

# Thousands of new community volunteering opportunities thanks to government investment

- Organisations in arts, culture, sport, civil society, youth and heritage to benefit from the £4.6 million fund
- Funding to increase volunteering opportunities for young people and those who experience barriers to accessing volunteering

Thousands of young people, people with disabilities and those experiencing loneliness will get the opportunity to volunteer and help others thanks to £4.6 million in government investment.

More than 160 community organisations will be able to support 7,800 new volunteering opportunities over the next two years as the government confirms the beneficiaries of the Volunteering Futures Fund.

The fund was launched last year and will be distributed by Arts Council England (ACE). It will break down barriers to volunteering and enable organisations across the arts, culture, sport, civil society, youth and heritage sectors to continue their valuable work within local communities while volunteers enjoy the personal benefits of making a difference.

ACE has awarded funding to organisations including colleges, local councils, schools, health and wellbeing organisations in response to demand from a wide range of beneficiaries such as people experiencing loneliness or social isolation, young people in the LGBTQ community, and people with learning difficulties and complex needs.

## **Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:**

Volunteering offers a wealth of benefits to those involved and the organisations which rely on the help.

Our new support will deliver a step-change for those who may be isolated, lonely or experiencing any number of potential barriers to getting involved in volunteering.

More than 160 organisations across the country will benefit and we will see better collaboration between local councils, the public sector and civil society.

Beneficiaries of the Volunteering Futures Fund include:

The Bureau Centre for the Arts in Blackburn and Darwen, which will be able to roll out a new two-year programme to engage hundreds of local young people in culture, sport and heritage volunteering. It will result in a digital portfolio toolkit that can be replicated in other towns. The centre will work with Blackburn Rovers Community Trust, Blackburn Museum, Blackburn with Darwen Library Service, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Blackburn Festival of Light, Blackburn Youth Zone with 11 other partners.

The Festival of Thrift in Redcar will deliver a collaborative volunteer recruitment, training and development programme covering music, visual arts and performance. It will enable greater volunteering capacity across the Tees Valley in a safe, supported way, providing opportunities for progression and a shared experience. It will work with BloominArt, Curious Arts, Hartlepool Waterfront Festival, Stellar Projects and eight other partners.

Barnsley Museums will establish new partnerships between local stakeholders in Barnsley to offer new, high quality volunteer opportunities. It will develop skills and address loneliness and isolation and prioritise those most in need who face barriers to participation. Barnsley Museums will work with Feels Like Home, Barnsley College and Inclusion in Action among other partners.

Other beneficiaries include museums in Cumbria, Birmingham and Tyne and Wear. The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games festival and cultural festivals in Brighton and Cleveland will also benefit, as will local authorities in Bassetlaw, Hertfordshire and the Midlands.

The first round of the Volunteering Futures Fund already up and running through government and Pears and NHS Charities Together funding include Sense, a national disability charity that has launched a Virtual Buddy Scheme which pairs those with complex disabilities with a volunteer.

In addition, the Birmingham Community Healthcare Charity and Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are currently developing volunteering opportunities for young people including improving digital skills and testing new approaches to volunteering to further expand opportunities through the fund.

Grants of £100,000 or more have been awarded following an ACE competitive process launched in November 2021. There are 19 lead organisations that will work with more than 160 partner organisations to deliver volunteering opportunities at a local level across England.

An additional £2.2 million is being distributed by Pears Foundation and NHS Charities Together.

**Darren Henley, CEO of Arts Council England said:**

There's an abundance of evidence to show that volunteering can be a key factor in helping people lead happier lives.

This new investment will enrich villages, towns and cities across England, increasing health and well-being and decreasing loneliness and isolation.

**Cath Ford, Director of The Bureau Centre for the Arts said:**

We have one of the youngest populations in Europe, and this funding will enable us to work with our local partners to provide young people with training, mentoring and a range of opportunities to volunteer across the borough.

This is an investment in our borough's future, an opportunity to actively engage more young people in culture, sport and heritage, helping them to discover their passions, contribute to their community and develop future leaders."

**Emma Whitenstall and Stella Hall – CoDirectors Festival of Thrift said:**

We are overjoyed to receive this funding at such a challenging time for many people! The past ten years have seen Festival of Thrift expand from an annual weekend event into an amazing year-round programme of activities focusing on sustainability.

We are delighted to be working with our partners at the Tees Valley Festivals Network to deliver this volunteering project to offer people living in Tees Valley new training and skills opportunities that are directly linked to some of the best events and festivals in the UK.

**Lynn Dunning, Head of Barnsley Museums, said:**

Volunteering is vital to the cultural sector and offers huge advantages to both the individual and the organisation. This funding will allow us to establish high quality volunteering opportunities that will offer personal and lifelong benefits to those taking part.

They will develop new skills, offer avenues into work, support health and wellbeing and boost confidence. Doing so in collaboration with a range of community partners and lived experience.

We really want to showcase the impacts that volunteering can have and also how Culture can really add value to lives and communities.

ENDS

## Notes to editors:

1. The first round of Volunteering Futures Fund grants was launched in September 2021 when DCMS ran a competition for matched funders here.
2. The second round of Volunteering Futures Fund grants was launched by Arts Council England in November 2021 here.
3. Further details of Volunteering Futures Fund grants awarded by Pears Foundation here.
4. Further details of Volunteering Futures Fund grants awarded by NHS Charities Together here.
5. A full list of the 19 lead organisations receiving VFF funding is below:

## Headline data for Volunteering Futures Fund

Total awarded organisations: 19 Total amount awarded: £4,650,483

ACE Area	Awards	Amount
London	2	£489,996
Midlands	4	£1,187,000
North	8	£2,024,575
South East	3	£638,912
South West	2	£310,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>£4,650,483</b>

## Awards

Lead applicant	£ Awarded	Discipline/Artform	ACE Area	Local Authority
Barnsley Museums	£180,000	Museums	North	Barnsley
Cultural Services – Portsmouth City Council	£130,000	Combined arts	South West	Portsmouth
Ignite Imaginations	£135,000	Combined arts	North	Sheffield
Active Communities Network	£245,000	Combined arts	London	Southwark
Higher Rhythm Ltd	£214,994	Music	North	Doncaster

<b>Lead applicant</b>	<b>£ Awarded</b>	<b>Discipline/Artform</b>	<b>ACE Area</b>	<b>Local Authority</b>
Kirklees Theatre Trust	£124,957	Combined arts	North	Kirklees
Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums	£400,000	Combined arts	North	Newcastle upon Tyne
Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery	£490,000	Museums	North	Carlisle
Arts & Health South West	£180,000	Combined arts	South West	Exeter
Culture, Learning and Libraries (Midlands) "Inspire Youth Arts"	£262,000	Combined arts	Midlands	Nottingham
Bassetlaw Community & Voluntary Service	£220,000	Not discipline specific	Midlands	Bassetlaw
Culture Central	£525,000	Combined arts	Midlands	Coventry
Festival of Thrift	£180,000	Combined arts	North	Redcar and Cleveland
Hertfordshire Library Service	£185,000	Libraries	South East	Welwyn Hatfield
The Bureau Centre for the Arts CIC	£299,624	Combined arts	North	Blackburn with Darwen
Things Made Public CIC	£250,000	Not discipline specific	South East	Basildon
Ledbury Poetry Festival	£180,000	Literature	Midlands	Herefordshire, County of
Brighton Dome & Festival Limited	£203,912	Not discipline specific	South East	Brighton and Hove
London Wildlife Trust	£244,996	Literature	London	Westminster