and compliance, stronger partnerships, and improved use of data/technology to deliver efficiently within available resources.

Who We Are

Kilkenny Volunteer Centre (KVC) is one of 29 Volunteer Centres affiliated to Volunteer Ireland. Volunteer Centres are funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht. These 29 Volunteer Centres support over 22,000 volunteers and more than 11,000 Volunteer-Involving Organisations (VIOs)¹.

We commenced operations in Kilkenny in January 2021. While we are based in Kilkenny city, our work covers the whole county.

We are a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, overseen by a Board of Directors and employ a full-time Centre Manager, 2 full-time Volunteering Development Officers and a part-time Administration & Communications Assistant.

What We Do

Kilkenny Volunteer Centre works to build a vibrant and inclusive culture of volunteering across County Kilkenny by connecting people, supporting VIOs, and strengthening the overall volunteering environment. We are committed to developing positive outcomes through volunteering and to helping build resilient communities where people feel connected, supported and able to contribute.

We place the volunteer at the heart of our work, providing an accessible, welcoming service that supports people to explore meaningful opportunities. Recognising that pathways into volunteering differ, we take a person-centred approach to support individuals across Kilkenny to access the personal and social benefits associated with volunteering.

As the county's central volunteering support service, we promote opportunities through the I-VOL database and connect individuals with VIOs. We work to increase access, improve quality, and widen participation in volunteering, particularly among underrepresented groups.

We support local VIOs to develop strong and sustainable volunteer programmes by providing consultancy, guidance, Garda vetting, and learning opportunities. This helps ensure volunteers have positive, well-supported experiences.

We promote and celebrate volunteering through initiatives such as National Volunteering Week, the Volunteer Ireland Awards, and local recognition events, highlighting the impact of volunteers and encouraging participation.

Collaboration is central to our approach. We work closely with community organisations, local agencies, education bodies, businesses, heritage and environmental sectors and

national partners to strengthen volunteering across the county. This enables us to embed our work within the local infrastructure and to reach new audiences.

Our work is underpinned by strong governance and a commitment to quality. We operate in line with the National Quality Standards Framework for Volunteer Centres and achieved the National Quality Standard Award in 2023.

We are fully compliant with the Governance Code for Charities and have been recognised for our governance standards through the Carmichael Good Governance Awards, winning Category 2 in 2023 and again in 2025 in recognition of our ongoing commitment to effective governance and quality².

Context For This Strategy

County Kilkenny

County Kilkenny's population grew by 5%, from 99,232 in 2016 to 104,160 in 2022³. While Kilkenny City is the main urban centre with a population of 28,000, the county remains predominantly rural, with 72% of the population widely dispersed in smaller regional towns and villages. This can present particular challenges in how KVC provides its services and responds to local needs.

Volunteering

County Kilkenny has a strong volunteer culture. In 2022, 14% of the population in Ireland volunteered. In Kilkenny, the proportion was higher, at 15%. The most common organisations that people volunteered with were sporting groups, followed by community groups, then social and charitable related activities.

	County Kilkenny	National Average
Percentage of population that volunteers	15%	14%
Average age of volunteers	48.2 years	38.8 years
Percentage of volunteers who were married with children	24.9%	22%
Percentage of families without children who volunteer	20.1%	18%

²Category 2 organisations are non-profits with an annual turnover of €100,000 to €250,000.

³Central Statistics Office, 2016 and 2022 Census.

¹Volunteer Ireland national statistics.

Volunteering brings many benefits to people, including the following:

Benefits of volunteering

- ✓ Personal well-being
 - ✓ Social life
 - ✓ Mental & physical health
 - ✓ Impacting local communities
 - ✓ New skills
 - ✓ Community ties
- ✓ Meeting new people
 - ✓ Improved social skills
 - ✓ Self-confidence
 - ✓ Integration
 - ✓ Career prospects

However, how people volunteer has changed, especially post-COVID-19, and key trends include⁴:

- Growth in demand for virtual volunteering.
- Decline in formal volunteering and a preference for more informal flexible volunteering.
- Volunteering on a drop-in and out basis, and less willingness to commit to a set number of hours and days.
- Shift towards being motivated by social inclusion and forging connections in communities.
- Challenges attracting volunteers to roles that require much time and training, or that have a governance function.

