SCVO Annual Review 2020-21

Hello to our 256 new members, 13 new supporters – and welcome back to our existing ones!

This year, we continued to deliver against the ambitions of our Strategic Plan 2019-22. However, like other voluntary sector organisations, the coronavirus pandemic forced us to adapt our plans and our approach, and to revisit our priorities in an uncertain and constantly changing environment.

Here’s our review of 2020-21. We hope you enjoy it!

This year, our focus was on supporting our members and the wider voluntary sector through the pandemic, and this united our Board, management and staff. We switched to a remote working model without disruption to any of our services and were able to continue to deliver high quality support to voluntary organisations from Lerwick to Stranraer. For example, our digital inclusion work, our Coronavirus Third Sector Info Hub, and our one-stop-shop funding hub have been vital to our members and the wider voluntary sector, attracting positive feedback and a lot of engagement.

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Throughout this year, we have developed and enhanced important relationships. We’ve been working more closely than ever with third sector interfaces and other intermediary organisations, with independent funders, local authorities and our sister organisations in the rest of the UK and Ireland. We have worked in partnership with Scottish Government on the pandemic response as well as on policy development, and with voluntary sector employers to support young people into employment.

We’ve continued to share important sector news online through Third Force News (TFN), with over a million visits to the website throughout the course of the year. We also produced our annual Third Force News Guide to Running a Charity or Social Enterprise, which focused on the changing nature of work and service delivery during the pandemic.

Challenges

A note of the challenges our organisation has faced over the past 12 months.

As the main backdrop to this year, the pandemic raised many challenges. This included:

* rapidly transforming to a **remote, homeworking model** in response to the pandemic
* coping with a **surge in demand** for certain areas of work – most notably, managing furlough processes in addition to our regular payroll service, responding to unprecedented demand for digital support, development of digital platforms and delivery of a shared funding platform
* **transforming the delivery models** for all our events and training in response to sector needs
* **closing our offices** to tenants as well as staff, with ongoing uncertainty around when, and to what extent, we would be able to re-open
* **understanding and responding** to the ongoing work and wellbeing needs of our staff

**Coronavirus**

We approached our response to the pandemic under three key areas:

Voice and representation

From the start of lockdown, we worked hard to make sure the sector’s voice was heard in national discussions on the impact of coronavirus, the future we’d like to rebuild and what the voluntary sector needed to help contribute to the future. We worked with Scottish Government and independent grant-makers to create a **Coronavirus Funding Hub** offering a single entry-point to a range of emergency funds. We worked with independent funders and third sector interfaces to make funding accessible and coordinated. We also worked with the Scottish Government and a wide range of partners to develop and deliver the **Connecting Scotland** initiative to bring devices, skills and connectivity to 37,000 digitally excluded people across the country. We kept regular contact with our sister organisations across the UK and Ireland (NCVO, NICVA, The Wheel and WCVA) to co-ordinate support to the sector and launched the **#NeverMoreNeeded** campaign to capture and highlight the impact of coronavirus on Scotland’s voluntary sector and to stimulate debate about the sector’s future.

Link to Connecting Scotland highlights video clip on YouTube

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlooStgKZG0**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlooStgKZG0)

**Information, resources and support**

We created an online **Coronavirus Third Sector Information Hub** with information and resources on areas including funding, running organisations, governance, fundraising, volunteering and more, attracting 850,000 visits across the year. We produced quarterly reports looking at the impact of the coronavirus on the voluntary sector in Scotland. We upscaled our activity on digital capacity building in the voluntary sector with a particular focus on digital services, digital inclusion and remote working, and hosted a range of practical and discursive webinars for around 5,000 attendees. We also hosted 12 **Community Jobs Scotland** zoom sessions to support young people, staff and employers.

Support services

We responded quickly to adapt our support services to meet people's changing needs. We shared news of funding opportunities, claimed back substantial sums of money from the HMRC job retention scheme on behalf of our payroll clients and switched to publishing our monthly **Third Force News (TFN)** magazine in an e-magazine format as well as opening the TFN archive online. We continued to support our shared office space tenants and our managed IT clients and we launched a valuable **HR and Employment Support Service** to support voluntary members manage the impact of the pandemic. There's more information about the work of our support services in the ‘Support Services’ section on P6.

