
THE GOOD PRACTICE HANDBOOK



Promoting good practice in managing volunteers from socially excluded groups





With the help of GoldStar funding, Manchester Event Volunteers has been given a fantastic opportunity to work with small voluntary organisations by helping them to introduce best practice documents and develop their volunteering services. MEV has been able to achieve this via its Goldstar funded website which contains all MEV good practice documents and policies. The feedback we have received since the introduction of expanded service has been extremely positive and without the additional Goldstar funding we would not have been able to achieve this.

Mark Pritchard
Project Manager
Manchester Event Volunteers

My name is Rosie. I am a survivor of Childhood Sexual Abuse and for a short time received treatment from mental health services. I am a single parent with 4 children. Last year through the Gold Star Programme I undertook training as a Volunteer Support Worker with the Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (Cornwall). The training and support I have received has been absolutely amazing and has actually changed my life. A month ago I went for a job interview, something I would never have done before I joined WRSAC. I was offered the job and am so proud of myself.

Rosie
Volunteer
Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (Cornwall)

We have really benefited from the diverse backgrounds of our volunteers. It is really helpful to us that they bring wider knowledge, experience and empathy to their work. In return, we are able to help them to achieve their goals, improve their skills, move towards employment or find a fulfilling use for their free time. Sometimes it takes imagination to provide the best fit for each person - but it is always possible and the wider benefits of this approach go way beyond the immediate task set.

Liz Jacobs
Third Sector Professional
Skills for Life and Financial Inclusion Manager

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Foreword

The latest results from the Government's citizenship survey 2007 show that 73 per cent of all adults had volunteered (formally or informally) at least once in the last 12 months. This is a real indication of the continued tradition of volunteering in this country. The challenge now is how to spread the message of volunteering to those who are not already involved and may not traditionally volunteer.

With the Goldstar programme, Government took a new approach to this challenge. As well as funding 46 organisations to recruit new volunteers, we also funded an extensive programme to ensure that the work and practice of these organisations is spread throughout the Third Sector. The fruits of this work run through this report and crucially it reflects the experiences of those involved in working with volunteers on a day to day basis.

One legacy of our Goldstar programme will be to provide other Third Sector organisations with practical case studies which demonstrate how a range of organisations have approached the recruitment and retention of volunteers. This is particularly important as volunteers remain the basis of not just a strong Third Sector, but also strong and healthy communities.

This report sits alongside other programmes from the Government, including our Capacity Builders programme, which demonstrates our commitment to developing an environment which enables the Third Sector to thrive, growing in its contribution to Britain's society, economy and environment.

Finally this must not be a report that sits on organisations' bookshelves, but is one that the sector uses actively to learn from the experiences of others in the volunteering field.



Phil Hope MP
Minister for the Third Sector

Critical success factors

The GoldStar Exemplar Programme

The GoldStar Exemplar Programme is a national initiative designed to encourage and enable voluntary organisations and projects throughout England to realise the potential of volunteers, mentors and befrienders from socially excluded or disadvantaged groups.

These groups include people with no qualifications, people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and those with disabilities or long term illness, but more widely, basically, anyone in danger of social exclusion. These people represent a rich and largely untapped volunteer resource in all our towns, cities and local communities.

The Cabinet Office point out on their website that social exclusion is about more than income poverty.¹ It is a short-hand term for what can happen when people or areas have a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually reinforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people don't get a fair deal throughout their lives, often because of disadvantage they face at birth, and this disadvantage can be transmitted from one generation to the next.²

Volunteering can offer one way for many people who might otherwise feel on the margins of society to gain confidence and skills, but also give something back by engaging in activities of use to others and their own local communities. In many cases volunteering can offer a route into other activities such as employment, education or other volunteering roles that would otherwise not have happened.

However, many people, particularly from socially excluded backgrounds face barriers to volunteering. These can include inadequate transport services, lack of confidence, potential financial costs and also lack of awareness of the different volunteering opportunities that might be available locally.

The aim of the GoldStar programme is to promote and share the good practices used in engaging and supporting people from groups at risk of social exclusion and giving them the opportunity to enrich their own and other peoples' lives.

A total of 46 projects have been funded through the programme, with each GoldStar Exemplar project achieving its status through good practice in recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers, mentors and befrienders from socially excluded groups.

The purpose of this report is to draw on the experience of the 46 Goldstar projects in order to set out what seem to be **critical success factors** in relation to encouraging and sustaining volunteering amongst socially excluded groups.



