

Welcome to the Blackburn with Darwen Vision for Volunteering Toolkit



Introduction:

This toolkit is here to support meaningful conversations that bring people together and spark ideas around volunteering in Blackburn with Darwen. It includes all the guidance you need to run a successful session:

- A **Facilitator Guide** to lead the discussion
- A **Participant Information Sheet** for attendees
- A **Facilitator's Summary Report Form** to capture and return insights

All feedback from these sessions will help shape the **draft Blackburn with Darwen Vision and Plan for Volunteering**, due in **April 2026**.

Every voice matters and every bit of insight helps. After your session, just send us the completed summary form to kate.lee@communitycvs.org.uk so your group's ideas can be included in the vision.

Thank you for your support— you are helping to build a volunteering future that reflects the hopes and needs of our community.

We'll be collating everyone's views after 31st January so please plan to have your group session and return the report anytime between now and January 31st

Have any questions? Just email Kate- kate.lee@communitycvs.org.uk

Facilitator Guide:

Vision for Volunteering Workshop

Purpose:

Thank you for helping us explore volunteering in Blackburn with Darwen. This guide will support you in leading a friendly and meaningful conversation with your group. We want to hear:

- What's working well
- What could be better
- Ideas for the future

Your session will help shape a shared **Vision and Plan for Volunteering** in our area.

After the workshop, please complete the summary sheet and return it and any photos to kate.lee@communitycvs.org.uk.

Every voice matters—thank you for your support.

Resources you'll need:

- Flipcharts or large sheets of paper
(pre-title for *Icebreaker* and each of the 4 Activities)
- Markers and pens
- Sticky dots (or stickers/pens for dot voting) – around **15 per participant**
- Participant Information Sheet & sign-in form (your own for records)

Suggested Room Layout:

- Chairs in a circle or semi-circle
- For large groups: breakout tables or small clusters
- Flipcharts placed on walls, easels, or tables for each of the 4 Activities

Important:

- Keep a record of flipcharts, quotes, and voting results (take photos if possible).
- Ensure all information sent to Community CVS is **anonymous** (no personal identifiers).

Resources you'll need: (contact kate.lee@communitycvs.org.uk if you need help with getting any of these).

Workshop Plan (1.5 hours)

Signing In:

Ask people to complete the anonymous Participant Information Sheet (and your own sign-in sheet if needed for your own records).

1. Welcome & Purpose (5 mins)

- Cover housekeeping and group rules (fire safety, toilets, breaks, phones off, respect all views, equal speaking time).
- Share purpose of the session:
 - Explain that we want to hear their views about volunteering—what works, what could improve, and new ideas.
 - You might want to mention different types of volunteering (youth, health, arts, mutual aid, community etc.) or ask:

“When you think of volunteering in Blackburn with Darwen, what kinds of activities or people come to mind?”

- Explain that this session will help shape a shared Vision and Plan for Volunteering in Blackburn with Darwen.
- Let people know that notes from the session will be summarised in a report for Community CVS and that everything will be anonymous.

2. Introductions & Icebreaker (10 mins)

- Go round the group and ask people give their name, role (volunteer/staff/other), plus an answer to a fun question of your choice (e.g. “favourite cake?”).
- Icebreaker: *“What’s one word that comes to mind when you think of volunteering?”*
 - Write words on the flipchart.
 - Encourage people to think of Blackburn with Darwen’s different communities and causes and different ways volunteering helps people.

3. Discussion Activities (45 mins total – 4 × 10 mins + movement time)

Activity 1 – Strengths (10 minutes)

- What do people like about volunteering here?
- What makes it enjoyable or easy?
- What’s already working well in Blackburn with Darwen- in your group or elsewhere in the area?

Activity 2 – Barriers, Challenges, Gaps (10 minutes)

- What makes it hard to volunteer - for you or others?
- Are there groups or parts of Blackburn with Darwen for whom volunteering feels harder to access?
- What could be better?

Activity 3 – Things that might get in the way (future) (10 minutes)

- What things might make it hard for someone to start volunteering, even if they want to help?
- What might make someone stop volunteering after they've already started?
- What changes in Blackburn with Darwen (e.g. cost of living, transport, community spaces) could make it harder?