This means that KVC has to identify new, innovative and inclusive ways of engaging volunteers and supporting VIOs.

National Volunteering Strategy

The Programme for Government, *Our Shared Future*, committed to developing a national strategy for volunteering. The first *National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025* was developed by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht and is the key national framework and vision for volunteering in Ireland. It has five strategic objectives that aim to:

- Increase participation and diversity in volunteering.
- Develop the volunteering environment.
- Recognise the value and impact of volunteers.
- Promote international volunteering.
- Improve policy coherence.

KVC was developed as an action under the National Volunteering Strategy and plays a vital role in implementation at local level.

The Department is developing the second National Volunteering Strategy that will build

⁴ Central Statistics Office *Volunteering in Ireland Census 2022*, *National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025*, Kilkenny Submission Report for National Volunteering Strategy 2, KVC strategy consultations.

on the work of the first strategy. In 2025, KVC and Kilkenny Public Participation Network worked together to seek the views of volunteers and VIOs to inform this new strategy. A submission was subsequently made to the Department. The consultation process noted that many aspects of volunteering in County Kilkenny are working well, yet challenges remain, including the recruitment and retention of volunteers, the administrative burden on VIOs, and the need for more flexible and accessible volunteering opportunities.

Volunteer Ireland Strategic Plan

KVC is affiliated with Volunteer Ireland, the national representative body for Volunteer Centres. Volunteer Ireland’s strategy 2023-2027 has five strategic goals to:

- Advocate for volunteering.
- Support Volunteer Centres.
- Develop meaningful volunteering.
- Raise the profile of volunteering.
- Grow and sustain an excellent organisation consistent with values.

These goals are aligned with the National Volunteering Strategy and have informed KVC’s work.

KVC Trends

Since KVC started operations, the number of new volunteers registered with our service has nearly doubled; the number of opportunities applied for that were processed has doubled, and the number of confirmed volunteer placements also grew. Our capacity in 2024 was reduced when two staff members were on maternity leave, so there was a dip in all activity areas. These recovered in 2025.

The trend in VIOs participating in our service has also been positive. The total number of registered VIOs has nearly doubled, although there has been a slowdown in the number of new VIOs. The number of opportunities has held steady.



How this Strategy was Developed

The Board of KVC and its Strategic Planning Sub-Committee were assisted in developing this strategy by Ann Clarke & Associates.

We consulted with staff, the Board, volunteers, VIOs and other external stakeholders through an online survey, interviews, focus groups and workshops. This identified KVC's strengths, weaknesses/challenges, opportunities, threats/risks, what matters most in how KVC serves people, and the key priorities for the strategy. The consultants worked with the Strategy Planning Sub-Committee to finalise this strategy.

What Our External Stakeholders Say About Us



Professional and quality service

KVC is rated highly for our professionalism and described us as a well-run, energetic and well-regulated organisation. Volunteers highlighted the quality of our service and commitment of staff. VIOs said KVC staff are responsive and knowledgeable, and that they provide a great service. KVC is recognised as a reliable partner with sound governance structures.



Welcoming, helpful and inclusive

KVC is considered to be welcoming, inclusive, and friendly. People also stressed the staff's kind, caring, engaging and non-judgemental approach to volunteers. Our helpful and supportive approach plays an important role in encouraging volunteering in Kilkenny.



Volunteering

KVC is perceived as the one-stop shop for volunteering in Kilkenny. Stakeholders noted our commitment to diversity in volunteering, exploring new and innovative ways to create volunteering opportunities, and promoting volunteering in the county.



Community-focused

KVC is considered to have a strong community focus that connects with and supports volunteers and VIOs in addressing community needs. We are known for our collaborative, relationship-building approach.

Strategic Plan 2026-2030

Vision

A vibrant, inclusive Kilkenny where volunteering is visible, valued and connects people in contributing to their communities.