The 46 exemplar groups



121 Youth Befriending

Supporting young people in need or at risk, the mission of the Dartford based 121 Youth Befriending is to challenge disadvantage by changing young lives for the better by offering friendship, experience, diversion, caring and mentoring.



Barnardo's (North East)

The aim of this registered charity covering the North East, is to help the most vulnerable children and young people to transform their lives and fulfil their potential.



Carlisle CVS

The role of Carlisle CVS is to develop new voluntary organisations in Carlisle and support existing organisations in their growth, helping them to share ideas and good practice.



Age Concern Gateshead

This project centres around the in-house training and recruitment of volunteers who provide a varied range of service and amenities to over 1200 older people throughout Gateshead.



Bolton Lads and Girls Club

Realising that an increased number of attendees were experiencing a wide range of issues leading to social disaffection, the Club started a mentoring project helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to realise their potential.



Chance UK

The project identifies primary school children with behavioural difficulties and takes steps to minimise the risk of them developing anti-social or criminal offending behaviour.



Age Concern Islington

A not-for-profit organisation seeking to ensure that older people in Islington are able to maintain their self respect, independence and freedom of choice.

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project

This project provides a package of practical volunteer run services which help unemployed people to challenge the effects of poverty and disadvantage.



Cheetham Hill Advice Centre

The Centre is an independent advice agency which not only helps to alleviate poverty, distress, sickness and promote health and education - but also recruits, trains and supports local residents as volunteer advice workers.



Age Concern North Tyneside

This independent local charity promotes the wellbeing of older people in and around North Tyneside and enables them to make life more enjoyable.



CSV Volunteering Partners

CSV Volunteering Project creates opportunities for young people to play an active part in their community through volunteering, training and education. The goal is to increase the number of 16-25 year olds volunteering in Luton and South Bedfordshire.



Bankside Open Space Trust

Working in an area with poverty, social problems and a scarcity of green space or gardens, this London based group aims to bring people and communities together to create inspiring urban green spaces.



CSV Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre

This organisation works with women and girls who are the victims of rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence. They support over 1,000 victims a year and integrate many of them as volunteers.

Council on Addiction (Northampton) - Footsteps Project

The aim of this project based around Northampton is to encourage those who are homeless or have drug/alcohol dependencies, to move towards independence and fulfilment. To support this, they work to dispel the myths surrounding such people and ensure that social exclusion and isolation become things of the past.

¹ www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/context.aspx

² These are the issues that are being referred to within this Report when the term social exclusion is used. In a number of cases terms such as disadvantaged groups or socially disadvantaged have been used interchangeably with social exclusion.



Darlington Association on Disability (DAD)
DAD is a user-led organisation which exists to promote choice and independence to disabled people and carers through the provision of services, support and information in the Darlington area.



The Junction
This registered charity based in Redcar & Cleveland provides support and information services to young people under the age of 25 who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or in difficulty as a result of their life circumstances.



North Tyneside Voluntary Organisations Development Agency
VODA provides recruitment, placement, training and support for volunteers and placement providers. The Active Youth Project aims to recruit young people who wouldn't normally consider volunteering, such as those facing barriers relating to disability, offending, homelessness and mental health.



Refugee Action and Horizons
Set up in 1981 to provide a radical new approach to the UK resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers, this group is based on supporting, promoting and working with refugee communities to enable refugees to take volunteer roles and help themselves.



Sports Volunteering North West
As a voice for sports volunteers, one of the central aims of the organisation is to encourage and support young people in the North West to acquire the confidence, knowledge and skills to be involved in sports leadership in a voluntary or paid capacity.



Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea
Founded in 1969, the Centre delivers a range of innovative and exciting volunteering services. This includes A+ Volunteering which encourages and supports disabled people with mental and physical health needs to have a positive volunteering experience in their local community.



Wai Yin Chinese Women's Society
Wai Yin was set up in 1988 by four women volunteers responding to the need of Chinese women in Manchester experiencing domestic violence, family breakdown and acute isolation. The service has now expanded to respond to a broad range of needs from all members of the Chinese community.



Envision
This project focuses on giving young people the opportunity to 'make a difference' by presenting them with inspiring, relevant and properly supported volunteering opportunities. This includes the capacity to help 16-19 year olds in schools and colleges to set up their own voluntary projects.



