

# Sport



A Home For Lifelong Volunteering

Joint Internal Evaluation Report  
2018-2019



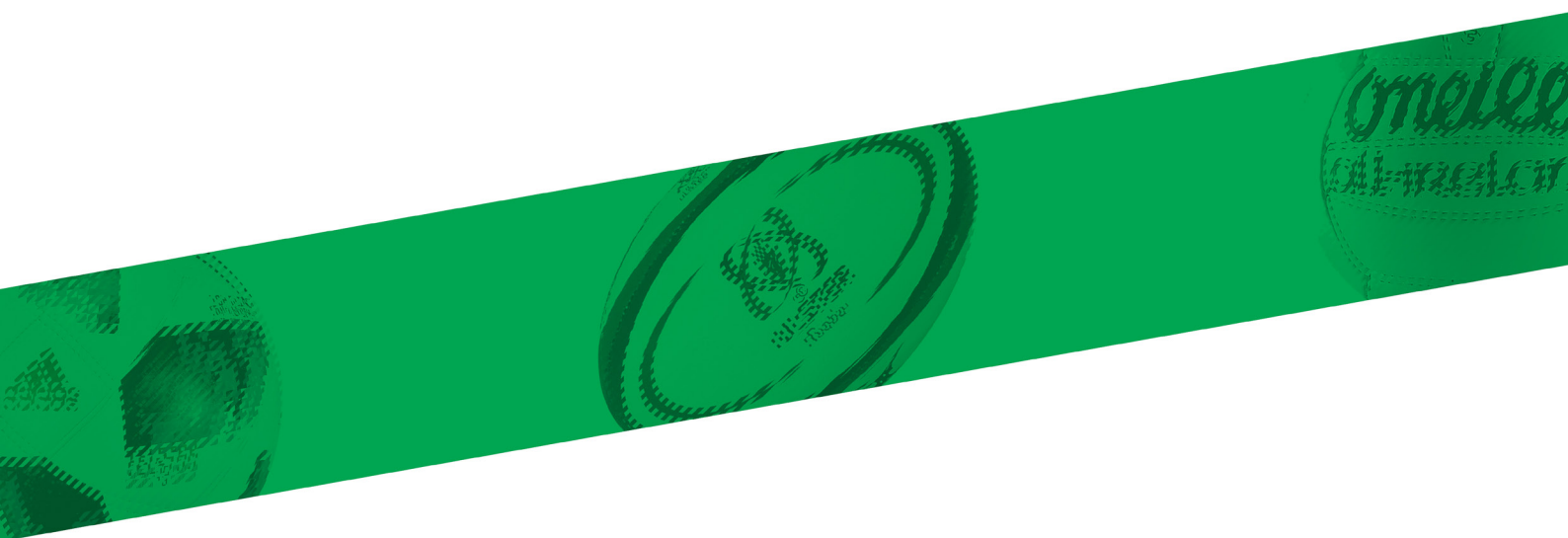
## DfC

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## SECTION 1



# Introduction & Background

Following the success of the Sport – A Home for Lifelong Volunteering programme in 2017/2018, the Irish FA, Ulster GAA and Ulster Rugby were keen to extend the programme for another year. However, constraints within the political system meant that only a nine-month period of funding could be committed to by the Department for Communities. Thus funding was duly agreed and accepted by the programme partners for a delivery period of nine months from 1 July 2018 – 31 March 2019.

Throughout this nine-month period the programme was supported by Project Officers from each of the three codes:

### Irish FA

**Volunteer & Policy Development Officer:** Michael Carvill

**Club & Community Development Officer:** Gavin Nelson

### Ulster GAA

**Volunteer & Policy Development Officer:**

Ashelene Groogan (1 July 2018 – 30 November 2018),

Sharon Haughey-Grimley (1 December – 31 March 2018)

**Club & Community Development Officer:** Fionntan O'Dowd

### Ulster Rugby

**Volunteer & Policy Development Officer:** Nicci Wilson

**Club & Community Development Officer:** David McKay

This internal evaluation sets out to summarise the achievements of Sport – A Home for Lifelong Volunteering against the joint project objectives. It also provides some feedback on the highlights and challenges of delivering the programme across this nine-month period, with the information presented complementing the joint six-monthly reports and the individual evaluations completed by each code.

The partners would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department for Communities for their support in delivering the programme. On both an individual basis and as a collective, the partners have been able to deliver a wide programme of activities which have empowered and enriched volunteers, broadened their experiences and expanded their opportunities to contribute towards the development of grassroots sport. It is very much appreciated.