Mission

To develop and support the wider volunteering environment in County Kilkenny.

Values and Beliefs

The values that guide our work are as follows:

Inclusion	We welcome and respect difference, and work to remove barriers so that volunteering is accessible to everyone. We proactively include people from diverse backgrounds, experience and abilities.
Collaboration	We work in partnership with our volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations, agencies and other community partners.
Connection	We connect people together to enable mutual support, resilience in communities and long-term wellbeing.
Empowerment	We facilitate and enable volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations to be empowered and focus our support on those who need it most.
Integrity	We strive to be honest, transparent, professional and accountable in all we do.

Core beliefs that underpin our work are:

- All people should be valued and respected and have the opportunity to volunteer.
- Volunteering is a positive force which benefits individuals, VIOs and communities.
- Volunteering helps to build and strengthen connections and resilience within communities.
- All forms of volunteering, whether formal or informal, are equally valid.

Strategic Priorities

The focus of this strategy is on maintaining quality, focusing on activities that achieve impact, ensuring our activities are sustainable, and prioritising volunteers and VIOs who most need our support.

We also want to maintain our high standards in organisational management and governance and ensure we have the appropriate balance between ambition, innovation and our capacity to deliver services to volunteers and VIOs.

Overall, our primary focus will be on consolidating what we already do.

The top priorities under each goal below are in italics.

Strategic Priority 1: Nurturing and Supporting Volunteers

Goal 1.1: Placing volunteers at the centre of all we do by:

- *Providing a professional, high-quality, welcoming, accessible service that connects people with meaningful volunteering opportunities.*
- Having mechanisms to hear the voice of volunteers through ongoing communication and feedback.
- Actively engaging volunteers through ongoing communication, feedback and co-creation to shape and improve our services.
- Involving volunteers in our governance, including board, sub-committee roles and supporting peer-led initiatives.

Goal 1.2: Create inclusive pathways into volunteering that enable broader participation across Kilkenny

- *Proactively targeting and supporting individuals experiencing barriers to participation.*
- Developing and promoting flexible pathways into volunteering, including project-based, short-term and remote opportunities to meet diverse needs.
- Engaging with a range of sectors and partners to broaden and diversify volunteering opportunities across communities.
- Facilitating appropriate matching of volunteers with opportunities, based on their interests, skills and availability.

Goal 1.3: Sustaining engagement and participation in volunteering

- *Providing support, guidance and follow-up to help foster positive volunteering experiences.*
- Recognising and celebrating volunteer contributions.
- Maintaining regular communication with volunteers to keep them informed and creating opportunities to connect with one another.

Goal 1.4: Developing the volunteers of the future by:

- *Building strategic partnerships to reach new audiences and to broaden participation.*
- Raising awareness of volunteering through engagement with education providers and youth services to signpost to volunteering opportunities for young people.
- Promoting volunteering as a positive, accessible activity for all.
- Enhancing the role of volunteers in raising awareness of KVC services and strengthening our community presence.

Strategic Priority 2: Empowering Volunteer-Involving Organisations to give Volunteers a Good Experience

Goal 2.1: Building the capability of VIOs by:

- *Building and maintaining strong relationships with VIOs through engagement, collaboration and support.*
- Providing advice and guidance to support good volunteer management practice.
- Facilitating learning and networking opportunities for volunteer managers.
- Supporting VIOs to recognise, measure and communicate the impact of volunteering.

Goal 2.2: Enabling high-quality and inclusive volunteering experiences by:

- *Supporting VIOs to develop inclusive roles and strong volunteer management practices that ensure volunteers feel valued, supported and recognised.*
- Sharing insights and feedback with VIOs to improve volunteer experiences.
- Promoting volunteering opportunities through digital platforms and communications to support VIOs to attract volunteers.

Strategic Priority 3: Working Smart and Sustainably

Goal 3.1: Prioritising to protect quality and to achieve impact by:

- *Developing and implementing a strategy to measure and evaluate our impact.*
- Prioritising intensive support for underrepresented groups⁵ and lower-capacity VIOs.
- Delivering focused outreach in selected rural areas through partnership working.