The Latin American Women's Rights Service
This Volunteering Project aims to promote active citizenship and mutual support for Latin American women, enabling them to gain work experience and skills through volunteering as a pathway to better jobs and opportunities.



Poole CVS/Poole Volunteer Centre
The Volunteer Centre is a project of the CVS and runs the Older People's Volunteer Project. The aim of the project is to involve more older people in Poole in volunteering, especially those who may face barriers such as mobility and isolation.



Renewal Refugee and Migrant Project (RAMP)
Set up in 1971, RAMP has developed a range of services for a racially, culturally and religiously diverse local community with the aim of enabling people - particularly those poor or disadvantaged - to grow to their full potential.



Student Community Action Newcastle (SCAN)
SCAN is a vibrant and lively young person led charity that aims to promote partnerships between students and the local community through activities and special events whilst demonstrating good practice and challenging prejudice.



Volunteer Centre Sutton
The aim of the Centre is to enhance community well being in the Borough of Sutton through voluntary action. The core work is the recruitment and placement of volunteers in opportunities of their choice within a range of local projects and organisations.



The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
The WWT exists to create a sustainable future for wildlife and people. This is achieved by helping to recruit local volunteers prepared to champion wildlife causes. Many of the WWT's projects are recognised as being of national importance.



Gateshead Access Panel
Set up as a support group for disabled people in the area, Gateshead Access Panel set up a Volunteer Project designed to give disabled people the confidence, knowledge and skills to become informed advisors on disability issues to service providers.

Leeds Homestart
This independently registered charity supports parents to provide their young children with the very best start in life. Volunteers offer families emotional support, guidance, encouragement and practical help during periods of difficulty.



The Prince's Trust (Lancashire)
This registered charity helps young people aged from 14 to 30 to overcome barriers and get their lives working. It provides practical support that includes training, mentoring and financial assistance to help young people realise their potential and transform their lives for the better.



Richmond CVS
The Women in Governance (WinG) project is an inclusive programme which encourages and supports women - especially those from ethnic minority communities, other socially excluded groups or with disabilities - in three boroughs of West London to take part in local democracy and become community decision makers.

Thirsk, Sowerby and District Community Care Association (CCA)
This independent registered charity is firmly committed to identifying ways to support unmet need and provide support to develop local voluntary services through the Association's Voluntary Project Services Programme.



Volunteer Centre Tameside
VCT pursues a vision of active communities in Tameside, supported through the development of volunteering activity to enhance local organisations and communities and working in partnership with the public and corporate sectors to maximise involvement opportunities for individuals.



Worcester Volunteer Centre
WVC aims to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community and to promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of that purpose. Volunteers are used in the delivery of all services and cover a wide range of local needs.



Manchester Events Volunteers
Originally set up for the Manchester Commonwealth Games of 2002, this volunteer programme has successfully continued in its quest to attract disadvantaged individuals into volunteering and provide training and opportunities as a progression route to employment.



The Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre for Women on Merseyside
The aim of RASA is to support women and girls of all ages who have experienced any form of sexual violence at any time in their lives. The centre provides many services to achieve this aim including free and confidential counselling at a safe house, free and confidential helpline, home visits and further support.



Torrige Voluntary Services
This is a voluntary community resource in rural Devon dedicated to supporting those groups and individuals who strive for positive change within their communities, based on the needs and aspirations of local people.



Volunteer Centre Westminster
The Recruitment Development Project which began in June 2003 aims to improve the volunteer led recruitment service at the centre and offer support to local volunteer involving organisations through increased volunteer referrals and appropriate help and advice.



Groundwork Rossendale
The purpose of this project is to build sustainable communities by joint environmental action. This requires the involvement of individuals and groups from the local community in practical projects that can improve the quality of life.



Multiple Choice
This community based drug rehabilitation programme supports individuals to become and remain drug free as an alternative to residential rehab. The programme is open to anyone aged over 18 in Leeds.



Somerset Youth Volunteering Network (SYVN)
SYVN is a charity company based in Glastonbury run by young people with the aim of supporting all those aged 14-25 who want to get involved in volunteering, community action and citizenship in Somerset.



Tynedale Voluntary Action
The mission of this local volunteer centre is to promote, enable and develop volunteering throughout Tynedale, seeking to break down barriers and make volunteering accessible to all sections of the community.



