

Voluntary Action Orkney

**STRATEGIC
PLAN:
2026 - 2029**

Supporting organisations, empowering people, and strengthening Orkney's communities.

Voluntary Action Orkney is the Third Sector Interface for Orkney.



CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION



As Chair of Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO), I am pleased to introduce our Strategic Plan for 2026–2029. The voluntary and community sector in Orkney is central to community wellbeing, inclusion, and resilience. This plan reflects our shared ambition to enable and empower the sector to thrive locally and in alignment with Scotland's national priorities.

Over the next three years, we will focus on building capacity, enhancing collaboration, strengthening our voice, and ensuring community needs drive action at both local and national levels. Our plan aligns with national and local outcomes and reflects the role VAO plays in supporting people and organisations across Orkney. We also contribute to the national Volunteering for All Action Plan, strengthening participation and inclusion. We will also invest in VAO's own internal resilience so that our organisation remains strong, responsive and well-equipped to support Orkney's communities.

I extend sincere thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers, directors, and partners. Their skills, insight, and energy are fundamental to delivering this plan and strengthening Orkney's voluntary and community life.

By 2029, we aim to have strengthened the resilience, voice, and impact of Orkney's voluntary and community sector.

Katharine McKerrell
Interim Chair, Voluntary Action Orkney



ABOUT VAO

Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) supports and develops the voluntary and community sector in Orkney. We are Orkney's Third Sector Interface (TSI). This means we are the recognised local organisation that supports, connects and represents voluntary organisations, community groups, social enterprises and volunteering. We provide a single point of access for support, information and representation, helping local organisations to thrive.

We provide:

- Practical support for voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises
- Volunteer development and placement
- Partnership working with public, private and third sectors
- Advocacy for sector interests at local and national levels

We also deliver projects and services that meet community need beyond core TSI functions.

Our Mission

To support a thriving and dynamic voluntary and community sector that drives positive change, strengthens communities, and enhances quality of life through inclusive and sustainable initiatives.

Our Vision

A resilient, inclusive Orkney where individuals and organisations work together to create stronger, connected and sustainable communities.



Our Values

- Integrity, Honesty and Quality – We act transparently and deliver to a high standard.
- Collaboration – We work in partnership to achieve better outcomes.
- Kindness and Respect – We value every person's contribution.
- Inclusivity – We ensure opportunities are accessible and fair.
- Productivity – We work efficiently to maximise impact.

DELIVERY OF OUR PLAN

Our Organisational Structure

Our governance and delivery structure ensures strong leadership, accountability, and collaboration across all areas of our work. It connects our Board's strategic oversight with the teams delivering day-to-day impact in communities.

The Board provides governance, strategic direction, and accountability for VAO. It ensures that our vision, values, and priorities are delivered in line with our charitable aims and in the best interests of Orkney's communities.

VAO's structure then comprises five key teams working together under the leadership of the Executive and Senior Management Teams:

- Executive Team – provides overall leadership and direction.
- Senior Management Team – coordinates delivery across all functions.
- Finance Team – manages financial planning and support.
- Partnerships & Engagement Team – leads communications, research, and collaboration.
- Development Team – delivers volunteering, youth and community development advice, support, projects and programmes.
- Office & Facilities Team – ensures smooth day-to-day operations and administration.
- Projects - Projects sit within our wider team structure and contribute to our strategic priorities

VAO's delivery relies on the skills and commitment of our:

- Board, who guide governance and strategic oversight
- Staff team, who deliver services and innovate
- Partners and funders, who help shape and resource our work

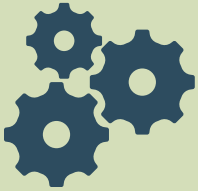
Strengthening our internal resilience is essential to delivering this plan. This includes investing in our people, systems, evidence processes, and internal communications so VAO remains adaptive, accountable, and able to support the sector effectively.

We will strengthen our organisation by:

- Investing in our people, systems, and digital tools
- Improving how we work to be more responsive and effective
- Strengthening internal communication and learning
- Ensuring our support is focused on members while remaining accessible to all

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

VAO will focus on four interrelated priorities:

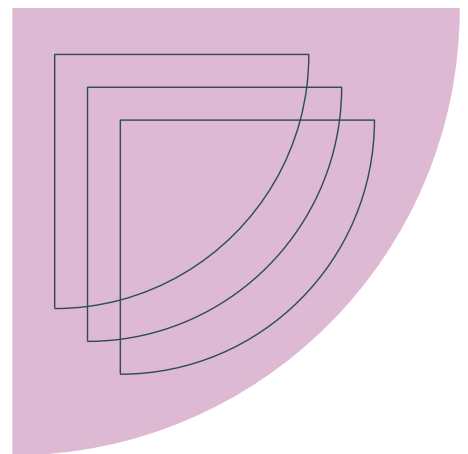


Building Capacity

Strengthening the skills, sustainability, and resilience of organisations and volunteers.

We will ensure:

- Organisations are better governed, funded, and sustainable
- Volunteers are supported to develop and thrive
- Inclusive and fair working practices are embedded
- More people can access and benefit from volunteering opportunities



Central Source of Knowledge

Positioning VAO as a trusted source of information, insight, and evidence.

We will:

- Maintain and develop the Orkney Community Directory
- Share relevant information, advice, and research
- Improve access to opportunities and support
- Strengthen community insight and data to inform decisions

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Connect

Bringing people and organisations together to strengthen collaboration and shared action.

We will:

- Coordinate partnerships and networks across sectors
- Strengthen the VAO membership community
- Facilitate shared learning and collective action
- Support organisations to work together effectively

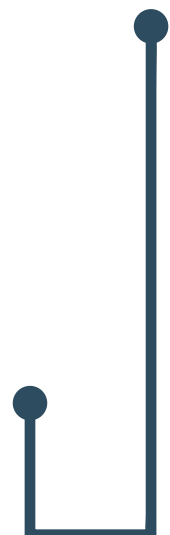
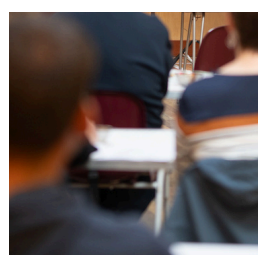
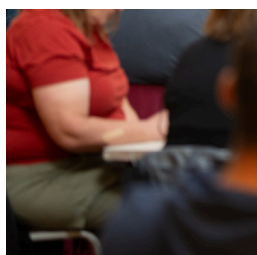
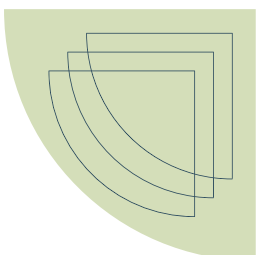


Voice

Ensuring the voice of Orkney's voluntary and community sector is heard and influences decisions locally and nationally.

We will:

- Represent the sector in policy and decision-making spaces
- Amplify community voices and experiences
- Share evidence and impact to influence change
- Ensure Orkney's needs shape national conversations



OUR OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Our Outcomes Framework shows how the support we provide in Orkney leads to stronger organisations, more active communities, and greater impact.

It connects what we do every day with wider local and national priorities, ensuring our work contributes to a stronger, more inclusive and resilient Orkney.

How our work creates impact

Our work follows a clear pathway:

What we do

We support organisations, volunteers, and partnerships through capacity building, volunteering, collaboration, and advocacy.