⁵ The under-represented groups prioritised by KVC for the 2026–2030 strategic plan period are new communities, older people, young people, and people with disabilities

Goal 3.2: Building our strategic alliances by:

- *Developing strong relationships with key stakeholders to strengthen collaboration and enhance the reach of our services.*
- Using our experience and practice to inform relevant local, regional and national strategies and Volunteer Ireland's advocacy work.
- Collaborating with partners to promote and celebrate volunteering.
- Linking with other key agencies in Kilkenny to support engagement with volunteers and VIOs across the county and to promote volunteering to new audiences.

Goal 3.3: Ensuring KVC remains a great place to work by:

- *Developing a family-friendly work-life balance policy.*
- Conducting an annual review of pay and conditions.
- Engaging in realistic annual work planning.
- Seeking staff input and responding to staff feedback.
- Supporting continuous professional development.
- Developing a staff succession plan.

Goal 3.4: Using technology appropriately by:

- *Developing a policy on AI and emerging IT needs.*
- Investing in technology to communicate, connect, support and analyse where appropriate, and identifying activities that could be streamlined through automation.
- Ensure our communications, systems and processes, including our website and social media, are accessible, user-friendly and engaging.

Goal 3.5: Securing adequate funding and resourcing to support implementation by:

- *Identifying relevant funding streams and investigating opportunities to leverage funding from new initiatives that will complement what KVC already does.*
- Ensuring that funding/adequate resourcing are in place before committing to and commencing any new initiatives.
- Developing a fee structure for certain activities.

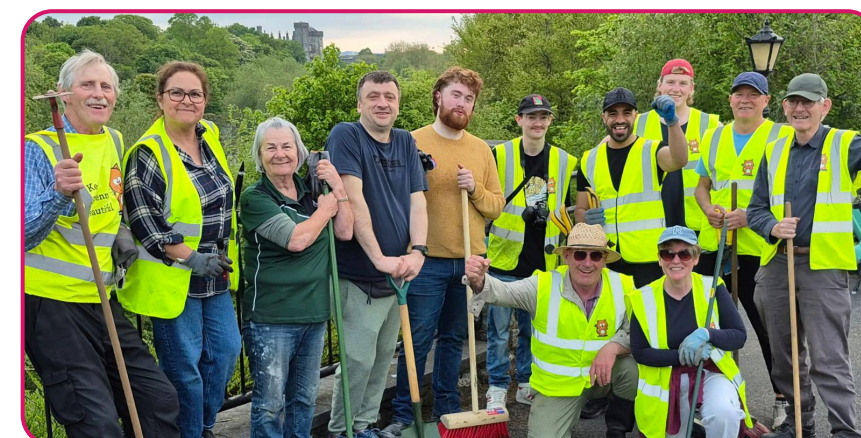
Goal 3.6: Developing excellence in how we govern our organisation by:

- *Continuously improving based on stakeholder feedback.*
- Maintaining high standards and quality in all that we do, through strategic focus, deliberate selection of work activities, and prioritisation.
- Ensuring diversity on our board, supporting board development and implementing a board succession plan.
- Engaging in regular reflective practice across the Board and operations to support learning, continuous improvement, and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

- Strengthen governance through regular risk review, business continuity planning and annual board performance reviews.
- Driving strategy execution via an annual planning day and a strategy sub-committee.

Goal 3.7: Demonstrating the value of our work by:

- *Developing and implementing a Marketing and Communications strategy.*
- Maintaining data systems to meet Department requirements and to enable us to demonstrate our impact.
- Measuring and communicating our impact and the impact of volunteers to stakeholders and the wider community.



Outcomes 2026-2030

Outcomes we aim to achieve in the coming years for volunteers include:

- They have increased confidence and skills through volunteering.
- They are better integrated and connected in their communities and have a stronger sense of belonging.
- Sustained engagement in volunteering, including repeat participation.
- They have meaningful avenues to participate in volunteering and contribute to their communities.