WORLDwrite
The Recruitment Development Project which began in June 2003 aims to improve the volunteer led recruitment service at the centre and offer support to local volunteer involving organisations through increased volunteer referrals and appropriate help and advice.





1

Targeting

Organisations seeking to attract volunteers from excluded groups need to adopt effective targeting campaigns tailored to local circumstances. Factors that are critical to the success of targeting can vary according to circumstances, for example, if the targeted volunteer population is in a socially or economically deprived area, or from a specific group (such as people with disabilities, particular ethnic group etc.). It may also be the case that the target volunteer population has significance in terms of the purpose of the volunteering organisation, for example, the Latin American Women's Rights Service.

The following are the main factors relating to targeting that are deemed to be critical to its success in attracting volunteers at risk from social exclusion.

- Clarity of purpose;
- Understanding the target population;
- Developing appropriate methodologies;
- Involving existing volunteers in engagement activity;
- Ensuring campaign material is accessible.

Picture

" Negative experiences, low self confidence, suspicion of mainstream bodies, lack of awareness of opportunities - these all represent substantial barriers for some people from excluded groups. This makes it all the more important to reach out, to go the extra mile to say (or at least imply) 'we're looking for someone just like you to take part.'"

Mark Restall
Head of Information
Volunteering England

Clarity of purpose

The primary aim of the targeting campaign must be clear to all concerned, including who is being targeted and why. This should engender a common understanding among volunteers and staff about how the various elements of the targeting campaign contribute to its success.

The *Latin American Women's Rights Service* have adopted a formal Strategy for Recruitment, for example, while the *Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre for Women in Merseyside* have a dedicated resource in their Services Coordinator whose role is to ensure the successful targeting of potential volunteers.

1



LAWRS is the only Latin American organisation whose exclusive aim is to help Latin American women defend and secure their right to lead a fuller and more autonomous life.

The aim of the **Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)** through their formal Strategy for Continuous Recruitment is to maintain a continual base of 50 volunteers, although numbers can fluctuate according to the number of short term projects going on at any one time. The main features of the Strategy are to:

- Formalise existing recruitment measures;
- Build on key linkages with the Latin American (LA) media and other LA community organisations and churches;
- Ensure promotional material is accessible;
- Increase organisational capacity;
- Include those who cannot come to the centre;
- Provide purposeful volunteering opportunities;
- Include involvement in community events;
- Emphasise pathways to employment;
- Ensure sound management practices in relation to recruitment, support, retention, and skills development of volunteers.

2



The **Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre for Women (RASA)** realised that there was under-representation of the large and varied number of black and minority ethnic communities within its geographical catchment area among those who were accessing its services and volunteering. To address this, RASA recruited a Services Co-ordinator, a major part of whose role is to target recruitment within such communities.

The role of the Services Co-ordinator includes:

- Building relationships with local black and minority ethnic community groups;
- Identifying suitable outreach facilities that are both easily accessible to survivors and volunteers;
- Promoting the service;
- Recruiting from target communities; RASA's aim is to have volunteers from BME groups running outreach facilities for survivors;
- Build working relationships with disability groups.

Understanding the target population

A sound understanding and appreciation of the target population is an essential prerequisite of a targeting campaign. Direct links with the local community and other organisations whose work engages them with the local community are key ways to gather essential information systematically, such as barriers to volunteering. This can help to inform other elements in the process, and has the potential to provide key entry points to the community.

Worcester Volunteer Centre has a specialist outreach worker to target volunteers. A number of volunteering organisations stressed the need to forge links and build relationships with other organisations that are engaged in different ways with specific targeted groups, including *Richmond CVS* and *Home-Start Leeds*.

1



Worcester Volunteer Centre has appointed a specialist outreach worker with particular promotional skills and knowledge of target communities. Among other things, the appointment helps:

- Identification of promotional venues such as youth clubs, pubs, community centres, libraries and doctors' surgeries;
- Ensure that others such as community workers, youth workers, and health professionals have information to give to potential volunteers;
- Focus on BME communities in relation to volunteering.

2

Just under half those who have trained at WinG have English as a second language. One third of all trainees to date are now involved in their communities as volunteers, local decision makers and paid employees in the community sector



*Neelam Bakshi
Volunteer WinG*

WinG is an inclusive programme undertaken by Richmond CVS that encourages and supports women in the three London boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Kingston and Merton to take part in local democracy.

