

IET volunteer update June 2026

Video transcript – English

Morna Dason-Barber, People Director

Hello, everyone. I'm Morna Dason-Barber. I'm the people director at the IET and since January, my role has broadened to take on the leadership for our volunteer excellence team. Now, that's the team responsible for the recruitment, onboarding, training and support of all of our volunteers, and I'm sure you will have interacted with many of them since starting to volunteer with us.

It's National Volunteers Week, and it seemed the ideal time to bring you up to speed with some of the work underway since you first heard about our volunteer transformation plan that Ed [Almond, CES] and Dawn [Ohlson, IET President] briefly shared with you in their video earlier this year.

But first and foremost, thank you sincerely for everything you do and for the immense contribution that you make to the IET. Volunteering is at the heart of our strategic goals, and we know we simply can't achieve our aims without you. As Dawn rightly said in her President's Address, you are the powerhouse of the IET.

So, what do we mean by our volunteer transformation? Simply put, we have an ambition to be the best place to volunteer for engineers and technicians who want to make a real impact on their institution, on their sector and on wider society.

Now we know that ambition doesn't happen without a clear and targeted plan that ensures we make it easy to volunteer for the IET, that your experience is frictionless, that you, our volunteers, really feel like individuals and we offer you a personalised approach. That we recognise that you are incredibly busy and so time volunteering with us is time well spent, and that you feel you are making a difference, that you can develop personally and professionally through your work with us, and that every interaction that you have with us reflects that our colleagues have a volunteer-first mindset.

So, we have been really busy this year building on a long legacy of successful volunteering, but there is still more for us to do, and we know that. And we are committed to doing everything that we can to further improve and ensure you have the best experience with us. Our transformation programme has already been shaped by your feedback, such as the listening sessions that you may have been part of last year. We've had feedback from the annual survey, from our EngX forums, from governance and from our trustees. And our programme and plans that we've got will continue to be shaped by your feedback and with your input.

You may have heard that we are working towards Investing in Volunteers accreditation, which will provide a robust framework to inform the transformation

programme and really ensure we're delivering best practice across every aspect of your volunteer journey and experience with us.

Now, before I hand over to Lydia, who is our Volunteer Experience Manager, who's going to share with you just some of the work underway, I wanted to introduce you to Tom Barrasso, who's our very talented Volunteer Transformation Programme Manager, who has recently joined the IET.

Tom Barrasso, Volunteer Transformation Programme Manager

Hi, I'm Tom and I'm the Volunteer Transformation Programme Manager. I joined the IET just over a month ago and I have 13 years' experience delivering change and projects within the public and voluntary sector and I'm so excited to be here at the IET.

Our programme has one purpose, as Morna has mentioned, and that's to make our ambition to be the best place to volunteer for engineers and technicians a reality. It's a real privilege to be able to lead this programme. The IET simply wouldn't exist without the dedication, passion and everyday commitment that you all show through your volunteering roles.

And I'm also very much struck by the magnitude and responsibility that comes with leading a programme like this, not just for the IET, but for you as well, for every single person who gives their time willingly and freely and wholeheartedly to volunteer for the IET.

The programme has been very much shaped by your feedback and your suggestions, and we're committed to making sure that your voice continues to drive the programme going forward. So, my ask is simple, please keep feeding back to us. We are listening and we want to make sure that we're focusing on the right things. At the end of the day, it's your experiences that tell us whether we're moving in the right direction and whether we're focusing on the right things.

The scope of the programme is very broad. It covers everything from the start of the volunteer journey, so people expressing an interest, all the way through to saying farewell to volunteers. And we have a clear idea about a lot of the things that we want to focus on and the things that we want to develop. However, we also felt it was really important that we have an external and independent appraisal of how we are working with volunteers as well. So that's why we're investing in the Investing in Volunteers accreditation as Morna has already mentioned. This will give us a clear framework to work to. We've already started this process and we're very much on the journey. The recommendations from those assessors will very much help shape our programme and our priorities alongside all of the feedback that you've given us as well. However, and this is really, really key, just getting the accreditation, delivering projects or delivering outputs is only the start. The most important thing is

that we're also supporting people along this journey, and that includes staff as well as yourselves as volunteers, to make sure that any change that we make is sustainable long term and is going to achieve our ambition.

I really hope to meet many of you soon, and I hope to work with you as well. Thanks.

Morna Dason-Barber, People Director

Thank you, Tom. And now let me hand over to Lydia.

Lydia Vaton, Volunteering Experience Manager

I'd like to share a quick update on how we've been looking to improve your experience as a volunteer with us. Starting with onboarding, we've been focusing on creating a more consistent and fair experience for everyone that's coming in. Some of the key changes include the implementation of a new welcome pack as well as checking emails, really with the aim of helping new volunteers understand what to expect and feel supported from day one in role.