Outcomes we aim to achieve from our work with VIOs include:

- They feel confident and capable of recruiting, managing, and supporting volunteers.
- Improved skills and practice in volunteer management.
- Greater ability to attract and retain volunteers.

From our organisation's perspective, our outcomes will be:

- We are a well-run and effectively governed organisation.
- We remain focused, responsive and known for quality service provision.
- We have stronger and expanded strategic alliances that can help us to support volunteers and VIOs right across County Kilkenny.
- We effectively and consistently measure and communicate our impact.



Strategy Implementation

Critical factors to implementing this strategy will be:

1. Our funding remains at least at its current level, and preferably increases, and our staff complement does not fall.
2. We prioritise protecting the quality of our service provision and resisting pressure to expand or take on new activities beyond our resourcing.
3. We continue to have the support of volunteers, VIOs and partners we collaborate with.

The Board will oversee implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy. An overall Implementation Plan will be developed, and it will be supported with annual work plans for each staff member. The Manager will report to Board meetings about progress and any challenges encountered. The Board and staff will engage in an annual review day. Given the uncertain and rapidly changing environment in which we operate, we will conduct a mid-term review of progress against the strategy, and a final review will take place in 2030.

Conclusion

This Strategic Plan provides a clear and realistic roadmap for Kilkenny Volunteer Centre for 2026–2030. By nurturing and supporting volunteers, empowering volunteer-involving organisations to provide high-quality experiences, and working smart and sustainably, we aim to strengthen volunteering in ways that are inclusive, impactful and achievable within our capacity.

Delivering this strategy will depend on continued collaboration with volunteers, VIOs, community partners and funders. We will maintain a strong focus on quality and good governance. We will use our KPIs, annual work plans and regular Board oversight to monitor progress, learn and adapt in response to a changing environment.

Together, we will help build a volunteering culture in County Kilkenny where people feel welcomed, supported and able to contribute to thriving communities.

Appendices

Key Milestones In Our History

2016–20	Volunteer Information Service, supported by Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, serves County Kilkenny.
2018	Commitment by the Department of Rural & Community Development under the National Volunteering Strategy to upgrade 7 Volunteering Information Services, including Kilkenny.
2019–20	Volunteer Ireland delivered awareness-raising events across County Kilkenny. Board of Directors for KVC recruited and KVC was incorporated.
2021	KVC commenced operations. Two core staff recruited. Annual work plan developed. Trustees appointed and charitable status granted. Initiatives developed in response to COVID-19 restrictions. Garda vetting service developed. Website and social media instigated. Introduction of Kilkenny Community & Voluntary Awards.
2022	Outreach to rural communities. Provision of training for VIOs. Facilitated inclusive volunteering projects and supported the Ukraine Crisis Response in Kilkenny. Programme of events for National Volunteering Week.
2023	Growth in the number of volunteers and VIOs supported and in inclusive initiatives. Supported integration of new communities. KVC awarded Good Governance Award (Category 2). Achieved National Quality Standard Award. Administration & Communications Assistant appointed under the Community Employment scheme.
2024	Integration Support Officer appointed. Development of new strategic partnerships in the community such as St. Luke's Hospital, Danesfort Going Strong group, Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, Closh Residents Committee and the Bees for Biodiversity project. Established KVC's Creative Group for Good Causes. Initiated the Community Volunteers programme to support people from diverse backgrounds and abilities to engage in community activities and to support short-term events, festivals and community response.
2025	Opening new pathways for new audiences, and more people than ever are engaged. Submission developed for the second National Volunteering Strategy. KVC was awarded the Good Governance Award (Category 2). Accompanied One Million Stars to the European Parliament to showcase this Kilkenny initiative. Developed accessible project-based volunteering opportunities.