Activity 4 – Suggestions & Opportunities (10 minutes)

- What ideas could improve volunteering in the borough for everyone?
- How can we make volunteering the best it can be - more visible, welcoming, supported and rewarding?

For groups larger than 8:

Set up 4 stations (one for each Activity). Divide people into groups of up to 4. Rotate every 10 minutes.

4. Voting & Prioritising (15 mins)

- Explain purpose: to identify the most important ideas.
- “*We want to see which ideas matter most for Blackburn with Darwen overall.*”
- Give each person **12 stickers** (3 for each activity).
- Ask participants to move around and place stickers on the ideas they feel are **most important for the future of volunteering in the borough**.
- Tally the votes afterwards for your report.

5. Summary & Reflections (10 mins)

- Share the **top-voted ideas**.
- Ask:
 - “Does anything surprise you?”
 - “Is anything missing?”
 - “What feels most crucial/urgent?”
- Note down reflections and key quotes.

6. Next Steps & Thank You (5 mins)

- Explain what happens next:
 - All workshop feedback will feed into a draft **Vision for Volunteering (due March 2026)**.
 - Organisations and groups will then be invited to pledge actions.
- Thank everyone for their time and contributions.

7. Reminder for facilitators: keep participant information sheets, notes, photos of flipcharts, and voting records for your report.

Tip:

If participants struggle to “see the whole borough,” use prompts like:

- “Think of volunteers in different places — schools, parks, foodbanks, events, neighbourhood groups.”
- “If we could design the best volunteering scene for Blackburn with Darwen what would it feel like?”

Participant Information Sheet:

Vision for Volunteering

By filling in this form you will be enabling us to work out if any group is missing from our conversations and run additional workshops if necessary. You can leave anything blank if you prefer not to say.

Are you:

- A volunteer
- A staff member working with volunteers
- Other; please state _____

What is your age? _____

What is your gender? _____

What is your ethnic background? _____

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- Heterosexual or Straight
- Gay or Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other – please state _____
- Prefer not to say

What is your postcode? _____

Vision for Volunteering Session Report:

(To be returned after the session- Kate.lee@Communitycvs.org.uk)

We'll be collating everyone's views after 31st January so please plan to have your group session and return the report anytime between now and January 31st.

Purpose of the Session

To hear from participants about their views on volunteering in BwD to help us plan better ways to support and grow volunteering locally.

Part 1: Participant Information

Facilitator Name and Email: _____

Date of Workshop: _____

Location: _____

Number of Participants: _____

Participant information:

Please fill in as much as the table below that you can (based on data from the anonymous participant information sheets, because we want to be able to explain whose voices have been heard and where we see gaps we can try to address this by promoting the toolkit to unrepresented groups. NB; Information that you send to us needs to be anonymous with no identifiable information about individuals.

	Number
Age 16-24	
Age 5-55	
Age 55 +	
Ethnicity	
LGBTQIA+	
Gender	
Volunteers	
Staff who work with volunteers	
Postcodes	
Anything else relevant about makeup of group:	

Part 2: Please highlight the key points raised in your session

Activity One: What's already working well in BwD?

What do people like about volunteering? What makes it easy or enjoyable?
Please list the ideas in order of most to least number of votes (stickers/marks).

Activity Two: What Could Be Better?

What makes it hard to volunteer? What could be improved?
Please list the ideas in order of most to least number of votes (stickers/marks).

Activity Three: Things That Might Get in the Way?

What might make it hard for someone to start volunteering, even if they want to help?

What might make someone stop volunteering after they've already started?

What changes in Blackburn with Darwen (e.g. cost of living, transport, community spaces) could make it harder?

Please list the ideas in order of most to least number of votes (stickers/marks).

Activity Four: Opportunities, Ideas and Suggestions?

What new ideas or changes could help more people get involved?

What actions could help improve volunteering in our area?

Please list the ideas in order of most to least number of votes (stickers/marks).

What People Said (Quotes)

Please note down here a few quotes that really show what people think or feel.

Anything else you may wish to add?

How easy did you find the workshop to deliver, and are there any parts of it you would change or amend?

Please return this report along with photos of flip charts with responses and voting from the session to kate.lee@community.cvs.org.uk