Reaching potential volunteers is identified as a critical challenge for WinG. In order to ensure this challenge is met, the project has built an effective network of local partnership arrangements with BME, refugee, disability, carer and lone parent support organisations to enable a grassroots recruitment campaign to be implemented. The project delivers a number of outreach events through these organisations.

The Project has developed particular relations with organisations that deal with those from socially deprived backgrounds, but also stresses that the intake of volunteers needs to have a cross section of the population including those from well-educated backgrounds.

In order to ensure successful recruitment of women and particularly BME women volunteers the project recognises the importance of constantly nurturing contacts with the local voluntary sector, as well as contacts in organisations such as local authorities, business organisations and the volunteers themselves.

The project is also made attractive to people with no qualifications by having approved learning provider status from the Open College Network, and policies to support learners from all backgrounds. The project also tackles language barriers for those from BME and refugee communities through the use of volunteer translators.

3



Home-Start Leeds has been successful at breaking down the barriers to volunteering in different communities. One of the approaches Home-Start Leeds has used for achieving this has been the development of relationships with a network of local service providers over the last six years, encouraging them to highlight the opportunities for volunteering amongst their own clients.

Six years ago, Home-Start Leeds identified the need to diversify their volunteer base and examined how accessibility to the broadest range of people coming into the organisation could be achieved. Home-Start Leeds recognised that there were a lot of people who traditionally never think about volunteering, but also recognised that simply advertising would never get to these 'hard to reach' potential volunteers, as many *had "not even got to the stage of thinking of volunteering as an option."*

The organisation therefore examined ways of creating access to these groups in order to present volunteering as an option, but also asked, *"What are the barriers to these people volunteering?"*

The organisation identified the fact that a lot of those traditionally hard to engage in volunteering are engaged with other services, implying the need for Home-Start to get to these organisations and highlight to staff the benefits of saying to their clients volunteering is an option you can consider. Home-Start Leeds therefore started to contact a wide range of local service providers with a message to staff at these organisations, *"Don't just see people as service users, think of what they could also offer to another service."*

At the same time Home-Start examined every aspect of their own practices and asked, *"What is it that we do that stops people volunteering?"* The organisation didn't ask, *"Who would this enable?"* but *"who would it stop?"* and started to eliminate procedures/processes that could act as barriers. Home-Start has continued this practice, which is now embedded in the culture of the organisation. In this respect it was commented:

"It makes you think about people in a different way. Don't make assumptions about people, but start from an absolutely blank sheet."

Home-Start have over a number of years developed structured contacts with different service providers in Leeds, including housing offices, social services, disability services, the Benefits Agency and Jobcentres in order to encourage volunteer referrals.

Although this process has worked extremely well, the effort involved should not be underestimated. It was commented:

"But it has been six years slog, we've really slogged at it. But it is an amazing difference to the diversity of the people coming into the organisation."

Developing appropriate methodologies

Although methods commonly used by a wide range of volunteering organisations may be of use in targeting groups at risk from social exclusion, different methods may need to be used for particular groups. Examples could include attendance at events where target groups may be present, use of dedicated outreach workers, or ensuring a diverse range of volunteering opportunities.

Some lateral thinking went on at *Age Concern North Tyneside*, for example, where they were able to deal with barriers to participation for a hard to reach group of older people with mobility problems by setting up a Knitting Project and supporting volunteers working from home. *Wiltshire Wildlife Trust* promotes volunteer champions that attend suitable events to promote volunteering opportunities. Volunteer champions are existing volunteers that can play a valuable role in engaging new volunteers. Some other organisations adopt a similar approach through the use of volunteer 'ambassadors'.

North Tyneside Voluntary Organisations Development Agency's Outreach Sessions for young people facing barriers to participation take an opportunistic approach. This led to their being invited to go into a school where "enrichment" sessions were being held for sixth formers, and which led directly to new recruits. *Communities United Project, (CUP)*, uses the "hook" of sport to recruit non-traditional learners in volunteering activities. *Tynedale Voluntary Action* on the other hand has adopted a particular approach that is based on community engagement and a needs driven approach to projects within a rural community.

1

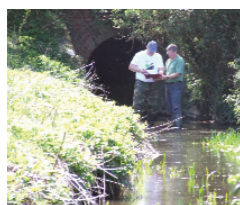


Age Concern North Tyneside (ACNT) aims to reach the widest range of over 50s possible, and has found that one particular volunteering project has had great success with a very hard to reach group. This group includes, for example, older people and those with health problems, including poor mobility. This is the Knitting Project and it helps to overcome many of the barriers to participation that affect people in this category.

