# Festival of Volunteering 2023 Evaluation Summary Report

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## Introduction

The Festival of Volunteering 2023 is RNIB’s annual celebration of the contribution and impact of volunteers by holding in person and remote events across the UK.

Volunteers and staff reported a largely positive experience of attending the Festival of Volunteering event series in 2023. We delivered six in person events and one remote event between June and September 2023. We welcomed 211 attendees in total, which is an increase of 28% (or 46 people) compared to the 2022 event series.

We have achieved the objectives of the Festival of Volunteering:

* We have made volunteers feel valued and recognised with 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “I feel valued for my contributions as a volunteer with RNIB”.
* We have provided opportunities for colleagues and volunteers at all levels to meet, share stories, learn from each other and feel part of the same organisation.
* We have demonstrated the impact of volunteering on customers, volunteers and staff through storytelling and presentations from volunteers and staff about their experience.
* We have increased attendance and engagement levels with the 2023 event series as we welcomed 28% more people this year compared to 2022 and 58% of volunteer respondents attended the Festival of Volunteering for the first time.

This evaluation report provides more details about attendee reflections on the Festival of Volunteering 2023 as well as recommendations for future events.

## Findings

### What worked well

Attendees shared that they enjoyed:

* Hearing stories of the impact of volunteering for our customers as well as individual volunteers from volunteers, customers and staff.
* Volunteers and volunteer managers having the opportunity to meet face-to-face as it helps to build stronger relationships.
* Meeting people who volunteer and work in different roles with RNIB.
* Celebrating and recognising the contributions that volunteers make to RNIB.
* Finding out and/or sharing more about different services, activities, or campaigns that RNIB offers.

### Areas for improvement

Attendees shared they would like improvements in the following areas:

* Venues that are fit for purpose that have adequate space for attendees and better audio-visual equipment to ensure the events are inclusive for all attendees.
* Ensure that the objectives of the events are clearly communicated, so that all sessions are better aligned to the overall purpose.
* Ensure that attendees have clear roles and responsibilities at the events to make the best use of time and experience.
* Include interactive, learning opportunities for attendees to participate in.
* Consider holding evening or weekend events to enable attendees who are in work or education to get involved.

### Comments from attendees

“I enjoyed it and enjoyed sharing my volunteering experiences. I just would like to thank you for giving me that opportunity” – Volunteer at Northern Ireland event in Derry-Londonderry.

“Lovely to see the Grimaldi building but next year a larger space would be beneficial” – Volunteer at London & South East event in London.

“Thanks to all who made this event possible” – Volunteer at Scotland event in Edinburgh.

“Thank you for a fantastic event, I can’t wait to hopefully attend another one in the future” – Volunteer at Online Festival of Volunteering x Keeping in Touch event.

“I love meeting the volunteers but I also think that it gives us a really important opportunity to reflect on what a difference our volunteers make to what we are able to achieve as a team. As you know, our volunteers are such an integral part of my team and it is so important that we never take this for granted.” Staff at Wales event in Cardiff.

“I found it personally very inspiring to attend the session in Manchester, meeting and hearing stories from our volunteers was great. I also felt it reminded me of the great work and impact that RNIB delivers, which I find helpful because it can be easy to forget this.” – Staff at North event in Manchester.

## Recommendations

Volunteers and staff reported a largely positive experience at the Festival of Volunteering 2023. The post-event feedback from volunteers and staff attendees indicates that we have delivered against our objectives. This shows that many aspects of the Festival of Volunteering work well, while there remains room for improvement.

The recommendations for future Festival of Volunteering events are:

* Incorporate storytelling and presentation opportunities from volunteers and customers as a common feature for all Festival of Volunteering events.
* Review each event agenda against the event objectives and include in a pre-event briefing for volunteers and staff who are speaking or facilitating sessions at the events. This would support the delivery of events that meet the objectives and enable attendees to have a more consistent experience irrespective of the event they attend.
* Create clearly defined roles and responsibilities to support the delivery of the event objectives and to utilise individuals’ expertise as best as possible. This information should form the pre-event briefing and be communicated well in advance of the event to allow people to ask questions or for clarification.
* Use RNIB’s Inclusive Meeting guidance into the event risk assessment process and include site visits.
* Consider including more interactive and learning opportunities that are aligned to our new strategy but also maintain an engaging, celebratory feeling as this is important to attendees.
* Continue to coordinate the Festival of Volunteering series through a central project team and design individual events through collaboration with local events team. This model worked well and should remain for future events.

We expect to hold the Festival of Volunteering as an annual event to connect volunteers with each other and staff. We aim to strengthen areas of good practice that were well received by attendees and consider how to implement recommendations in future event series. The Festival of Volunteering provides a positive space for RNIB to recognise the value and impact of volunteering through volunteer and staff engagement, while offering us the chance to explore different opportunities to support volunteers and staff to come together as a united collective to deliver our new purpose and strategy.

## Acknowledgments

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* Festival of Volunteering project group: Bernadette Halton, Cassandra Kamara, Claire Denning, Hazel Hyland, Hollie Wilson, Jo Keller, Joanne Wilson, Lisa Foulkes-Arnold, Samantha McConnell and Sharon Jones.
* Northern Ireland Festival of Volunteering events team: Joanne Wilson, Samantha McConnell, Kirsty Campbell, Joe Kenny, Elaine Manson and Rosie Edge.
* Wales Festival of Volunteering events team: Ansley Workman, Betti Hunter, Cassandra Kamara, Ellie Palmer, Emma Jones, Sharon Jones and Yvette Tompkins.
* London & South East Festival of Volunteering events team: Cassandra Kamara, Claire Denning, Helena Pellier and Lisa Foulkes-Arnold.
* Midlands Festival of Volunteering events team: Bernadette Halton, Cassandra Kamara, Hollie Wilson, Sharon Jones and Val Humphries.
* North Festival of Volunteering events team: Hazel Hyland, Hollie Wilson and Neil Baxter.
* Scotland Festival of Volunteering events team: Daniel Meikle, Hollie Wilson, Jane Coates and Lisa Foulkes-Arnold.
* South West Festival of Volunteering events team: Andy Moyes, Gill Cowsill, Joanne Wilson, Sharon Jones, Trish Sail and Yvette Tompkins.
* Online Festival of Volunteering x Keeping in Touch events team: Angela Davey, Hazel Hyland, Joanne Wilson and Lisa Foulkes-Arnold.
* All our speakers across the events:
* Northern Ireland: Andrea Hope, Ann Marie Houston, Elaine Manson, Jaison Curtis, Joanne Wilson, Olive Rodgers and Robert Shilliday.
* Wales: Ansley Workman, Eleanor Rothwell, Emma Jones, Gareth Davies, Gordon Davies, Hannah Rowlatt, Howard Miller, Kirsty James, Nick Lancaster, Rachel Jones, Rachel Llewellyn and Rehnaz Khan.
* London & South East: Adrian Hare, Aliya Thany, Anna Henning, Anna Tylor, Cassandra Kamara, Ehtessam Hussain, Helena Pellier, Howard Miller, Lisa Foulkes-Arnold, Madleen Bluhm, Mohammed Atif, Phil Ambler and Ruby Knight.
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* Scotland: Adrian Hare, Christine Harrison, Colin Shales, Daniel Meikle, Eileen Clarkson, James Adams, Jo Keller, Shauna Slee, Shona Black and Stephen Davidson.
* South West: Andy Moyes, Chris Turner, Gill Cowsill, Jo Keller, Phil Ambler, Scott Wood, Sharon Jones, Stuart Fox and Trish Sail.
* Online x Keeping in Touch: Angela Davey, Hazel Hyland, Joanne Wilson and Lisa Foulkes-Arnold.
* All volunteers and staff who attended the Festival of Volunteering.

Each and every person contributed to growing the Festival of Volunteering 2023 from the first series in 2022. Thank you!

Document ends.