



VIP Strategy

Introduction

At People Know How our volunteers, interns and placement students (VIPs) are integral to our ability to deliver our services. VIPs have been involved in People Know How since it was founded in 2013 and since then their involvement has gone from strength to strength.

In 2019 People Know How employed a dedicated member of staff to support our VIPs to ensure that, along with the people who use our service, VIPs stay at the forefront of our work. There is now a recognised need for a more formal plan for VIP development.

This strategy sets out our approach to VIPs and our plans for refreshing our VIP programme, developing opportunities and making People Know How the place to go for volunteers, interns and placement students to develop their skills, share their experience and achieve their goals. The strategy will set out plans for the next 5 years to ensure VIPs are integrated into our work, aligning our organisational aims with our VIP strategic objectives to ensure that VIPs gain as much from their experience as we gain from their efforts.



Who are our VIPs?

Our VIPs fall into three categories:

V

Volunteers

Our volunteers, for the most part, give a few hours a week to a volunteering role for a variety of different reasons. Volunteering doesn't have an end date and is more flexible for people looking to fit volunteering around other commitments.

I

Internships

Our interns come to us on pre-planned internships, often organised through an intermediary organisation or scheme, with a set start and finish date and clear objectives and outcomes. Internships can last anywhere from a few weeks to 6 months and involve taking part in service delivery, research and defined projects. Some internships involve grants and scholarships paid to People Know How or directly to the intern.

P

Placement students

Our placement students come to us through university or college courses that require a placement to contribute towards academic studies. Students will be with us for a set time with specific objectives and requirements.





Monitoring and evaluation plan

The table below shows the monitoring and evaluation plan for VIPs. The two outcomes for VIPs focus on how they benefit from their involvement with People Know How. These are monitored using the indicators listed through a number of evaluation and feedback processes.

Outcomes	VIPs have increased instrumental benefits	VIPs have increased wellbeing and social benefits
Indicator 1	VIPs consolidate existing skills or learn new skills	VIPs feel an increase in physical health
Indicator 2	VIPs report new knowledge and experiences	VIPs feel more socially connected
Indicator 3	VIPs report their involvement has helped their current or future employment	VIPs feel an increase in mental wellbeing

We will continue to integrate monitoring and evaluation into the VIP experience to ensure that we are measuring the success of the strategy from a VIP perspective as well as that of the organisation. We will monitor success through methods such as feedback forms, a bi-annual satisfaction survey and qualitative feedback from VIPs, staff and people we support.

Developing the strategy

To develop the strategy, we created a range of opportunities for VIPs and staff to make their voices heard. These included a workshop, a focus group, a survey and the first VIP satisfaction survey. All options were open to our current cohort of VIPs and some alumni VIPs were also asked to contribute.

Workshop: SWOT analysis

During Volunteers Week 2023 we started the process to gather thoughts from VIPs on what they would like to see in a VIP Strategy. The workshop was offered to all the current VIPs at the time and staff who had progressed from VIP to staff member. In total, 4 volunteers, 2 placement students and 1 member of staff (previously an intern with People Know How) attended the workshop which was facilitated by the VIP Manager and VIP Coordinator. The workshop was set up as a SWOT analysis asking attendees to think about the following themes: support, reliability, communication and satisfaction.

Survey

The second method for gathering input from VIPs and staff was a survey that mirrored the workshop. The survey was sent out via Microsoft Forms and asked VIPs and staff to comment on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats across the same themes as the workshop. The survey was sent out to all staff and VIPs who were currently at People Know How and had 20 responses.

Focus group

The final input from VIPs and staff was a focus group designed and run by 2 current interns. The VIPs designed and ran the focus group so participants would feel more open to sharing their experiences and ideas without the VIP Management team running the session. 8 VIPs and 2 staff members who were previously VIPs were asked to participate as representatives from each of the current roles we offer to VIPs. The focus group was transcribed, analysed and categorised into the SWOT analysis categories in order to combine feedback.





Satisfaction survey

The VIP Satisfaction Survey was launched in December 2023 and will run bi-annually in June and December from 2024 onwards. The first set of results are being included in the VIP strategy as a baseline for VIP satisfaction. There was a 48% response rate in this first survey and responses were overall very positive.

Summary of results and feedback

The following table shows themes drawn from VIP and staff inputs.

What is going well	What could be improved
Welcoming and open culture	Clearer and easier systems and processes
Strong communication in most areas	Feeling disconnected from other VIPs
Flexibility	More individualised support for VIPs
Recognition for VIPs	Reaching more diverse groups
Opportunities to gain skills and experience	More range of opportunities

From this input from VIPs and staff, along with the VIP Management team's thoughts on areas we can work to develop we have developed the VIP Strategy which we believe captures the needs of VIPs and the organisation.

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government launched a national volunteering framework, Volunteering for All, in 2019 which outlines all things volunteering in Scotland. Subsequently, a Volunteering Action Plan was launched in 2022 which lays out 47 actions to support the development of volunteering in Scotland over a 10-year period.

The [Volunteering for All Framework](#) highlights the benefits of volunteering for the individual and society. It focuses on creating opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth and encompasses the value that we are a society which treats all of our people with kindness, dignity and compassion, respects the rule of law, and acts in an open and transparent way.



Image from Volunteering for All: national framework, Scottish Government, 25 April 2019: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/volunteering-national-framework/pages/4>

Since its publication, People Know How has incorporated the four benefits listed by the framework into our VIP monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure we provide VIPs with opportunities and experiences that will allow them to benefit in ways important to them.

