

Vision for Volunteering Learning and Evaluation Partner: Invitation to Tender

06 February 2023

Summary

The Vision for Volunteering is looking for a learning and evaluation partner to understand the effectiveness and impact of phase two in the implementation of the Vision and inform decisions about future strategy. Phase two is starting now and will run to 31 March 2024.

We are seeking interest from partners that want to work with us to finalise our plans for learning and evaluation of phase two, work alongside us to meet those plans, and be responsible for delivering key outputs to draw out learning and evaluate what has been achieved.

Up to £50,000 is available for this contract, inclusive of VAT.

Proposals should be submitted by 9.00am Monday 6 March 2023. The process is set out in more detail below.

Background

The [Vision for Volunteering](#) is a collective ten-year aspiration for the future of volunteering in England, based on a deep understanding and commitment to voluntary action. Through the Vision, we are seeking to bring about change in how volunteering looks, feels, and runs in England - making it brilliant for everyone, everywhere.

We want to build a movement of people who are inspired by the five big shifts we want to see over the next decade:

- awareness and appreciation
- power
- equity and inclusion
- collaboration
- experimentation.

The Vision articulates outcomes for volunteering and describes how volunteers should feel in 2032 – how this is realised will look and feel differently across the many spaces and places where volunteering occurs. We see change as decentralised, happening in different ways simultaneously, not through big, top-down interventions or a standardised way in which volunteering needs to happen.

To deliver that, change must happen at different levels, over different time frames.

- **Big organisations** and coalitions, like Shaping the Future, the NHS Volunteering Task Force, and large volunteer-involving organisations, need to be part of the Vision so that their power, size, and membership can drive awareness and support.
- The voluntary sector is predominately made up of **small, local, grassroots organisations** alongside informal groups. [Most people volunteer locally](#), in their own

neighbourhoods, and for a local organisation. Unless we engage the thousands of small organisations, the Vision will not reach the majority of volunteers.

- Millions of people volunteer without being part of an organisation. The **volunteer community** need to drive change for themselves as partners and leaders within formal and informal settings, moving beyond beneficiaries or participants of volunteering activities.

The Vision has been led to date by five partner organisations: Volunteering Matters, National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM), National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and Sport England. It is supported and funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

The Vision will have three full-time members of staff, hosted within NCVO. The team comprises of three roles: a project lead, a network and engagement officer and a learning and storytelling officer.

More information on the Vision, and how it was developed, is available at [Vision for Volunteering](#).

The next phase of the Vision

Over the next 18 months (phase 2 of the project), the Vision team's mission is to inspire individuals and organisations around the country to develop the Vision and make it a reality. To do this, they will carry out broad engagement with partners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the Vision and provide training and tools, building a community to champion the Vision, sharing stories of positive change, and collecting evidence and sharing learning.

Developing a full theory of change, particularly for the medium and long-term, will be an important early task for the newly appointed Vision team and learning partner. However, through phase two, our aim is that people within the volunteer ecosystem and community:

- understand the Vision and are inspired by it
- are committed to taking action in organisations, groups, and communities
- have the skills, knowledge, tools, and confidence to make change
- can be supported by others to make changes in their organisations, groups, and communities.

To do this, during phase two, we will:

- **communicate** the Vision and the five themes
- **build a community** of supporters and champions of the Vision
- provide **training, tools, and guidance** to help people understand and action the Vision in their organisations
- share **stories** of change to inspire and motivate others
- collect **evidence and data** about what's changing, how that's happening, and what's contributing to it
- bring people together to **share learning** and practice
- **make connections** across the volunteering ecosystems and communities.

We will do this in a way that:

- **acknowledges** the exciting work that already exists in volunteering and **appreciates** the work to improve it
- shifts **power** that sits in the partner organisations and other national bodies
- fosters true **collaboration** with and within the volunteering ecosystem rather than be constrained by sectors or other artificial boundaries
- ensures **equity and inclusion** throughout our activities, both what we do and how
- ensures we allow space for **experimentation** with a test and learn approach that is led by what we find, not a pre-determined view of what 'good' volunteering must be like

With learning from phase two, both from the experience of partners and the staff team as well as the external evaluation, we will make decisions about what needs to come next. By the end of phase two, as the project partners and team, we hope to have:

- a strengthened Vision, with revisions or additions based on feedback over phase two
- a broader set of organisational, institutional, and individual supporters and champions
- a better understanding of what tools and support people need, what the barriers to organisational and programmatic change are, and where the project can most help
- a community able to support each other and guide the project's work
- robust systems for capturing, understanding, and sharing learning.

Appointment of Learning and Evaluation Partner

We are seeking to appoint a Learning and Evaluation Partner that shares our excitement and enthusiasm for the Vision and its potential for transforming volunteering over the next ten years.

Working with Vision for Volunteering team, you will be responsible for developing and delivering a learning and evaluation framework to understand the effectiveness of the Vision and inform decisions about future strategy.

You will work with the Vision staff team for the duration of the project to 31 March 2024, acting as consultant, adviser and point of reference. The Learning and Storytelling Officer will be responsible for much of the daily work of monitoring and data collection, and for producing five learning reports that will be published during the project.

