

# **WIRRAL TOGETHER STRATEGY**

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**2017-2020**

**THE WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP**

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# **CONTENTS**

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>OUR AMBITION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OUR PRIORITIES</b>	
1. INSPIRING PEOPLE TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES	<b>9</b>
2. ENCOURAGING MORE PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER IN WIRRAL	<b>11</b>
3. WORKING TOGETHER TO REMOVE BARRIERS	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS STRATEGY</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ACTION PLANS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>23</b>



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## INTRODUCTION

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### Wirral is home to many vibrant, engaged communities who work together to get things done – volunteers who improve their areas and the lives of people living there.

There are many reasons why people get involved in their communities. Some are passionate about a particular cause, others see it as a way of boosting their employability or simply to make new friends and have fun. Whatever the reasons for people getting involved, research suggests that those who volunteer are happier than those who don't.<sup>2</sup>

Wirral residents, community groups and public, private and voluntary and faith organisations all play important roles to work collaboratively and make a positive difference to Wirral's communities. Only through working together, will we be able to strengthen communities and use our collective resources and creativity to provide local solutions to local problems.

It is important we continue to recognise the inspiring and innovative work of community members and volunteers, and to help remove the barriers that so often inhibit good ideas and imaginative solutions which benefit local people.

It's important to recognise the public sector cannot continue doing what it has traditionally done in these financially difficult times. Public services need to develop an entirely different relationship with residents and ensure that local people and communities are able to do more for each other and their local areas.

In July 2015, the Wirral Partnership made up of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group, Wirral University Teaching Hospital, Merseyside Police, Department of Work and Pensions Wirral, Citizens Advice Wirral, Wirral Chamber of Commerce, Wirral Metropolitan College, Wirral

Community NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Wirral Council agreed the Wirral Plan, a set of 20 pledges. Community involvement and volunteering were identified as key themes underpinning all the pledges.

#### ***Services are joined up and accessible***

*We are already integrating public sector and community services to make sure they are fully joined up, but we will integrate more services with our partners, and work with voluntary and community groups to transfer local assets for them to manage directly, providing the services residents need.*

*We will enable our already thriving communities to realise their full potential, and unlock the skills and expertise within them to deliver more for themselves.*

It was agreed a strategy was needed to help identify what can be done to acknowledge and support this in Wirral. This strategy is linked to all areas of the Wirral Plan and community involvement is a key part of how we achieve our joint aims.

To develop this strategy we held two events in June and October 2016 with participants from across the public, private, voluntary, faith and community sectors to establish our ambition and the actions based on our collective thoughts and solutions. From listening to and learning from participants three priorities were developed.

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## OUR AMBITION

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The priorities underpinning this Wirral Together Strategy are:

	Priorities
1	Inspiring people to become more involved in their communities
2	Encouraging more people to volunteer in Wirral
3	Working together to remove barriers

I am proud to commend this strategy to you and am grateful to the Wirral Together Steering Group for leading its development. My thanks also to all those who have contributed from local voluntary and community organisations and the public and private sector.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew Patrick". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Councillor  
Matthew Patrick**  
Cabinet Member for  
Localism and Engagement

*“ As Chief Executive of Community Action Wirral and a member of Wirral’s Partnership Board, I was really pleased to be asked to lead the development of a strategy which recognises the essential role that active citizens and volunteers play in building strong communities.*

*There are many benefits that volunteering brings to the person offering their time and the people and organisations they support. Volunteers come from all different backgrounds and age groups. For many, volunteering is about sharing skills to support others but it’s also a great way to meet new people, learn new things, have fun and improve health and well-being in the process!*

*In Wirral, there are all kinds of volunteering opportunities available whether you’re an individual or a businesses or organisation who want to invest their staff’s time, skills and energy into some fantastic local causes which deliver positive outcomes across the borough.*

*Our ambition is to work together as partners make it easier for local people to find and apply for opportunities to volunteer or just get involved informally to support local projects.*

*I am grateful to all of those who have given their time to develop this strategy which supports all areas of the Wirral Plan and look forward to achieving our actions through strong partnership work and ongoing dialogue with communities.*”

**Annette Roberts**

**Chief Executive  
Community Action Wirral**

By 2020, we want our communities to be thriving and realising their full potential, with residents and businesses sharing their skills and talents to make Wirral a better place.





# OUR PRIORITIES

## 1

**Inspiring people to become more involved in their communities**

The skills and talents of local residents are integral to strong and sustainable communities for the future.

Thousands of people in Wirral support their local community on a regular basis. This could be by doing the weekly shopping for an elderly neighbour, helping to keep their neighbourhood clean and tidy or even babysitting for a friend without getting paid. It is essential to recognise the value of these types of activities in creating community spirit and helping to make the lives of those around us that little bit easier.

