



Volunteer Now's Response to the CAL Committee Inquiry into the Creative Industries

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Volunteer Now welcomes the opportunity to comment on the CAL Committee Inquiry into the Creative Industries.

Volunteer Now works to promote, enhance and support volunteering across Northern Ireland. Volunteer Now is about **connecting** with individuals and organisations to **build** healthy communities and create positive **change**.

Volunteer Now enhances recognition for the contribution volunteers make, provides access to opportunities and encourages people to volunteer. We provide training, information, guidance and support to volunteer-involving organisations on issues of good practice and policy regarding volunteering, volunteer management, child protection, safeguarding vulnerable adults and governance.

Volunteer Now is interested in making a response because volunteers underpin arts in Northern Ireland. 'It's All About Time'¹ (2007), a study of volunteering in Northern Ireland, notes that an estimated 2,539 formal volunteers (0.9%) are involved in voluntary activities within 'culture/arts/crafts'. It also showed that 79% and 32% respectively of volunteer activities are 'organising or helping to run and activity or event' and 'within arts/crafts/music/drama'.

We would like to make the following key points in relation to the Inquiry:

- Arts and events are a significant part of Northern Ireland community life and dependent on volunteers. 64%² of voluntary / community arts support organisations are finding it hard to recruit volunteers. It is Volunteer Now's view that for volunteer involvement to continue, guidance and support must be made available on volunteer management best practice for volunteer involving organisations in the creative industries.
- Cultural tourism illustrates how arts and culture are part of our strength as a visitor destination. Volunteers deliver many of these programmes / events. For example Belfast Festival at Queens has a small number, around 10, paid members of staff but recruits, supports and manages over 100 volunteers. It is imperative that organisations involving the volunteers are able to build their capacity, develop the skill base of their volunteers and deliver effectively.
- If an employee carries out work on behalf of an organisation the work carried out is automatically the intellectual property of the employer and *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988*. This Act states that

¹ It's All About Time, 2007, Volunteer Development Agency

² Needs Analysis of Voluntary and Community Arts Support Organisations in relation to Volunteering and Volunteer Management, 2009, Volunteer Development Agency.

materials produced by employees belong to their employer. However, because a volunteer does not have a contract of employment within an organisation there is no automatic transfer of intellectual property rights from a volunteer to an employer. This might seem like a trivial issue, but there have been cases where volunteers have been producing original work for important publications, such as annual reviews, reports, photos, sound recordings, website development etc., but following disputes with their organisation have refused to allow them to use their work.

As part of a greater awareness of good practice in volunteer management the aspect of intellectual property should be considered.

Finally, this Inquiry also offers the chance to highlight, in support of the evidence above, that continued and additional support is required to enable the Creative Industries to flourish. In this instance the opportunity to build good practice in volunteering into their (the creative industries) plans going forward.

Volunteer Now would be pleased to discuss any of the points raised above.