## SECTION 2



# Programme Objectives

Form effective partnerships between sporting bodies to provide co-ordinated infrastructure support for volunteering

### Steering Panel Meetings

Partnership steering panel meetings – minutes and action points recorded

#### Target partially achieved

- The first steering panel took place on 2 August 2018
- A second was to take place and several dates had been scheduled, but this was postponed by DfC until the reporting period had passed

### Terms of Reference

Term of reference clarifying purpose, roles and responsibilities

#### Target achieved

- Terms of reference agreed at first steering panel on 2 August 2018

### Strategic Plan

Strategic plan with agreed rationale and outcomes

#### Target achieved

- Strategic development through Sport Uniting Communities
- Sport Uniting Communities meeting was held on Friday 2 September 2018

### Action Plan

Agreed action plan which commits partners to work together to deliver actions against agreed priorities and within agreed timescales

#### Target achieved

- Sport – A Home for Lifelong Volunteering action plan developed and agreed at steering panel on 2 August 2018

### Progress Reporting

There is an agreed monitoring framework for the design and collection of data and progress reporting

#### Target achieved

- Two six-month progress reports were submitted to DfC on Wednesday 31 October 2018 and Tuesday 30 April 2019
- Monitoring framework agreed with DfC (scorecard) at first steering panel meeting on 2 August 2018





### Evaluation and Review

There is an agreed evaluation framework to inform the collection, collation and analysis of evidence about programme impact

Evidence of learning is shared and used to inform improved practice, planning and decision-making

#### Target achieved

- This report constitutes the evaluation report
- Format was agreed at DfC at the first steering group meeting on 2 August 2018
- Two progress reports delivered internally at board level within each code

## Clubs to have enhanced capacity to recruit, manage and retain volunteers

### Volunteer Charter

Partners review/update the Volunteer Charter on an annual basis reflecting best practice, and disseminate to clubs through sign-up to charter

#### Target achieved

- Volunteer Charter was updated on 2 August 2018
- **56** clubs signed up to the Volunteer Charter

### ClubMark Accreditation

Partners maintain, regularly review and update accredited quality standards for volunteering in clubs

#### Target achieved

- Retained status as accrediting scheme by Sport NI as of charter by end of March 2019

### ClubMark Accreditation

Clubs are supported through the clubmark process by programme staff

#### Target achieved

- **17** clubs accredited

### Lifeline Volunteering Training Programme

Key club personnel are provided with the skills to recruit, manage and retain volunteers through a lifelong volunteering training programme

#### Target achieved

- 3 December 2018, Kingspan Stadium
- 12 December 2018, Drumragh GAA

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## Club Case-Studies

Partners document learning and good practice and share in a variety of formats and media

### Target achieved

- Each code prepared a video case-study of a club they have supported through a number of development programmes. These were shared on each code's social media channels in March 2019

## Partners to provide volunteering opportunities (including underrepresented groups)

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### Schools Roadshows

40 participants at one schools roadshow by end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- Event hosted on 21 November 2018 in Our Lady of Lourdes, Ballymoney

### Club Placements

47 club placements facilitated by end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **54** club placements were facilitated

### Governing Body Placements

225 governing body placements facilitated by end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **414** governing body placements facilitated

### Inter-Organisational Placements

15 inter-organisational placements facilitated by end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **16** placements were facilitated as follows:
  - One Ballymena Games Development Centre (three Irish FA volunteers & three GAA volunteers) in March 2019
  - Ballymena RFC disability coaching sessions (three GAA volunteers) in March 2019
  - Ulster GAA Health Showcase event scheduled for 23 March was postponed due to the Greenvale Hotel tragedy and rescheduled for 11 May 2019

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## Youth Forums

36 volunteers to attend youth forums (one forum per code) by end of March 2019. (Target of 40% total participants through underrepresented groups)

### Target achieved

- 23 July 2018: Ulster GAA youth forum (33 young volunteers)
- 25 November 2018, 27 Jan 2019, 10 March 2019: Ulster Rugby youth forums (12 young volunteers)
- 16 March Irish FA youth forum (18 volunteers)

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## Joint Youth Forum

24 volunteers to attend joint youth forum by end of March 2019. (Target of 40% total participants through underrepresented groups)

### Target achieved

- The joint youth forum took place on 23 February, Kingspan Stadium with 24 attendees, 50% of whom were from underrepresented groups

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## Underrepresented

Partnership to take advice from organisations who work with underrepresented groups e.g. Age NI, Simon Community, Disability Sport NI & BME Groups).  
Evidence to be documented in reports