In Wirral, there are some fantastic examples of people coming together to support their communities. It's essential that public services lead by stepping back to enable such community action to flourish.

**What do we already know?**

- The Residents Survey 2015 told us that 48% of residents could - if more information and support was available - be encouraged to volunteer and become more involved in their local communities<sup>3</sup>.
- Both local and national research highlights the importance of a cause to a volunteer with 31% of Wirral residents citing this as a key motivating factor<sup>1</sup>.
- The 45 to 54 age group had the highest number of people who informally volunteered at least once a month (41%) followed by the 65 to 74 age group (36%)<sup>3</sup>.
- The 18 to 34 and 55 to 64 age groups had (significantly) the highest percentage of people who had never informally volunteered (27% and 32% respectively)<sup>3</sup>.

**How will we achieve our aim?**

- We will encourage residents and local groups to use their skills and energies to benefit their local area.
- We will continue to recognise and promote the work of our local community groups and create opportunities for networking between groups, organisations and public services.
- We will focus on developing approaches to working in neighbourhoods which unlock the potential of communities and residents.

## What's already happening in Wirral?

### Places of Welcome

Places of Welcome is a growing network of hospitality run by local community groups who want to make sure that everyone in their area has a place to go for a friendly face, a cup of tea and a conversation if and when they need it. The primary aim of the Places of Welcome network is that "Every neighbourhood has places where all people feel safe to belong, connect and contribute".

For more information about where these are happening in Wirral, contact Chris Shaw [cshawcommunity@icloud.com](mailto:cshawcommunity@icloud.com)

### Wirral Communities of Practice

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is an approach based on the principle of identifying and mobilising individual and community assets rather than focussing on problems and need. The Wirral Community of Practice is a network of community activists motivated by different things but who come together to build links with the aim of making Wirral a better place.

Communities of Practice aims to:

- Share community experiences and stories of development
- Grow new, strong connections and trusting relationships between Wirral people from diverse backgrounds but with common purposes.
- Develop new community practices in Wirral

For more information about how to get involved, contact Chris Shaw [cshawcommunity@icloud.com](mailto:cshawcommunity@icloud.com)

## 2

**Encouraging more people to volunteer in Wirral**

People are motivated to volunteer in many different ways. For some it's about lending their skills to something they are passionate about, for others it provides an opportunity to have fun or meet new people. Volunteering has helped many people to boost their career options and can contribute positively to increased self-esteem and confidence which are important underlying factors needed to gain employment. Research also suggests that volunteers are up to 12% happier than those who do not volunteer<sup>2</sup>.

In 2015, just over a quarter of Wirral residents said they volunteer at least once a month in a club or organisation and just under half of residents said they have volunteered in the last 12 months<sup>3</sup>.

Wirral is fortunate to have many exciting and flexible opportunities to volunteer, with roles to suit the skills and fit around the commitments of every person. It is therefore essential Wirral's volunteering opportunities are easy to find and to apply for and that volunteers receive the right support and resources.

A priority for this strategy is to match the aspirations, skills and talents of volunteers with the opportunities which are available.

**What do we already know?**

- 54% of 18 to 34 year olds in Wirral stated that they would volunteer if the hours were flexible and 46% stated they would volunteer if it didn't involve a big commitment<sup>3</sup>.
- 36% of Wirral men compared with 31% of Wirral women stated they had never formally volunteered<sup>3</sup>.
- Paid employment is the main barrier to volunteering with 50% of respondents stating they do not formally volunteer due to work commitments<sup>4</sup>.
- Research by the Cabinet Office (2016) states that among those who had formally volunteered at least once in the last 12 months, the most frequent reasons given for volunteering were to improve things/help people (60%) or to support a cause that is important to them (36%)<sup>4</sup>.

**How will we achieve our aim?**

- We will raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering and promote the wide range of volunteering opportunities in Wirral.
- We will recognise the contribution that volunteers make to our local communities and services.
- We will identify the areas of the Wirral Plan which would benefit from additional volunteers and promote related opportunities to all Wirral residents.
- We will work with public and private sector organisations to support their employees to volunteer and create volunteering schemes.
- We will build on existing approaches to recognise and reward volunteering in Wirral.

## What's already happening in Wirral?

### Side by Side

The UK's leading dementia charity, Alzheimer's Society has launched its innovative matching service Side by Side in a bid to reconnect people with dementia with their communities and favourite pastimes.

Ken who is 82, who has Alzheimer's and lives in Wirral, says meeting 45-year-old Side by Side volunteer, Steve, has changed his life. Ken and his wife found it hard to get the right help and support after Ken's diagnosis.