What changes

- Organisations become stronger and more sustainable
- People develop skills and confidence
- Relationships and collaboration improve

What this leads to

- Stronger, more connected communities
- Increased participation and volunteering
- A more resilient and responsive voluntary and community sector

What this contributes to

- Scotland's National Performance Framework outcomes
- Local priorities within the Orkney Community Plan (LOIP)

OUR OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

How we are aligned

Our Outcomes Framework 2026–2029 shows how VAO’s priorities connect with:

- [Scottish Government’s Third Sector Interface Outcome Framework \(2018\)](#)
- [Third Sector Interface \(TSI\) Network](#)
- [Volunteering for All Action Plan](#)
- [The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan \(LOIP\): Orkney Community Plan 2025-2030](#)

Our focus

The national Third Sector Interface (TSI) Network brings together Scotland’s local TSIs and identifies 17 short-term outcomes that guide shared support for the voluntary and community sector.

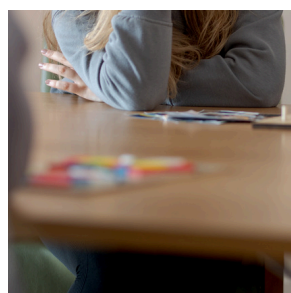
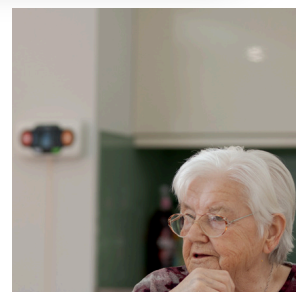
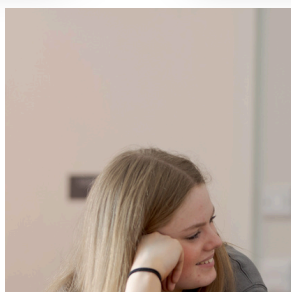
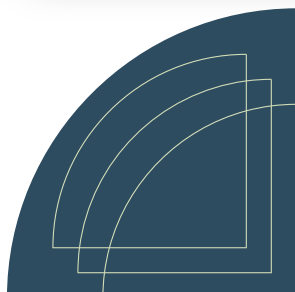
VAO focuses on the 10 outcomes that best reflect our role, capacity, and local priorities. These link directly to the 6 TSI medium-term outcomes and Scotland’s National Performance Framework, ensuring a clear line from:

**Local
delivery**

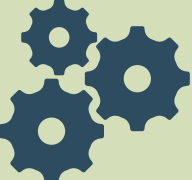

**Sector
outcomes**

**National
impact**



This approach allows us to clearly demonstrate how our work strengthens Orkney’s voluntary and community sector while contributing to a fairer, more resilient Scotland.



OUR OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Strategic Priority	VAO Short-Term Outcomes	TSI Network Medium-Term Outcomes	National Outcomes	LOIP (Local Strategic Priorities)
<p>Building Capacity</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Third sector organisations are better governed and managed. 2. Third sector organisations are able to start, sustain or grow their services. 3. People in the third sector have improved skills. 4. Third sector organisations have increased resources. 5. People using TSI volunteer centre services have better volunteering experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third sector organisations are better able to lead and develop shared agendas. • Third sector organisations are better able to respond to local need. • People are more involved in their community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe • We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally • We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of Living • Local Equality
<p>Central Source of Knowledge</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Third sector organisations have better access to information. 7. Partners have a better understanding of the sector and its impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cross-sector collaboration. • Third sector organisations are better able to contribute to shared agendas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe • We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination • We are healthy and active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Development • Local Equality • Population Health

OUR OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Strategic Priority	VAO Short-Term Outcomes	TSI Network Medium-Term Outcomes	National Outcomes	LOIP (Local Strategic Priorities)
<p>Connect</p> 	<p>8. There are better relationships between public and third sector.</p> <p>9. Third sector organisations better support each other and share resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cross-sector collaboration. • Third sector organisations are better able to contribute to shared agendas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe • We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Development • Population Health
<p>Voice</p> 	<p>10. The third sector is better able to influence decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key decision-making includes third sector input. • Third sector organisations are better able to lead shared agendas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe • We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally • We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Equality • Population Health