### Target achieved

- The group liaised with Disability Sport NI and the Rainbow Project in building capacity relating to underrepresented groups
- After consideration the Respect Charter was renamed the Inclusion Charter

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## Respect Charter

24 Clubs to sign up to joint Inclusion Charter by end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **37** clubs signed up to the Inclusion Charter

## Partners' volunteering opportunities to be effectively marketed to a target audience

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## Marketing & Communications Plan

One marketing & communications plan by the end of August 2018

### Target achieved

- Marketing & communications plan was agreed on 21 Aug 2018

# Different motivations for volunteering acknowledged and addressed

## GoldMark Log-Books Distributed

250 GoldMark log-books distributed to volunteers by end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **283** log-books distributed

## GoldMark Mentoring

100 volunteers mentored in the GoldMark programme

### Target achieved

- **201** volunteers mentored in GoldMark

## Engagement Programmes

16 engagement programmes for volunteer recruitment by end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **16** engagement programmes have been implemented

## Volunteers Showcased

45 volunteer showcase opportunities to be evidenced by the end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **48** volunteer opportunities showcased

## Volunteer Case-Studies

Three volunteer case-studies to be promoted on partners' social media with a record of public interaction (hits, likes, shares, retweets etc) by the end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- Case-studies were created on the following volunteers: Sophie Hipson, Queens RFC, Elaine Junk, Mid Ulster Ladies FC and Peter McLarnon, Creggan Kickhams GAA. In total the interaction was **224** likes, **196** shares and **22,938**

# Improved support of volunteer support needs

## Bespoke Induction Programme

180 volunteers availing of a bespoke induction programme by end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **203** volunteers have attended bespoke induction programmes

## Mentoring Scheme

100 volunteers engaged in mentoring scheme by the end of March 2019

### Target achieved

- **114** volunteers mentored

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### **Lifelong Volunteer Training Programme**

Lifelong volunteer training programme featuring 12 events with 300 club volunteers attending by the end of March 2019

#### **Target achieved**

- **19** events have been hosted with **525** volunteers trained

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### **Multi-Sport Volunteering Forum**

One multi-sport volunteering forum hosted by end of March 2019

#### **Target achieved**

- Multi-sport volunteering forum was held on 14 November 2018 at the Integrated College, Dungannon

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### **E-learning**

30 e-learning opportunities made available to volunteers by end of March 2019

#### **Target partially achieved**

- **28** e-learning opportunities were made available

## Greater recognition of the value and impact of the Sport: A Home for Lifelong Volunteering programme

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### **Infographics**

Two infographics of high-line delivery developed and shared across all social media channels twice per year by end of March 2019

#### **Target partially achieved**

- One infographic was shared following progress report one's completion. Progress report two was shared as an infographic after the end of March 2019

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### **Inclusion in Annual Report**

Information to be included in annual reports of all three partners at year end

#### **Target achieved**

- Each partner reported on the findings of the steering panel and progress reports at their respective end of year reports/AGMs

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### **GoldMark Awards**

One GoldMark Awards ceremony hosted by end of March 2019

#### **Target achieved**

- The GoldMark Awards ceremony took place on 20 February 2019 in Crowne Plaza Hotel, Shaws Bridge



# Programme Highlights

## Schools Roadshow

**The joint sports partnership delivered a multi-sport schools roadshow at Our Lady of Lourdes High School on Wednesday 21 November 2018. 41 young people took part – 20 from Our Lady of Lourdes High School and 21 from Dalriada. The Ballymoney area was selected for this year’s schools roadshow as the joint sports partnership had not engaged there previously.**

At this year’s schools roadshow we wanted to highlight the benefits of volunteering, to identify and discuss some perceived barriers to volunteering and highlight some of the volunteering opportunities available in sport that could enable volunteers to learn new skills to help them in their future chosen careers. Roles include social media, public relations, photography, journalism and other areas that would not immediately be associated with a sports club. We wanted to appeal to students who didn’t necessarily want to play a sport but who could still be involved and connect with their local community.

We also delivered information to students regarding GoldMark and gave those not yet registered but who were already volunteering in their club an opportunity to sign up to the GoldMark programme

A full evaluation report can be found in Appendix 1.





## Inter-organisational placements

This year the programme provided multiple inter-organisational opportunities for volunteers to attend:

- **Northern Ireland v Estonia international football match**
- **Ballymena Games Development Centre**
- **Ballymena Rugby Club**

At these events volunteers got an opportunity to learn more about different sports, develop new skills, work with young children, work with players who have a learning disability and network with volunteers from different parts of the community. The events also provided volunteers with the chance to learn more about coaching, event management and working with others.