Evaluation questions

Given the short-term nature of the project, the evaluation will focus on the outcomes for those engaging with the project and the process of delivery. It will not consider wider systemic change in volunteering.

We want to commission a process and outcome evaluation. We want to be challenged by the commissioned partner and are curious to explore the broader evaluation questions that we chose. As an early priority, it will be important to do this collaboratively across the partnership, rooted in both our shared ambitions for the project and our individual organisational motivations for engagement.

For example, we are interested in:

- What are the outcomes for people who engage in the project? Do they gain skills, knowledge, understanding of, and confidence to action, the Vision?
- What, if anything, changed in organisations or volunteer programmes as a result of the project? What do we learn about how things changed or are changing?

- How has the project been delivered? What works well and what should change in the future?
- Is there early evidence to validate or challenge our theory of change? Do our longer-term outcomes seem feasible given what the evidence tells us from phase 2 about how change is or is not happening?
- What needs to change in the next phase, both in terms of strategy and approach and the method of delivery?

We are interested in hearing what other questions would be relevant to engage with in the project evaluation.

There are three elements of the activity required.

Element One – Work alongside us to finalise the Learning and Evaluation Plan

We want to utilise the expertise and experience of the Learning and Evaluation Partner to finalise our learning and evaluation plans. We welcome being challenged on this thinking, and welcome innovative approaches to learning and evaluation. We are a high-risk set of partners, open to experimentation and new ideas.

From the start, we want to understand the impact of the Vision, track progress, and capture learning. We are interested in how you will help us to draw out and act on learning as the project develops, not just in the final reporting.

Our current thinking for understanding our impact is to:

- bring key people together to create a meaningful theory of change
- create an evaluation framework including data collection tools
- develop meaningful KPIs and proportionate tools for data collection
- create a learning plan with the learning and storytelling officer
- work with key groups to build the evidence base
- focus on learning and capturing stories of change and what works.

Element Two – Undertake Key aspects of the Learning and Evaluation Plan

We would seek the expertise of the Learning and Development Partner before finalising, but we are currently envisaging that the following methods would be used to draw out the learning and evaluation.

- Theory of change.
- Survey with participants
- Interviews with partners and key stakeholders
- Focus groups
- Review of project monitoring data
- External challenge workshops.

Element Three – Delivery of agreed outputs

We are open to discussion and suggestions regarding the most suitable delivery outputs from this work. Our current thinking is that it would include:

- An interim report to the project team and partners by 30 September 2023.
- A final report for project partners and the wider sector, with a full report, supporting blogs and summary resources.

- A learning workshop for the project team and partners to engage with the findings and inform future work.

Contract Funding

Up to £50,000 is available for this contract, to start as soon as is feasible, with the final reporting due by 31 March 2024. £20,000 must be invoiced prior to 31 March 2023. Figures include VAT.

Timeline

1. Recruitment – Tender released 8 February, closing date of **9.00am Monday 6 March 2023**
2. Notification of intention to invite for interview by 5pm Friday 10 March 2023
3. Interviews w/c 13 March (online)
4. Deadline for invoice for first £20,000 payment – 31 March 2023
5. Final report and supporting resources by 31 March 2024

The Commissioning Process and Submitting a Tender

We welcome applications from organisations that share our excitement for the Vision and feel that they can work alongside us in undertaking the learning and evaluation as part of phase two.

Key elements that will drive our selection of the Learning and Evaluation Partner will include:

- Values and behaviours – equity, partnership and collaboration will be important in the delivery of this work.
- Experience of evaluating in an iterative way, and drawing out learning throughout a project
- Experience of evaluating how equitable and inclusive a project is
- An understanding of evaluation of similar issues key to the Vision such as devolving power and building movements
- Value for Money
- Understanding of volunteering and the Vision for Volunteering.

When submitting a tender please include the following information.

1. Your contact details, including email address and phone number.
2. Information on your company, charity or the person responding to this tender. This should include company or charity registration details, statement of insurance cover and the names and contact details of two referees who you have worked with on similar projects and who can be contacted immediately.
3. A statement of previous experience that demonstrates that you have the necessary experience and understanding needed to complete this work successfully. This should include experience of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and working with volunteers.
4. An overview of the approach you will take to meet the requirements of the tender.
5. A detailed description of how you would approach the requirements of learning and evaluation, including methodology, an indicative timeline and the steps you would take to monitor delivery and ensure quality standards are maintained.

6. Details of who will carry out the work and how the skills and experience they have would deliver the project. A CV for each person who will work on the project should be appended to the application.
7. A high-level breakdown of how you anticipate using the budget.
8. Any other relevant information.

Applications should concisely address the requirements of the tender and be a maximum of 10 pages with a minimum 12pt sans serif font size. CVs to be provided separately.

Send your proposal as a PDF document (plus CVs) to: jill.hopkinson@navca.org.uk

Proposals to be submitted by **9.00am Monday 6 March 2023**

For all correspondence, please use email and the subject line: TENDER: Vision for Volunteering Learning and Evaluation.

After the closing date we will shortlist a number of potential candidates to invite for interview online w/c 13 March.

Do get in touch if you would like to discuss the tender before submitting a proposal.
Contacts:

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