Steve, Ken's Side by side volunteer, adds: "Side by Side came at the right time for me too. I had some time on my hands after working abroad and saw the advert for Alzheimer's Society. My dad had Alzheimer's too so it's a condition that is close to my heart."

"I thought it sounded great being able to hang out with someone while also helping them to still do the things they enjoy. My application went through really quickly. I felt nervous at first but then I met Ken and we just clicked."

Side by Side is designed to be flexible so that anyone can sign up – a telephone service is also available so people with limited time can volunteer.

Contact Rachel Meadows, Side by Side Coordinator, Alzheimer's Society on 0151 650 5505 or email [rachel.meadows@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:rachel.meadows@alzheimers.org.uk)

### Becoming a volunteer with The Reader

F is a Reader volunteer. He first joined a shared reading group in Phoenix House two years ago when he was in rehabilitation for his addiction. He then joined a Birkenhead community group and applied for and completed the Reader's Care Home Reader training, running a group in a dementia care home. F facilitates a community shared reading group in Birkenhead and has found full time paid work.

"Even down to now, my job, I think that's a big part down to my volunteering opportunity with The Reader, not just cos I can put it on my CV. I think when I was in interview and talking about it, people can just see, if you're passionate about something can't they? So...I think that was a massive part of why I was successful in getting my job, my full time job. I just can't believe that I get paid for going to work, it's so good, I thought that would go away, but this is like week five, and it's still...I'm getting paid for what I'd do.

I don't think I understood when I started volunteering that the sort of job I wanted to go for would value volunteering more than qualifications or current employment. I have a criminal record and it's just nice to lay it all on the table when I'm applying for jobs, and now I've got one and I've not had to be dishonest about anything and its liberating".

For more information about how to get involved email [info@thereader.org.uk](mailto:info@thereader.org.uk) or phone 0151 729 2200.

## 3

**Working together to remove barriers**

Actions to deliver a positive volunteering experience for all volunteers and ensure Wirral can continue to benefit from volunteering and community activity will be strengthened through public, private and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations working together.

Working in partnership presents opportunities to network, share knowledge and expertise, provide effective training and ensure unnecessary barriers are broken down to make volunteering accessible for everyone. As part of developing this strategy we talked to local people to understand what the barriers are and how to remove them.

Engagement with local groups, individuals and organisations highlighted a number of barriers that prevent people getting involved in their local area. The Residents' Survey 2015 also highlighted 91% of Wirral residents could be encouraged to volunteer if they had, for example, more information about the different volunteering roles available, if they did not have to give a big time-commitment and if the hours were flexible. This presents an opportunity to promote the diverse range and flexibility of placements Wirral has to offer.

**What do we already know?**

- 34% of Wirral residents have never volunteered before but only 9% of all those who responded said that nothing could encourage them to volunteer<sup>3</sup>.
- Community Action Wirral provides support in terms of volunteer provision to around 1400 organisations across the Wirral<sup>5</sup>.
- A lack of information about voluntary opportunities at the local level acts as a significant barrier to local people volunteering<sup>1</sup>.
- Well organised groups and organisations which promote strong, positive values, have a direct impact on whether people continue to participate or decide to stop volunteering<sup>1</sup>.

**How will we achieve our aim?**

- We will make it easier for local people to volunteer and get involved in their communities.
- We will create a central approach to advertising and managing volunteering opportunities where it is beneficial.
- We will create a set of good practice principles for organisations to ensure volunteers have a positive experience.

## What's already happening in Wirral?

### Wirral Volunteer Centre

In June 2016, Community Action Wirral launched the new Volunteer Centre Website which carries the unique Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation. The free online platform allows people to match their skills and interests with volunteering opportunities. Prospective volunteers are able to browse the wide range of volunteering opportunities once they are registered.

The Volunteer Centre collects and promotes the opportunities for volunteering from organisations in the third sector and helps them in developing their specification for volunteers and ensure that their requirements are realistic and achievable. The Centre also supports organisations and businesses with various volunteer policies to ensure a robust placement. It then matches them through both a physical and online matching service allowing volunteers and organisations to register their interest and consider offers of volunteering.

Community Action Wirral has partnered with Wirral Chamber of Commerce to enable businesses to make best use of staff 'volunteer days' and promote a lasting legacy of skill sharing, sponsorship and perhaps even encourage the staff to become trustees.

For more information visit:  
<http://communityactionwirral.org.uk/volunteering-in-wirral/>

*“ I don't think I understood when I started volunteering that the sort of job I wanted to go for would value volunteering more than qualifications or current employment. ”*

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## HOW WILL WE DELIVER THIS STRATEGY?