Ulster GAA offered multi-sports volunteering opportunities at Ulster GAA Health Fair & Conference, Saturday 23 March, Garvaghey, Tyrone. Unfortunately this event was postponed following the St Patrick's Day tragedy in Cookstown.



### Participant feedback:

*"We all had a ball and felt very welcomed. The fanzone was an excellent set-up. The girls really enjoyed helping out and meeting new people. Their opinions definitely changed after taking part with the games and meeting different people from different parts of the community. Definitely a great opportunity for the youth to experience different sports and show people we really can mix and cross over sports. Thanks for the opportunity and we definitely would be interested in future events".*



## Multi-Sport Volunteering Forum

### How to become a more inclusive club.

On Wednesday 14 November 2018 a multi-sport forum was delivered with a sole focus on developing understanding for volunteers on how to improve inclusivity within sports clubs. The event was jointly organised by Ulster GAA, Irish FA Foundation and Ulster Rugby.

Three guest speakers delivered presentations aimed at increasing awareness around disability, diversity and making clubs more accessible to underrepresented groups in their community. Shane McCann from Ulster GAA identified new initiatives within the three sports to support those with disabilities. Elaine Reid from Disability Sport NI discussed how DSNI can assist clubs to increase opportunities for those who are disabled but still keen to play or volunteer within sport. Nuala Devenney from the Rainbow Project focused on the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community. Nuala spoke of how sports clubs should increase awareness around this topic and of what is required to develop this within a club setting.

On the evening the three sports also launched the new Inclusion Charter and this was adopted by clubs on completion of the workshop. After a consultation with all grassroots clubs the three sports identified a gap in provision and knowledge around this area, and the information on the evening was greatly received. The event was delivered at the Integrated College Dungannon and attended by volunteers from all three sports.

#### Nuala Devenney, Rainbow Project

*"I feel the workshop last week in Dungannon with the Ulster GAA, Ulster Rugby and the Irish FA Foundation was the start of a great partnership to support LGBT+ individuals who may be part of their team/club presently and feel unable to come out. The Rainbow Project encouraged those club volunteers to start thinking of their own club/team and even small steps such as posters, badges or wearing rainbow laces that can make a big difference. It's important to make LGBT+ people feel accepted and knowing there is someone they can talk to."*



Shane McCann, (Ulster GAA) Elaine Reid (Disability Sport NI) Nuala Devenney (Rainbow Project)

**Shane McCann, Regional Development Officer, Ulster GAA**

*"Being an inclusive club should not be an extra add-on to a club. It should be an integral part of every sports club. Opportunities are becoming more prevalent and with the continued support from governing bodies this will continue to improve. Those with a disability should be encouraged to try all disability sports to find the one that is right for them."*

**Elaine Reid, Disability Sport NI**

*"Disability Sport NI is delighted that three of Northern Ireland's largest governing bodies of sport have launched an inclusion charter for their clubs. We hope that by continuing to work in partnership with the sports, that the number of opportunities available for people with disabilities to play, compete and volunteer within the club environment will continue to grow."*

## Joint Volunteer Training Programme

**In December 2018 two club promotion workshops were held to provide clubs and volunteers with information on how to effectively market their clubs in their communities. The first workshop was held at the Kingspan Stadium on 3 December 2018 and the second was hosted at Drumragh Sarsfields G.A.C on 12 December 2018. Over 50 people in total attended the two events.**

The workshops gave volunteers the chance to learn from marketing professionals working in sport – Damian Kelly, Marketing Communications Manager at Ulster Rugby and Ross O'Donoghue, Campaigns Officer at IRFU. Damian discussed how clubs can effectively use different types of social media and the benefits of each social media platform. Ross talked about the power of storytelling and of videos.



On these evenings clubs were also invited to share good practice with others in the room. 22nd Old Boys Football Club delivered a presentation on how they promote mental health through their club and in the wider Belfast area. Drumragh Sarsfields spoke about how they rebranded their entire club, including the club badge, kit and digital assets.



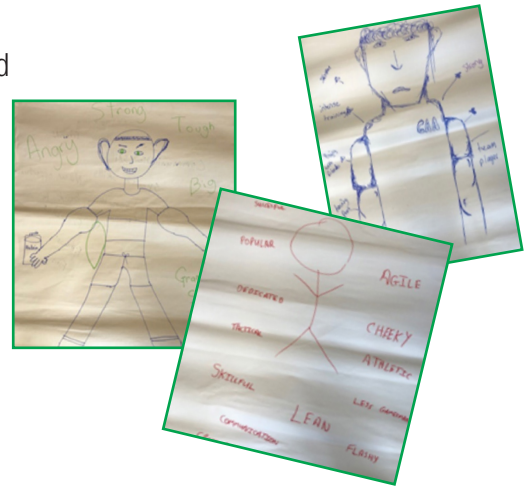
## Joint Youth Forum

**On the 23 February 2019 Ulster Rugby in partnership with the Irish FA and the GAA invited 24 young volunteers from each of the sporting codes to participate in our multi-sport youth forum at Kingspan Stadium.**

**We tried to make this youth forum as inclusive as possible. The group was made up of young adults from the ages of 16-24 years old and included some participants who had a physical or learning disability.**

The session started with icebreakers to help the participants feel more comfortable and to encourage the different codes to mix together.

The participants were then split into groups, each of which had representation from the three codes. They were asked to participate in interactive tasks and for their views on volunteering in sport. Each group was asked to draw their typical rugby player, footballer and GAA player and it was interesting to see the stereotyped player being drawn in all the respective sports. The groups took some time to discuss the drawings and tried to explain and/or dispel some of their perceptions.



The groups discussed issues around volunteering opportunities for young people in sport and explored what young people felt were the barriers to getting involved either as a volunteer or as a player, and subsequently what they felt were the benefits of being involved in sport.

After the forum participants were offered the opportunity to try out Ulster Rugby's virtual reality goggles and given tickets to watch Ulster play the Italian team Zebre that evening. They were also invited onto the pitch at half time to meet some of the players and have their photographs taken.





## GoldMark Awards

### Positive contribution of young volunteers recognised.



**On the 20 March 2018 young sports volunteers took centre stage at the GoldMark Awards Ceremony in the Crowne Plaza Belfast. The awards were jointly organised by Ulster GAA, the Irish FA Foundation and Ulster Rugby. The event highlighted the huge volunteering effort across the three sports among young people aged 14-24 years.**

Young people from across Northern Ireland heard first-hand from three sports stars about their experiences of volunteering and the impact volunteers made on their sporting careers - Pat McGibbon, former Manchester United, Wigan Athletic and Northern Ireland player, Niall Grimley, Armagh GAA and Ireland International Rules player, and Stuart McCloskey, current Ulster and Irish international rugby player.

The packed audience also heard from 22 year-old Emily Millar from Malone Rugby Club who gave a powerful overview of her experience of volunteering in sport after her playing career was cruelly cut short following serious injury. BBC sports commentator Thomas Niblock conducted the proceedings that saw over 100 young people awarded the GoldMark Millennium Volunteers Award for 50, 100 and 200 hours.

Congratulating the young volunteers Ulster Rugby President Stephen Elliott said, "The GoldMark programme requires young people to commit their time and talent to their local sports club. Over 100 young volunteers have been recognised at this event for contributing 50 hours, 100 hours and

200 hours to their sports club. That is an incredible achievement and I congratulate each of them."

Acknowledging the role of clubs in promoting youth volunteering, Ulster GAA President Oliver Galligan said, "Hundreds of sports clubs right across Ulster have signed up for the GoldMark programme to promote volunteering to their young members and to officially recognise the contribution that young volunteers make to sport and their communities. That is important work helping to develop the skills and talents of our young people and I would encourage any club not registered for this programme to get in touch with their governing body."

Irish FA Foundation Chairman Jim Shaw thanked DfC and Volunteer Now for their assistance delivering this programme and said, "Through DfC funding the Irish FA Foundation, Ulster Rugby and Ulster GAA are able to work together to increase participation in volunteering – promoting and recognising our volunteers and developing their skills and knowledge. We appreciate the ongoing support of Volunteer Now in this work also. Through this programme, the spotlight shines on the positive contribution of young people to clubs and their communities."

## SECTION 4

# Challenges

**Programme delivery over the nine months from July 2018 to March 2019 has been on the whole very successful. However, as expected there have been a number of challenges.**



Each governing body appreciates the challenges that the Department for Communities faced and still faces in light of the lack of agreed budgets. Uncertainty with funding can cause uneasiness with staff for long-term commitment to the posts. However, credit must be given to the programme staff who have continued to maintain an excellent standard of delivery despite a lack of long-term job security.

Nine months of delivery results from April to July were redundant. Despite work continuing in this period, this work cannot be reported on and thus this fruitful part of the year cannot be best utilised. Programmes and events are then hosted during less favorable parts of the year and that may, on occasion, result in fewer attendees than we would have liked.

Again relating to long-term job security, a short-term funding period presents a challenge in terms of planning for long-term impact. Although the programme is evaluated continuously throughout and at the end of each funding period, the true potential of the programme and the partnership is being somewhat thwarted by a lack of opportunity to plan longer-term. While some clubs and volunteers will continue to need support on the more basic elements of club and volunteer development, those who have been engaging in the programme for several years are now seeking support on more advanced projects. The short-term nature of the programme does not allow our work to progress the level of support which many clubs and volunteers are now requesting.





Despite this, the partnership will continue to evaluate and plan as well as possible until such times as a longer-term option is available. It is appreciated that this is a problem which is outside of the control of the Department for Communities.

Another challenge recognised during this funding period is the increased running costs for each organisation. Although the partnership manages budgets well, the success of the programme means that running costs have been increasing year-on-year. An example is the GoldMark Awards. The success of GoldMark means the number of young volunteers engaged in the programme and meriting an award has increased. Our GoldMark Awards Ceremony is our high-profile event which takes place in a hotel and with a high-level of hospitality. This year we had an increased number of volunteers attending, which meant increased costs. Each partner recognises the excellent value for money the agreement with DfC presents. However, increased financial constraints internally within each governing body have meant greater scrutiny on all expenditure.

All partners fully commit to the programme and have already put in place heightened financial controls when planning for 2019-2020 delivery.

As with any programme that deals primarily with volunteers there are occasions when it can be challenging to get the correct support to volunteers in a way which best suits them. Volunteers generally are only available on weekday evenings and at weekends. The majority of programme delivery subsequently takes place at these times.

However, volunteers by their nature are busy and often have other time-commitments at these peak times. This is par for the course, so programme staff have developed resources and support material which volunteers can access at a time which suits them. The online support element is something the programme has encouraged and all partners continue to work towards making materials and resources available online. However, for some programmes and events face-to-face contact with volunteers is key, so the partnership will continue to offer a variety of means through which volunteers can engage.



## SECTION 5



# Conclusions



Sport – A Home For Lifelong Volunteering continues to excel in its aim of supporting clubs and volunteers. Across many areas the partners have out-performed against the very ambitious targets that made up the 2018-2019 programme. This challenge is welcome and has resulted in the partnership once again successfully working collaboratively.

A nine-month delivery period has proved to be challenging but credit must go to the programme staff and management team who have remained dedicated to the task. As stated in previous evaluation reports, clubs and volunteers are evidently increasing their capacity through engagement with the programme. The spectrum of support demanded from clubs is growing with clubs and volunteers who have been engaging for some time now seeking higher-level support.

There also remains a need to provide more basic level support to clubs and volunteers who are new on their journey. Credit must go to the programme staff who have developed multiple delivery formats enabling them to appeal to a wide range of clubs and volunteers. The development of online content is one area the programme hopes to progress further.

The programme continues to attract and engage with volunteers from a wide demographic. This was not always the case. The number of female volunteers has increased while the average age of volunteers engaging has decreased. This is largely due to the success of the GoldMark programme and subsequent youth forums. A huge positive of the programme is the repeat engagement of clubs and volunteers across a number of programmes.





This suggests that clubs and volunteers are happy with the support being offered and therefore engage with more than one element of the programme. This is backed up in feedback received from participants.

Although sport is the core business of our clubs, increasingly the programme has adapted to reflect the needs of clubs outside of sport itself. Health and wellbeing, social inclusion and lifestyle are just some of the areas in which clubs are taking an interest. This year has seen more emphasis on including people with disabilities, members of the LGBT+ community, and on looking at the role of sports clubs in relation to mental and emotional wellbeing. These topics offer additionality to clubs and contribute to Programme for Government targets.

2018-2019 has been a year of great political uncertainty with the ongoing impasse among the power-sharing institutions and the all-consuming debate on Brexit. Communities struggle to pinpoint how things may look in the future, so having strong clubs to help focus people on the here and now is a positive thing. Again the example shown by the partnership of the Irish Football Association, Ulster Rugby and Ulster GAA working together serves to remind people that we are stronger working together and the big issues facing our communities are the same across the board. It is the strong desire of the partnership that Sport – A Home for Lifelong Volunteering can continue to be a good example of collaboration and community development for many years to come.







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