



VOLUNTEER STRATEGY

2023 - 2030



FOREWORD



Like all sports, we want to grow. We want more players, more coaches, more volunteers, and stronger more sustainable clubs. These remain our key objectives which we will seek to deliver. We will do so through the rugby league dividend - supporting our people our communities and through tackling the inequities and barriers that exist within society that prevent people from embracing the many benefits that engaging with our sport can deliver. Instrumental in this approach is continuing to highlight the vital work our volunteers do to support the delivery of our sport. Ensuring our volunteers feel valued and supported remains an absolute priority.

Marc Lovering

Director of Participation and Development

Volunteers are the life blood of our sport. Rugby League would not exist without them, they are part of the rugby league family, they are our people. Volunteers are involved in every aspect of the sport, therefore to succeed, our approach to volunteering has to be game wide and supported by all.

The 2022 Community Strategy included a commitment to produce a Volunteer Strategy to grow, retain, support, develop, value and diversify our volunteer network. As a sport, we need to provide the tools, guidance, opportunities, and support networks needed so that volunteers are skilled and effectively mobilised and feel welcomed, appreciated and valued. We need to make it as easy as possible for anyone to get involved and ensure they have an enjoyable and meaningful experience when they do.

This plan sets out our ambition for volunteering, the goals and milestones that will enable us to realise this ambition and how we will measure our success. It

details who our volunteers are and what they are telling us. How we will **grow** our volunteer network by providing more flexible and easily accessible opportunities. How we will **develop** our people by providing high quality training and opportunities. How we will **value** our volunteers and better recognise and celebrate the invaluable contribution they make to the sport. How we will **diversify** our volunteer network to ensure it is representative of the communities we serve.

We will tackle inequalities through removing barriers and providing opportunities.

We will build a sustainable sport and deliver positive social impact to the people and communities that need it most.

We will empower our people and our communities to thrive.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

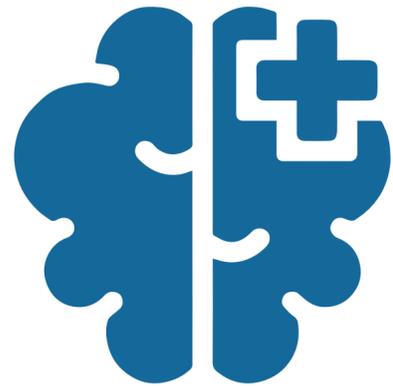
Volunteer roles within rugby league are wide ranging with something for everyone who wants to get involved.

Typically, volunteer roles can be split into three key categories:

- **Team, club and league roles (non coaching) for example team managers, first aiders, game day managers, chair, secretary, finance, safeguarding, fundraising, communications, social media**
- **Event volunteers**
- **Coaches and match officials**

This strategy focuses on the first two categories; volunteering within a team/club/league and event volunteering. There will be separate coaching and officiating strategies which covers the third category of volunteers; coaches and match officials.

This strategy has been informed by the volunteer registration data collected on the sports Game Day Registration and Competition Management System during the 2023 season and by a volunteer survey conducted in spring 2023. It provides an overview of the rugby league volunteer network and identifies areas for improvement. Further data collection is required to establish a more accurate picture of the volunteer network and this strategy includes a commitment to do this.



6%

have a physical or mental condition or illness.

54%

46%

5,711

VOLUNTEERS

(excluding coaches and match officials)



35%

are from the top 30% most deprived communities by IMD

92%

are white

6%

are aged under

25

years old

MOTIVATIONS TO VOLUNTEER

WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER IN RUGBY LEAGUE?

- They want to make a difference to others
- They want to give back to the sport
- They believe their volunteering makes a positive contribution to their local community

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING IN RUGBY LEAGUE

- Volunteering has helped me meet new people and make new friends
- I get satisfaction from seeing the results and impact of my volunteering
- Volunteering has helped me learn new skills
- Volunteering gives me a sense of personal achievement

FOCUS AREAS

- MAKE IT EASIER TO GET INVOLVED
- MORE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS THAT ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL
- USER FRIENDLY DIGITAL PLATFORMS
- INCREASE VOLUNTEER RETENTION AND EXPERIENCE BY IMPROVING TOUCHLINE BEHAVIOR
- IMPROVE VOLUNTEER COMMUNICATION
- MORE REGULARLY SHOW VOLUNTEERS THEY ARE VALUED AND APPRECIATED

OUR SPORT



The sport is too reliant on individuals, many of whom are carrying out multiple roles and becoming overburdened. Many volunteers don't feel supported or valued for what they do and feel training and development opportunities are lacking and difficult to access. Our volunteer network lacks diversity and doesn't reflect the communities we serve. A large proportion of our volunteers and clubs are in areas of socio-economic disadvantage and would benefit most from more support to tackle the challenges they face. We need to support and empower our people and our communities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sport.

Our ambition in terms of volunteering is to be one of the UK's leading sports in this area. We want a larger volunteer network that is more representative of the communities they serve. We want a more sustainable sport in which volunteers and organisations can thrive. We want to provide enjoyable and meaningful rugby league experiences where people feel supported and valued.

We will:

- Grow the number of volunteers involved in the sport, reducing the burden on the current network. We will provide more flexible opportunities and make it as easy as possible for people to volunteer.
- Diversify our network of volunteers in line with Tackle It, rugby league's inclusion and diversity action plan. We will tackle inequalities through providing opportunities and pathways to ensure representation in the sport's volunteer network.