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The delivery of the Wirral Together strategy will be in partnership with local residents and community groups, as well as public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

We will deliver the priorities outlined within this strategy through the following action plans and other key strategies and plans linked to Wirral's 2020 pledges which focus on community involvement and volunteering.

The agreed actions will be delivered over the lifetime of this strategy supported by regular review and monitoring.

There will also be further engagement and consultation with residents, partner organisations and other stakeholders as we develop the actions.

An annual review report will be prepared which will outline progress against the actions and demonstrate the outcomes that have been achieved through the delivery of the strategy.

# ACTION PLANS

1

**Inspiring people to become more involved in their communities**

Action	By when?	Responsible
<b>Work with communities to deliver the Wirral Plan</b> by developing a future model for working in neighbourhoods which promotes and supports community involvement.	October 2017	<b>Wirral Council</b> Rachael Musgrave <b>Wirral Council</b> Neighbourhoods and Engagement Team
<b>Build community networks</b> through working with Community Connectors, supporting existing community leaders and identifying new ones.	January 2019	<b>Involve Northwest</b> Justine Molyneux <b>Communities of Practice</b> Chris Shaw
<b>Build local knowledge</b> by identifying what activities are happening across Wirral.	Ongoing	<b>Involve Northwest</b> Justine Molyneux <b>Communities of Practice</b> Chris Shaw <b>Wirral Council</b> Rachael Musgrave
<b>Work with local Councillors</b> to inspire people to become more involved in their local area.	Ongoing	<b>Wirral Council</b> Cllr Matthew Patrick

## 2 Encouraging more people to volunteer in Wirral

Action	By when?	Responsible
<b>Increase volunteering in line with the Wirral Plan</b> by working with partners to prioritise and promote opportunities which support the 2020 pledges.	September 2017	<b>Wirral Partnership</b>
<b>Raise the profile of volunteering</b> through targeted marketing and promotion using a range of channels.	Ongoing	<b>Wirral Partnership</b> Kevin MacCallum
<b>Promote employer-supported volunteering and Corporate Social Responsibility</b> by creating a central hub which allows skills to be matched to opportunities.	September 2017	<b>Community Action Wirral</b> Annette Roberts <b>Wirral Chamber of Commerce</b> Paula Basnett
<b>Reward and recognise the contribution of volunteers</b> by developing schemes which build on best practice.	April 2018	<b>Wirral Partnership</b>

**3** Working together to remove barriers

Action	By when?	Responsible
<b>Develop a coordinated approach</b> for the Wirral Partnership to advertise and recruit volunteers for formal volunteering opportunities.	September 2017	<b>Wirral Partnership</b>
<b>Provide a positive experience for volunteers</b> by creating a set of good practice principles for organisations.	September 2017	<b>Community Action Wirral</b> Annette Roberts
<b>Provide links to available support,</b> training and ongoing development for volunteers.	September 2017	<b>Community Action Wirral</b> Annette Roberts
<b>Increase external funding</b> coming into the borough to help small organisations to develop.	April 2018	<b>Community Action Wirral</b> Annette Roberts



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## GLOSSARY

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### **Community Connectors**

Community Connectors can help strengthen neighbourhoods. They help people find out what is going on locally and how to get involved in social activities.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

A corporation's initiatives to assess and take responsibility for its impact on environmental and social wellbeing. Usually goes beyond efforts that are required by regulators or protection groups.

### **Formal volunteering**

Formal volunteering is defined as unpaid help given as part of groups, clubs or organisations to benefit others or the environment.

### **Informal volunteering**

Informal volunteering is giving unpaid help as an individual to someone who is not a relative.

### **Voluntary, Community and Faith sector**

Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector- Term encompasses all not-for-profit voluntary, community and faith groups, organisations, charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and mutuals, large and small.

### **Wirral Partnership**

The Wirral Partnership is made up of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group, Wirral University Teaching Hospital, Merseyside Police, Department of Work and Pensions Wirral, Citizens Advice Wirral, Wirral Chamber of Commerce, Wirral Metropolitan College, Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Wirral Council.

### **Wirral Plan**

Published in June 2015, the Wirral Plan sets out a series of 20 pledges which the council and its partners will work to achieve by 2020, focusing on three key themes: protecting the most vulnerable; driving economic growth and improving the local environment.

### **Wirral Residents' Survey**

Wirral Residents Survey- A survey commissioned in 2015 as a key part of the Wirral Plan, conducted by Ipsos Mori in order to understand what residents want, need and aspire to.

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To find out more:



**search: Wirral 2020**



**@wirral2020**

**THE WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP**