SCVO

AI and Everything Else

Creating a digitally confident Scottish voluntary sector in 2026

Our fourth call to action

Scotland's voluntary sector is operating in a world where digital and technology are no longer optional, "back-office" concerns. They shape how people find help, how services are delivered, how trust is built, how funding flows, and how risk is managed.

Used well, digital and technology can make charities more effective, resilient and responsive. This enables better outcomes for people without increasing costs. Used poorly, or ignored, they can deepen exclusion, increase risk and undermine impact.

This Call to Action is about what needs to happen next.

We are calling on Scotland's voluntary sector, and those who support it, to take deliberate, sustained action to build digital confidence to become more responsive and effective.

Our shared call to action

We call on the sector to:

Put people first in all digital change

Design services, systems and communications around real user needs, accessibility and lived experience. Not internal assumptions, legacy processes or supplier promises.

1

Treat digital as a leadership and governance responsibility

Boards and senior leaders must prioritise digital, data, AI and cyber risk as strategic issues, and set clear direction, realistic aims and sustained investment.

2

Invest in skills, confidence and culture - not just tools

3

Digital confidence comes from people who are supported to learn, experiment and improve continuously. Technology alone will not fix problems rooted in ways of working, capacity or culture.

4

Use data to drive insight, learning and impact

Move beyond reactive reporting towards purposeful, ethical and secure use of data to inform decisions, improve services and clearly show impact.

5

Approach AI with curiosity and care

Explore the potential of AI through small, safe, values-led experiments. These should be grounded in good data governance, transparency, trust and human judgement, not hype or fear of missing out.

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7

8

Focus on reliable, user-centred technology foundations

Prioritise dependable tools, infrastructure and partnerships that enable staff and volunteers to work well, safely and confidently, today and into the future.

What this means in practice

For boards and leaders:
Make digital change a standing strategic priority.
Invest realistically. Lead with curiosity, humility
and intent.

For managers and staff:
Champion user needs, build confidence, use
data thoughtfully, and keep improving, even in
small steps.

For funders:
Support core digital capability, infrastructure and
skills, not just short-term innovation projects.

For technology partners:
Design accessible, secure, transparent tools that
genuinely meet charities' needs, and price them fairly.

SCVO's commitment

SCVO will continue to support the sector through strategic leadership, practical guidance, training, one-to-one support and advocacy. We will help organisations of all sizes take meaningful steps towards greater digital confidence.

We will also play a convening role. We will support collective learning and collaboration across the sector, so that charities can learn from what works, avoid duplication and make faster progress together.

This is not about chasing the latest technology.

It is about building a voluntary sector that can adapt, thrive and deliver impact in a digital society.