One of the attractions of the Knitting Project is that it can bring people together to work in groups, but can also use volunteers working from home. Participation in the project, even for those in isolated areas is made easy through the use of two volunteers who drop off materials and collect products, as well as keeping in regular contact with the knitters.

The purpose of the project also appeals to potential volunteers with the products of the Knitting Project going to appropriate homes, such as other charities, including Samaritan's Purse, the local premature baby unit and local cat and dog shelter.

2



Volunteering organisations are often faced with the constant challenge of attracting and enlisting new volunteers. **Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, (WWT)**, has been developing the concept of Volunteer Champions through its Swindon Wildlife Group to help to meet that challenge.

Volunteer Champions work alongside key volunteers to promote volunteering activities and can be phoned by potential volunteers who may need more information.

The Volunteer Champions perform a specific role, and this is spelled out in relevant promotional material and can bring a range of skills and attributes to recruitment activities. Bookings are made for the coming season to have a presence at local festivals and fetes where the volunteering message can be championed effectively.

3



Neil Watson
Volunteer VODA

In order to tackle barriers to volunteering faced by young people, **North Tyneside VODA** has instigated outreach sessions. VODA:

- Has an Active Youth Project worker who carries out regular outreach sessions at local youth centres, schools, and pupil referral units;
- Targets particular audiences through specific organisations working with young people who are at risk of social exclusion, such as Barnardo's, Working Links, and e2e programmes. But also makes use of 'opportunistic events'. For example, VODA was asked to work with a school that was running innovative "enrichment" sessions for sixth formers, which led to a group of eight students developing their own project;
- Has built a Youth Volunteering Lesson Plan that is designed to interest young people and open their eyes to the potential for them in volunteering as part of the outreach sessions.

4



As well as providing opportunities for youngsters, CUP provides training such as Football Association Coaching Awards, Working with Children, First Aid, Meeting and Communication Skills and Community Sports Leader Award.

The Communities United Project (CUP) provides a critical community development role, concentrating efforts within deprived communities and providing support and resources to enable adult residents to develop constructive opportunities for local young people aged 8 to 16 years.

Volunteers recruited to Communities United Project are non-traditional learners. CUP uses the "hook" of sport to engage them in volunteering activities. Lesley Steel, the Manager of the Communities United Project commented:

"We have a project in north Kirklees which is funded by the Football Foundation and that is specifically looking at getting Asian People into football ('Asians in Football'). There are about 150 young people involved in the project at the minute. From that we are also getting young Asian girls who are coming and playing football and we have a girls only project running at the same time"

5



A focus on community engagement and a needs driven approach to projects is the main feature of the approach adopted by **Tynedale Voluntary Action (TVA)**. A number of factors are considered by TVA to be critical to the success of the project in targeting volunteers:

- *Dedicated resource* - the success of the project is due to having a local person working at grass roots level, and this approach has been used as a good practice on other projects;
- *Getting the message across* - a series of presentations were made to parish councils, village hall committees, youth groups, and other social/community groups, among others;
- *Build a network of contacts* - for recruiting volunteers, identifying sustainable community activities/projects, and for establishing the potential for individual and cross-locality/border task forces;
- *Promoting the advantages of volunteering* - such as acquisition of new skills, expanding social networks, and building confidence;
- *Involving partners* - where appropriate, in the development of identified community initiatives;
- *Needs driven* - many of the projects and activities have been needs driven in direct response to the express wishes of the local community. In these cases the motivation for volunteering has come from the individuals themselves;
- *Volunteers are a community* - TVA recognises that volunteers are a natural community, and their experiences of volunteering naturally cascades by word of mouth to family members, friends, and other social contacts;
- *An inclusive philosophy* - ensure that volunteering is made easy for everyone and be aware that in small rurally isolated communities, feelings of isolation based on perceived differences can be magnified and prevent people from full participation in group activities;
- *One-to-one support* - this is pivotal in attracting potential volunteers, and also in retaining established volunteers.

Involving existing volunteers in engagement activity

Volunteers can play a key role in a targeting campaign, both as a source of information and ideas, and also in an ambassadorial role. The ambassadorial work can be undertaken as part of a volunteer's role, and importantly, simply by volunteers being encouraged to tell people about what they are doing.