Funding

Info on SCVO managed funds, external grants and our funding search engine

**Over the past 12 months we have:**

* harnessed our **Funding Scotland** website and networks to share news of funding opportunities
* delivered funding to the voluntary sector through our new **Coronavirus Funding Hub**
* partnered in the development and delivery of a £50 million **Wellbeing Fund** (small and large grants) and £45 million **Communities and Third Sector Recovery Programme**
* **relaunched Funding Scotland** with an improved search function and user experience

Projects & Campaigns

An overview of partnership projects and campaigns SCVO has been involved with in 2020/21.

The **mPower project** (supported by the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Board) has established a cross-border service for older people living with long-term conditions across Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland – supporting people to live well, safely, and independently in their own homes by self-managing their own health and care in the community.

Development is also being completed on **SCOPE – Skills recognition, Capacity building and Professional Education** for the third sector (funded by ERASMUS+) – an innovative e-learning platform for small voluntary sector organisations covering the basics of governance, finance, fundraising, communications, and risk management.

Our **Never More Needed** campaign has spotlighted the contribution voluntary organisations are making on a daily basis, providing an open platform for sharing stories, successes and issues. It generated 1.5 million Twitter impressions over a six-month period, with more than 20% of social media content using the UK-wide hashtag created in Scotland. The sector has been recognised by politicians nationally and locally, by the private sector and by the public as integral to the very fabric of Scottish society. We're determined to build on that recognition and make sure that, as Scotland emerges into a period of recovery, the voluntary sector is in a good place and can continue to offer invaluable support to our communities and have a powerful, trusted voice and profile.

Link to #NeverMoreNeeded video clip on YouTube:

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKwzktQAPUE**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKwzktQAPUE)

Digital

An update on our work in digital participation, inclusion and evolution

This year has put digital into focus more than ever before, so we have worked on updating our **Digital Check-up service**, and introducing a new **Cyber Security Check-up** and **Essential Digital Skills Check-up**, while offering ‘quick fix’ emergency digital support service to 60 organisations. Our digital team has hosted **40 free #DigiShift webinars** and **six Cyber Scotland Week events** for hundreds of people across the country.

The biggest digital project of the year by far has been **Connecting Scotland**, which SCVO has managed in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector organisations. Connecting Scotland has provided a device, data, training and support to people who are digitally excluded to support learning and developing long term digital skills. To-date, over 40,000 households have been supported and 2,700 Digital Champions have been trained to offer support to Connecting Scotland customers. The project also won a **UK Digital Impact Leaders award** for using technology to improve mental healthcare.

Link to Connecting Scotland video clip on YouTube:

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mayrysgDux4**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mayrysgDux4)

Employability

Background on our employability work with goodmoves, CJS and Kickstart

From April 2020 to March 2021 we liaised closely with Scottish Government about the impact of the pandemic on **Community Jobs Scotland** funding, and joined with the **Third Sector Employability Forum (TSEF)** to set up a new voluntary sector employability community online. We created and filled 115 Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) jobs. This meant that overall, by March 2021, we'd created over 9,800 CJS jobs. We also offered job extensions to 268 young people so that they didn't miss out due to the impact of lockdown restrictions.

We became a gateway organisation for the UK government’s **Kickstart** scheme, working with 121 voluntary sector employers to create 501 jobs for young people, 143 of which were live by 31 March.

By launching the **Skills for Work portal** in partnership with the Open University and the Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development group, we also gave job seekers access to free training, supporting their work skills and career prospects.

Our **Goodmoves** careers website advertised 3,194 jobs for 983 organisations during the same period and connected 77,000 users with job opportunities every month.

Training & Events

Celebrating our training offer and flagship events like the Scottish Charity Awards

**We completely transformed our traditional in-person events and training offer into an online programme of activity. We focused on new and emerging learning and development needs arising from the pandemic.**

During the uncertainty and challenges of the pandemic we offered a series of interactive events that included webinars, virtual panel discussions and online networking opportunities. Our **programme of online events** gave our members and the wider sector the chance to come together to learn new skills, hear from experts and network with others to discuss their plans, thoughts, concerns and hopes for the voluntary sector in Scotland.

Over the year, we delivered 42 courses via 64 online sessions to 478 learners amounting to a total of 2,100 hours of learning.