KVC Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Strengths ▶ Professional, dedicated, responsive, engaged, creative team ▶ Good governance, strategic & well-run ▶ Quality provision ▶ Careful matching of volunteers to opportunities ▶ Intensive supports where needed ▶ Transparent communications & managing expectations ▶ Relationship building, collaboration, making connections & networking ▶ Focus on outcomes & impact ▶ Trustworthy ▶ Welcoming newcomers & supporting integration	Opportunities ▶ Contributing to other local strategies to support volunteering ▶ Supporting under-represented groups to volunteer & to broaden KVC's reach ▶ Diversifying & leveraging funding ▶ Using relevant technology ▶ Making connections
Weaknesses/Challenges ▶ Visibility ▶ Limited resources & staff capacity ▶ Current funding model & reliance on one main funding source ▶ Rural engagement & volunteering development ▶ Further development of links & connections	Potential Threats/Risks ▶ Funding cutbacks ▶ Reduction in people coming forward to volunteer, or fewer have time to volunteer ▶ Volunteer fatigue or burn-out ▶ Reduction in the availability of volunteering opportunities ▶ Loss of skilled staff and/or Board members, staff burn-out, reduction in quality ▶ Being perceived as too city-centric or too focused on certain communities ▶ Artificial Intelligence & automation ▶ Mission drift

Volunteering Needs Identified by Stakeholders

- ▶ Volunteering opportunities for new communities, people with disabilities & other excluded groups
- ▶ Using volunteering to support people experiencing isolation
- ▶ Capacity building of smaller, grassroots VIOs
- ▶ Developing short-term volunteering opportunities
- ▶ Signposting schools & colleges to facilitate students to engage in volunteering

What Matters Most to Stakeholders in What KVC Does

- ▶ Prioritising & ensuring quality over quantity
- ▶ Serving the community, connecting people, being inclusive & making an impact
- ▶ Raising awareness about volunteering & showing the value of volunteering
- ▶ Getting people involved in volunteering
- ▶ Supporting volunteers & volunteering opportunities
- ▶ Supporting VIOs to recruit volunteers & to implement best practice in volunteer management
- ▶ Maintaining a person-centred approach



Monitoring Progress and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Strategy

Headline KPIs (Baseline 2025)

Measure	2025 baseline	Target 2030 (conservative)
New volunteer registrations p.a.	374	400
Placements secured p.a.	538	550
Placement rate	33% ⁶	50%+
Repeat engagement (returning volunteers) p.a.	178	200
Registered VIOs engaging with KVC	226	250

⁶ This was the national average placement rate across the 29 Volunteer Centres in 2025

How We Will Measure Progress

Progress will be tracked through the headline KPIs above and the full KPI tables under each Strategic Priority, with quarterly monitoring (service data) and annual reporting (survey and governance measures).

KPIs for Strategic Priority 1: Nurturing and Supporting Volunteers

KPI	Baseline	Target (2030)	Data source	Reporting
New volunteer registrations	2025 baseline: 374	400	I-VOL	Quarterly
Placements secured	2025 baseline: 538	550	I-VOL	Quarterly
Placement rate	2025 baseline: 33%	50%+	I-VOL	Quarterly
Repeat engagement (returning volunteers engaging with KVC)	2025 baseline: 178	200	KVC records	Annually
Volunteer experience score (overall satisfaction with KVC)	Baseline to be established (2026)	80% positive	Annual volunteer survey	Annually
Participation from underrepresented groups (as defined by KVC)	Baseline to be established (2026)	Year-on-year increase	I-VOL and project records	Annually

KPIs for Strategic Priority 2: Empowering Volunteer-Involving Organisations to give Volunteers a Good Experience

KPI	Baseline	Target (2030)	Data source	Reporting
Registered VIOs engaging with KVC	2025 baseline: 226	250	I-VOL	Quarterly
VIO satisfaction with KVC service	Baseline to be established (2026)	80% positive	Annual VIO survey/ feedback	Annually
Capacity-building supports delivered to VIOs (e.g. training, consultancy, 1:1 supports)	Baseline to be established (2026)	Year-on-year increase	I-VOL	Quarterly