On the other side to that, we've also been looking at offboarding. This is still developing, but the aim is really to make sure that you have a positive close to your journey and know that the door is always open for you to return. This could include capturing your feedback, recognising your contribution and helping you stay connected if you want to.

Recognition is another big area of focus. We're exploring more ways to celebrate you. This includes things like our newly launched Volunteering Excellence Awards, written spotlight features on EngX and in our Member News, and even our upcoming Festival of Volunteering in September. We really wanted to create more opportunities to say thank you and share your stories. We understand that at the core for you is the chance to give back to the engineering community. So, we also want to do better at showing the impact that you are having and how your time is helping drive our mission forward.

Ultimately, everything that I've shared today, plus a lot more that's happening in the background, is all about making the experience more supportive and more rewarding for you at every single stage.

Michelle Sawyer, Volunteering Excellence Operations Manager

Hello, I'm Michelle, and I'm the Volunteering Operations Manager leading the central Volunteering Excellence Team.

As part of our transformation programme, we're also focusing on data and technology. Our aim is to create a simpler, more accessible experience across our systems while addressing the challenges you currently face.

We will actively gather your input throughout this process to ensure any improvements deliver real efficiencies and that investments in systems and technology achieve meaningful impact. We've already made progress by upgrading our learning management system to a more flexible and powerful platform. This allows us to design and deliver learning in ways that enhance your training experience.

We also want to strengthen how we collect and use your data. By doing this, we can better support your volunteering goals within the IET and more effectively capture the impact you're making on our mission and the wider engineering community. Improved data will also help us enhance our communication and engagement with you, making sure you receive relevant information at the right time to support you in your role.

Alongside this, we are developing strategies to enable more effective two-way communication, including structured and regular opportunities to gather your feedback and for us to respond. And as with any transformation programme, we're reviewing our internal processes and procedures. Our focus is on making them more efficient and effective using automation wherever possible and always keeping you and your volunteering experience at the centre of everything we do.

Lou Parfrey, Volunteer Training and Development Manager

I'm Lou Parfrey, Volunteer Training and Development Manager within the Volunteer Excellence Team.

I wanted just to take a moment to share some exciting plans around how we're expanding our volunteer training and development.

We know that volunteering with the IET isn't just about giving your time, and you give so much. It's also about what you can gain in return. So, we're putting a stronger focus on personal development opportunities that can support you wider. That means clearer pathways to build your skills, more structured learning and opportunities that will help you grow individually and professionally. Whether that's developing technical expertise, improving your leadership skills or gaining experience that supports your future goals.

Most importantly, we want to make sure that you are getting what you want from volunteering, that you feel you're progressing, developing and making the most of your time with us, your institution.

This is just the start, and we will be sharing more details in the future. But for now, thank you, as always for everything that you do.

Dawn Ohlson, IET President and Christopher Knibb, Governance and External Engagement Director

Hi, I'm Dawn Ohlson, the President of the IET.

And I'm Chris Knibb, Governance and External Engagement Director.

Back in March, we shared an update on the governance review.

And since then, we've been gathering feedback from volunteers.

Just to recap, the board set up a working group in 2024 to review how we're structured and make sure it reflects best practice and what actually needs governing.

The board also asked us to share early proposals with you so we could hear your views and improve them.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to get involved. Your feedback has been really valuable.

We've now reviewed all of that feedback and made changes to the proposed structure. So, your views really have helped shape our proposal.

The updated proposal was discussed by the board last week and will be working through our next steps in the coming days.

And later this year, we'll be sharing the proposal more widely with members, the Engineering Council and the Privy Council.

So, thanks again for your support.

Our local and technical networks are so important to the objects of the IET and are found in principles to share knowledge amongst engineers and others.

Over the past year, we've been working with volunteers across our local and technical networks to understand how we can improve things and how we can make changes to the delivery model. That model has been in existence for about 20 years and there's certainly ways that we can improve it, such as how we plan and how we budget. We want to make things much more easy and agile for our network so they can concentrate on delivering activities rather than the bureaucracy that sometimes comes with it.

Thank you to all the volunteers who've helped with listening sessions and workshops, and we can hear your frustrations, but also hear how we can improve things. It's really appreciated. As I say, there's work streams already going on with our volunteers to make those improvements. And we have a survey out currently

where we want to get your views on how we can make the improvements even better. If you're a local and technical network volunteer, please complete that survey. It closes at the end of this week.

Once again, thanks for everything you do for the IET.

Morna Dason-Barber, People Director

So, I hope that you have enjoyed hearing about just some of the work undertaken so far and feel reassured that we are focusing on the right things that will really enhance your experience as a volunteer with us. This is a programme that we will develop for you, with you, so there will be many more updates and opportunities to get involved soon.

But for now, once again, sincerely, thank you for everything you do, the impact that you have and the immense contribution that you make to the IET.

ENDS