A highlight of our 2020 events programme was our first virtual **Scottish Charity Awards**. This year the event took place entirely online and while we missed the glitz and glamour of the traditional awards ceremony, we were able to replicate it online and expand the audience to over 5,000 people in eight countries. We had a record number of entries. We received 191 applications with 45 finalists selected for eight awards. We received 31,000 votes for the People's Choice Awards. The online ceremony had 5,000 viewers and we received messages of support from politicians and celebrities.

Link to Scottish Charity Awards 2020 highlights video clip on YouTube:

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKfx6pO215w**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKfx6pO215w)

Services

More detail about the various services SCVO has provided over the past year

Over the past 12 months we claimed back **£1.5m from the HMRC job retention scheme** on behalf of our **payroll** clients, and processed payroll for over 400 organisations and their employees – the equivalent of almost 77,500 payslips.

We **supported 28 tenants** from our shared office space and 33 managed IT clients to navigate the challenges presented by lockdown and working from home. We launched an **HR and Employment Support Service** to help voluntary organisations manage the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and to support HR best practice across the voluntary sector.

Through our **Information Service** we provided information on how to set up and run voluntary organisations, including tailored responses to around 1,800 complex enquiries. We also delivered five events in **Trustees Week** and launching a new **Trustees Network** sponsored by Aberdeen Standard Capital.

Policy

**Insights into our policy work and how we have worked to support and advocate for the sector**

**We continued to constructively challenge on behalf of our members, looking to turn rhetoric into reality.**

We advocated on behalf of the sector to prevent changes to legislation that would have impacted on both the use of charitable funds (with potential knock-on impact on fundraising), and charities' ability to protect themselves against defamation. Our Policy team identified six key areas of focus for our policy work:

* **Coronavirus**
* **Economic actor**
* **Europe**
* **Employer**
* **Partnerships**
* **Regulation**

**Our People**

We’ve also been working on a lot of our processes and services this year, to improve our offering to members, supporters and the wider voluntary sector, including:

* a review of our **Information Service** and our **events, learning and training** offer
* a comprehensive **brand refresh** to make SCVO easier to understand and engage with
* embedding an **organisation-wide coaching approach**, empowering staff to fulfil their potential. We replaced annual appraisals with informal **wellbeing check-ins** to reflect the wellbeing challenges that staff were facing while working from home during a crisis
* completed a Job Evaluation and Pay Review – a key deliverable in our People Strategy.

Looking forward

**SCVO’s three-year strategic plan covering 2019-22 will continue to guide our overall direction, with the aftermath of the pandemic influencing how we deliver against that.**

In line with this, our overarching priorities for 2021/22 are:

* To progress a safe return to the workplace for SCVO staff and tenants
* To support the sector to deal with the impact and fall-out from the coronavirus pandemic
* To ensure SCVO’s continued financial sustainability

In addition to this, the following thematic priorities will be reflected in our workplans across the organisation:

* The funding environment
* The sector as an employer
* Environment
* Digital capacity-building and inclusion
* Successful voluntary organisations

Contact us

**Ask us anything – we’d love to hear from you!**

Email us at [**enquiries@scvo.scot**](mailto:enquiries@scvo.scot)

Visit our website [**www.scvo.scot**](http://www.scvo.scot)

Call our free information line **0800 169 002**

Twitter:[**www.twitter.com/scvotweet**](http://www.twitter.com/scvotweet)

Facebook: [**www.facebook.com/scvo1939**](http://www.facebook.com/scvo1939)

LinkedIn:[**www.linkedin.com/scvo**](http://www.linkedin.com/scvo)

YouTube: [**www.youtube.com/SCVOtv**](http://www.youtube.com/SCVOtv)

**SCVO’s networks include:**

* Intermediaries Network
* Policy Officers Network
* Third Sector Forum
* Comms Network
* Trustees Network

Our bulletins include:

* SCVO Members Bulletin
* Employability
* Digital
* Policy
* Coronavirus
* Events & Training

Join our community

This year we completed the membership review that we started in 2019/20 to update and streamline the value of our membership offer. Our members voted in support of a new membership fee structure in early 2021 and we created a new membership benefits package for launch in April 2021. We've welcomed a large number of new members, and our revised membership offer will continue to develop. As well as joining a community of over 2,000+ charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises, SCVO members receive access to a range of fantastic membership benefits.

Find out more on our website **www.scvo.scot**