- **Physical health benefits:** Evidence suggests that volunteering can promote healthy lifestyle and improve self-rated health
- **Social benefits:** Research finds that volunteering can improve companionship, tackle social isolation and increase social capital
- **Mental wellbeing:** Evidence shows that volunteering can improve confidence, purpose and life satisfaction
- **Instrumental benefits:** Volunteering can help people to develop new skills, gain knowledge, develop attitudes and increase employability

The framework outlines the principles for volunteering, which we extend to our interns and placement students, and how these feed into the outcomes and national outcomes. We have captured these principles across the three VIP strategic objectives to ensure that we are working towards volunteering for all.

Volunteering Action Plan

The [Volunteering Action Plan \(VAP\)](#) was launched in 2022 and sets out 47 actions across a 10-year plan. These are typically high-level actions but can be interpreted to allow organisations to integrate the plan into their practice. People Know How will work towards integrating many of the VAP actions as part of this strategy, with the following themes taking priority over the next five years: Funding, Inclusivity, Accessibility, Lifelong Volunteering, Volunteer Experience.



The VIP Strategy

Strategic objectives

Over the next 5 years we strive to meet the following strategic objectives for our VIP programme:

- People Know How will develop its support for all VIPs, cultivating an inclusive, diverse and welcoming culture for all.
- People Know How will develop opportunities that are meaningful and purposeful for VIPs and the organisation.
- People Know How will improve the quality of our VIP programme and support for our VIPs.

People Know How's mission, vision, values and strategic aims

People Know How's mission, vision and values reflect the type of organisation we strive to be, including how we support our VIPs and how our VIPs support those who use our services.

Our mission is to support people to overcome barriers so that their wellbeing can be improved, effecting positive change at its root.

VIPs will be supported to overcome their own barriers to employment, education and other areas, as being involved as a VIP has both instrumental and health and wellbeing benefits. VIPs will also contribute towards this mission by being integral to the support that the people who use our services receive.

Our vision is for those who need support to be heard by decision makers and placed at the centre of solving social issues.

VIPs will contribute to our vision by being involved in the activities that will ensure that those we support are heard, as well as contributing to our research and campaigning work to influence change on a national level.

Our values to be people-centred and people-led, collaborative, inclusive, innovative and action-orientated.

Our approach to VIPs will encompass all of the values of the organisation and are reflected in the strategy's objectives and outcomes.

People Know How's three strategic aims are:

To provide spaces for people to gather, collaborate, exchange ideas and improve wellbeing, both in person and remotely.

VIPs will not only be involved in contributing to providing these spaces for individuals and groups in the community, but we will also foster these spaces for our VIPs to learn and grow. VIPs will support us and be supported to contribute to community cohesion no matter what their role is with the organisation.

To improve digital inclusion in Scotland by providing support and campaigning for everyone to have access to digital skills, affordable data and devices, to safely communicate, connect and engage with opportunities.

VIPs will contribute to digital inclusion by continuing to support the work of our Reconnect service through their volunteering, internships and placements while also being given the opportunity to be digitally included themselves through digital support from our dedicated team.

To improve school transitions for all children and young people across Scotland by providing support and campaigning for children, young people and families to have access to the support they need in the transition from primary to secondary school.

VIPs will contribute to improving school transitions by continuing to support the work of our Positive Transitions service through various roles that will play a part in each young person's journey. They will have the opportunity to contribute to the wider policy work and share their knowledge and skills.



Delivering the strategy

Objective 1: People Know How will develop its support for all VIPs, cultivating an inclusive, diverse, and welcoming culture for all

Principles	Outcomes
Recognise diversity Flexible and responsive	People Know How is recognised as an inclusive and supportive organisation for VIPs
	VIPs have clear and flexible access to the information and resources they need to be able to participate in VIP opportunities
	VIPs are more diverse, coming from a wider range of backgrounds and communities

How we seek to deliver on this objective

We will work towards having a full inclusivity plan in place which will draw on knowledge and resources from the Volunteer Scotland Inclusivity Action Group as well as other organisations and trainings. We will proactively recruit and support individuals who are representative of the communities in which we work, including targeting under-represented groups. We seek to make being a VIP as easy as possible so that no one is excluded.

Objective 2: People Know How will develop opportunities that are meaningful for VIPs and the organisation

Principles	Outcomes
Sociable and connected Meaningful and purposeful	VIPs can participate in opportunities that meet their motivations, whatever these may be
	People Know How have more flexible opportunities for VIPs to be involved, including consideration of life stage
	VIPs gain as much from their experience with us as we gain from their efforts
	VIPs feel valued in decision making processes

How we seek to deliver on this objective

We will continue to seek opportunities for VIPs to use their time with us as a pathway to meeting their own personal goals and aspirations. We will develop our approach to lifelong and transformational volunteering and we will ensure that VIP involvement is meaningful and organised.

Objective 3: People Know How will continue to improve the quality of our VIP programme

Principles	Outcomes
Supported and enabled Valued	VIPs receive a high standard of support
	VIPs feel empowered and enabled to do their role
	VIPs are recognised for their efforts in their role

How we seek to deliver on this objective

Reassessing our systems and processes, funding for VIPs, contributing to wider discussions and legislations, awards and recognition, VIP satisfaction.

Note on delivering the strategy

We will work through reassessing our systems and processes, through the Investing in Volunteers accreditation. We will seek funding specifically for VIP activities and continue to pay expenses for our VIPs. We will continue to review our VIP Satisfaction Survey and consider changes that reflect VIP's views.



0131 569 0525
contactus@peopleknowhow.org

People Know How
Straits Meadow
61-63 London Road
Edinburgh EH7 6AA

peopleknowhow.org

 @peopleknowhow

 @PKHinnovation

 @peopleknowhow

 People Know How

Registered Charity No. SC043871

Design by claudiabaldacchino.com