- Provide high quality, accessible, user friendly training, development and support opportunities for volunteers across the network.
- Provide support and training to organisations engaging with volunteers.
- Better value and celebrate volunteers for the invaluable contribution they make to the sport.
- Provide a positive and welcoming environment for all through delivery of the sports Respect campaign.

To achieve our ambition, we will focus on four key goals. Each goal is underpinned by milestones, the actions we will take, and measurables, how we will measure success.

GROW the volunteer network

SUPPORT the volunteer network

VALUE the volunteer network

DIVERSIFY the volunteer network

GOAL 1 – GROW

GROW the volunteer network

Increasing the number of volunteers is key to ensuring the sport can continue to grow and thrive. We need to make it as easy as possible for people to get involved, provide more flexible opportunities and better promote the wide range of roles available. More volunteers involved in the sport will help to reduce the burden on current volunteers, many of whom are carrying out multiple roles.



MILESTONES

the steps we will take to achieve this goal

- Provide organisations working with volunteers with a suite of digital resources and training opportunities to better support them to recruit, onboard and retain volunteers.
- Launch a user friendly platform to better match volunteers with volunteer opportunities, and support organisations and volunteers to utilise it effectively.
- Identify gaps / demand for specific volunteer roles and deliver targeted recruitment campaigns to fill these gaps and meet demand.
- Showcase the range of different volunteer roles available within the sport, highlighting there is something for everyone.
- Establish a central volunteer programme to support the delivery of events across the community game.

MEASURES

how we will track progress and measure success

- An increase in the total number of active volunteers, including an increase in both the number of new volunteers and the number of retained volunteers within the sport.
- A range of high quality, fit for purpose digital resources being utilised by organisations working with volunteers.
- A central volunteer programme launched and an increase in the number of volunteers supporting community game events.

GOAL 2 – SUPPORT

SUPPORT the volunteer network

A well trained, motivated volunteer workforce is vital to the long-term sustainability of the sport. We need to provide high quality education and training, and effective ongoing learning and development opportunities that are easily accessible and flexible to meet individual needs. We need to ensure volunteers feel supported and empowered and that their volunteer experience is enjoyable and meaningful.

MILESTONES

the steps we will take to achieve this goal

- Provide a range of high quality, digital resources that are easily accessible for all volunteers.
- Review digital platforms to ensure they are fit for purpose and user friendly.
- Provide ongoing and meaningful learning and development opportunities for volunteers.
- Provide opportunities for mentoring and sharing of best practice across the volunteer workforce.
- Support delivery of the sports Respect campaign to ensure the environments volunteers operate within are positive and welcoming for all.

MEASURES

how we will track progress and measure success

- An increase in the percentage of the volunteer workforce that feel supported in their role.
- Maintain the percentage of the volunteer workforce that are satisfied with their volunteer experience.
- A range of high quality, fit for purpose, easily accessible digital resources being utilised by the volunteer workforce.

GOAL 3 - VALUE

VALUE the volunteer network

Our sport simply wouldn't take place without volunteers and it's important they feel valued. We need to better recognise, reward and celebrate the invaluable contribution they make. We need to listen to our volunteers and proactively seek their views to help inform the development and delivery of current and future activity.



MILESTONES

the steps we will take to achieve this goal

- Create a framework to recognise, reward and celebrate volunteers.
- Establish an annual volunteer communications plan.
- Conduct an annual volunteer survey and introduce mechanisms to seek volunteer feedback more regularly, ensuring areas for improvement are identified and acted upon wherever possible.

MEASURES

how we will track progress and measure success

- An increase in the percentage of the volunteer workforce that feel valued for what they do.
- A high quality recognition, reward and celebration framework implemented across the volunteer network.

GOAL 4 - DIVERSIFY



DIVERSIFY the volunteer network

We want our volunteer workforce to be more representative of the communities they serve. We will tackle the inequalities and barriers that exist within society that prevent people from embracing the many benefits that engaging with our sport can deliver. We will make it easier for people to get involved and provide opportunities for all.

MILESTONES

the steps we will take to achieve this goal

- Refresh the Young Leaders Award and support more young people to volunteer in the sport.
- Develop opportunities that support and encourage more disabled people to volunteer in the sport.
- Develop opportunities that support and encourage more volunteers from lower socioeconomic groups to volunteer in the sport.
- Develop opportunities that support and encourage more volunteers from ethnically diverse backgrounds to volunteer in the sport.
- Provide organisations working with volunteers with education, training, resources and guidance to support them to better engage with the diverse communities in which they operate.
- Promote the diversity of the volunteer network and actively encourage those from underrepresented groups to get involved in volunteering.
- Ensure volunteers register on the Game Day platform to enable diversity monitoring to provide an accurate picture of the volunteer network.

MEASURES

how we will track progress and measure success

- A volunteer workforce that is more reflective of the communities they serve.

NEXT STEPS

This strategy sets out our long-term ambition for rugby league volunteering and how we intend to realise this ambition. The strategy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the changing landscape and incorporates the feedback and thoughts of volunteers and organisations working with volunteers.

A roadmap for delivery, annual action plan and baseline measures will underpin this strategy and provide the building blocks for success.

Thanks to **Kirsty Blackburn** and **Community Integrated Care** for providing the images.