OUR OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

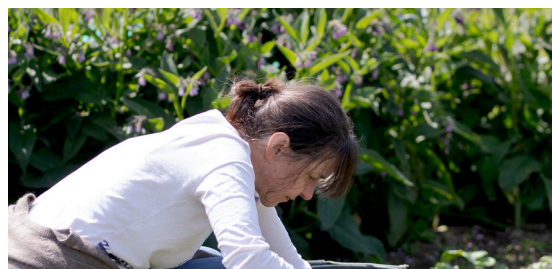
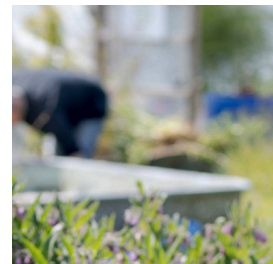
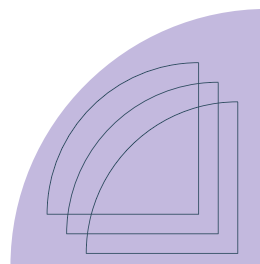
How we will use this framework

This Outcomes Framework guides how we plan, measure, and communicate our impact. Each short-term outcome will have agreed indicators, supported by case studies and data gathered locally.

Our work is underpinned by a Theory of Change approach, which helps us understand how our activities lead to short-term outcomes and long-term impact. This ensures our delivery is:

- Person-centred
- Strengths-based
- Inclusive
- Evidence-informed
- Trauma-informed

By linking local delivery to national outcomes, VAO can demonstrate how we strengthen Orkney's voluntary and community sector while contributing to Scotland's vision for empowered, fair and sustainable communities.



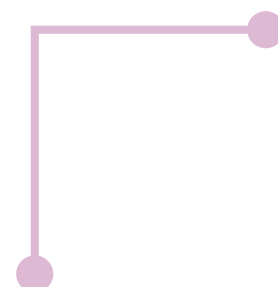
Monitoring and evaluation

This framework guides how we plan, measure, and communicate our impact.

We will measure our impact through a mix of qualitative insight and key indicators, such as increased organisational resilience, improved volunteer experiences, and stronger partnership working.

Our approach focuses on learning and reflection, supported by:

- Regular staff performance and operational reviews
- Feedback, stories, and case studies
- Annual impact reporting
- Strategic oversight by the Board



CONCLUSION

This Strategic Plan sets out our shared vision and direction for the next three years.

We will:

- Support Orkney's voluntary and community organisations
- Empower individuals through inclusive volunteering
- Strengthen community resilience, wellbeing, and innovation

We look forward to working with partners, communities, and stakeholders to deliver this shared vision for Orkney.

Our Commitment to Fair Work

VAO is committed to creating a workplace where everyone is respected, supported and treated fairly. All staff are paid above the Living Wage, and we are proud to be an equal and inclusive employer.

We know that many local organisations face funding and resource challenges. That's why we actively support local groups to understand and adopt Fair Work practices, not just to meet funder expectations, but to help build a stronger, more resilient sector for the future.

Learn more about Fair Work at: www.fairworkconvention.scot

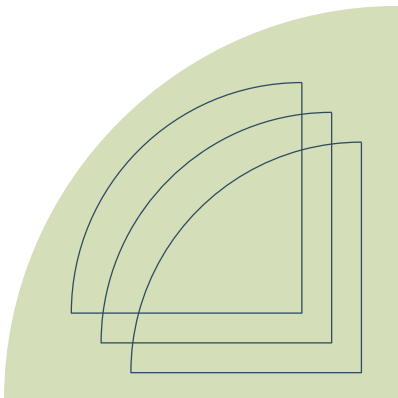
Language and Terminology

This plan uses “voluntary and community sector” to describe our stakeholders. This term is more widely understood than “third sector” and better reflects our inclusive remit. Where sector-specific terms are used, we explain them to ensure accessibility.





Scottish Charity No. SCO10691 Company No. 143208



Get in touch to find out how we can support your organisation or community:

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 enquiries@vaorkney.org.uk

 www.vaorkney.org.uk