KPIs for Strategic Priority 3: Working Smart and Sustainably

KPI	Baseline	Target (2030)	Data source	Reporting
Service quality maintained (e.g., Quality Standards/audit actions completed)	2023 achieved (pre-baseline)	Maintain / renew as applicable	Volunteer Ireland Quality Standards evidence	Annually
Staff stability (e.g., annual staff turnover)	Baseline to be established (2026)	<25% p.a.	HR records	Annually
Funding stability/ diversification (e.g., % of income from main funder; total funding)	Baseline to be established (2026)	Increased and more diversified	Annual accounts/ management accounts	Quarterly/ Annually
Strategic alliances (e.g. active partnerships delivering agreed actions)	Baseline to be established (2026)	Year-on-year increase	IVOL Project Records	Quarterly
Compliance maintained (Governance Code/ regulatory obligations met)	Compliant	Compliant	Board assurance/ Compliance Calendar	Quarterly
Visibility of volunteering (e.g., reach/engagement for key campaigns)	Baseline to be established (2026)	Year-on-year increase	Social media analytics; press coverage	Quarterly

Monitoring and Reporting

The Board will oversee implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy. An overall Implementation Plan will be developed, and it will be supported with annual work plans. The Manager will report to Board meetings about progress and any challenges encountered. The Board and staff will engage in an annual review day. Given the uncertain and rapidly changing environment in which we operate, we will conduct a mid-term review of progress against the strategy and a final review will take place in 2030.

2026	The Board will oversee implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy. An overall implementation Plan will be developed and it will be supported with annual work plans.
2027	The Manager will report to Board meetings about progress and any challenges encountered. The Board and staff will engage in an annual review day
2028	We will conduct a mid-term review of progress against the strategy.
2029	The Board will oversee implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy. The Manager will report to Board meetings about progress and any challenges encountered. The Board and staff will engage in an annual review day.
2030	A final review will take place in 2030.

- 1. **Quarterly Board dashboard:** headline KPIs (registrations, placements, placement rate, VIO engagement), Red/Amber/Green status against annual work plan actions, key risks/issues and decisions required.
- 2. **Annual strategy progress report:** narrative progress against each Strategic Priority, year-end KPI results and trends, volunteer/VIO feedback summary, case studies, and priorities for the next year's work plan.
- 3. **Mid-term review pack (2028):** cumulative KPI trends, assessment of what is working/not working, resourcing and risk review, stakeholder consultation highlights, and recommendations for any adjustments for 2029–2030.

Stakeholder Roles in Monitoring

- **Board:** oversight of implementation, monitoring and review; considers progress and challenges at Board meetings; agrees any course-corrections.
- **Strategy Implementation Sub-Committee:** supports the Board with a deeper review of progress, risks and evidence between Board meetings.
- **Manager:** leads the Implementation Plan, maintains KPI reporting, and reports progress and challenges to the Board.
- **Staff team:** deliver annual work plans, maintain service data and quality processes, and identify operational learning for continuous improvement.
- **Volunteers and VIOs:** provide feedback through surveys, consultation and ongoing communication to help KVC improve quality and accessibility.

- **Partners and stakeholders:** contribute insight on emerging needs and support delivery of actions (e.g., rural outreach, inclusion pathways) through collaboration.

Managing Risks

Key Risks	Mitigation
Funding cutbacks/ reliance on one main funder	Maintain a conservative delivery plan, strengthen reporting and outcomes evidence, and pursue diversified funding opportunities aligned to our mission.
Capacity constraints (small team) leading to reduced quality	Prioritise activities with greatest impact, resist un-resourced expansion, use annual work planning, and streamline processes through appropriate technology.
Volunteer recruitment challenges	Promote flexible opportunities, support VIOs to strengthen volunteer management and recognition, and monitor volunteer experiences so issues are addressed early.
Reduced availability/ quality of volunteering opportunities within VIOs	Build VIO capability (training, advice, networking), share feedback to improve practice, and support inclusive role design.
Staff/Board turnover and loss of organisational knowledge	Support staff development and wellbeing, maintain succession planning, and strengthen governance processes and documentation.
Perception risks (e.g., too city-centric) and mission drift	Deliver targeted rural outreach through partnerships, communicate service criteria transparently, and use governance oversight to keep activities aligned to mission.
AI/automation risks (privacy, bias, inappropriate use)	Develop and implement an AI policy, use secure systems, and apply human oversight for sensitive decisions and communications.



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