Poole Council for Voluntary Services select ambassadors who believe in and are committed to the role, who have an identity of interest with the target group, and whose opinion is valued by the organisation. *Refugee Action and Horizons* also use volunteer ambassadors to engage asylum seekers or refugees in volunteering. As part of the activities of the *Volunteer Centre Tameside* 'Building Bridges project' a group of disabled volunteers have produced a DVD to help further recruitment of volunteers.

1



Aged over 90, Ralph Monk acts as an ambassador for Poole Voluntary Services, often helping to recruit senior volunteers up to 30 years younger than himself!

The role of an ambassador is to represent the **Poole Volunteer Centre** and promote volunteering as a specific activity. Poole Council for Voluntary Services have taken the concept of people acting as ambassadors for voluntary projects to another level by creating a project, (Older People's Volunteer Project) around it, where a team of ambassadors promotes volunteering to older people with the aim of increasing participation rates and enhancing their well-being.

Ambassadors are supported by a member of staff with specific responsibility for this activity, with whom the ambassadors have one-to-one access. Poole ambassadors come from the same age group as the target audience, so can relate to their concerns and circumstances.

Knowledge of the range of volunteering opportunities available is identified as an important way of enabling potential volunteers to "have a closer look" at potential volunteering roles.

At Poole, the ambassadors decide where they will target their recruitment drive, for example, and have monthly meetings to review progress and consider fresh ideas.

Promotional opportunities where target audiences congregate are sought out, such as sheltered housing, lunch clubs and shopping centres. More isolated people are reached through statutory organisations such as the local authority's Social Services Access Team and by having promotional material available at Doctors' surgeries, etc. These activities are supported with suitable literature and examples of volunteering success stories.

2



Many Horizons volunteers are themselves asylum seekers or refugees. Volunteers are assigned specific roles within each office, ranging from fundraising, administration and research, to befriending clients and interpreting.

To overcome initial reluctance on the part of asylum seekers or refugees to volunteer, **Refugee Action and Horizons** have recognised the importance of the role of Volunteer Ambassadors. The role of such Ambassadors is to:

- Recruit refugees and asylum seeker volunteers through 'peer to peer' presentations on the benefits of volunteering;
- Carry out one-to-one assessments with prospective refugees and asylum seekers;
- Placing refugees and asylum seekers within appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Horizons train refugees and asylum seekers who have had positive volunteering experiences to be able to carry out this ambassadorial role. This has proved to be a highly successful method of recruiting volunteers and the evidence from a recent evaluation indicates that many Horizons clients would not have become volunteers if they had not attended one of these presentations.

3



A particular achievement of **Volunteer Centre Tameside (VCT)** in undertaking the Building Bridges Project was the production of a DVD by a group of volunteers with a range of disabilities. The volunteers were engaged in all aspects of the development of the DVD from decision making, to filming, to final editing.

The aim of DVD was to promote inclusive volunteering by showing the varied and interesting voluntary opportunities available.

The disabled volunteers involved in production of the DVD received training, skill development and support, including training in public speaking, digital skills, and marketing.

The volunteers who took part were awarded an Open College Accreditation in Basic Video Skills. Volunteers from the production team were involved in making presentations of the DVD to other organisations involved in production to demonstrate and market the added value that disabled volunteers can offer to organisations.

One unexpected outcome, given the group was made up of diverse individuals, some of whom had been socially isolated before taking part, was the strong cohesive bond that united the group.

Ensuring campaign material is accessible

Organisations use a range of media to communicate their message to the target volunteer population, whose ability to access the information on offer is critical. Barriers to access may be cultural, to do with language and comprehension, or concerning literacy, or a preference for more visual or verbal means of communication.

Chance UK implemented a highly successful campaign to recruit BME Mentors. *The Envision Project* in London sees initial contact as key, and time is taken to develop materials that are interactive, fun, and open to everyone.

1



Michael Patterson
Mentor Chance UK

In October 2007, Chance UK hosted the launch of the UK's annual Centre for Social Justice programme featuring a high profile press conference with Conservative leader David Cameron on how their new child-centred policies will support early intervention initiatives such as Chance UK.

Recognising the importance of attracting suitable mentors **Chance UK** has worked hard to recruit those mentors under-represented in their programme. In 2002 Chance UK launched the 'Man Enough to Mentor?' campaign to encourage more men to volunteer to be a mentor to a 5-11 year old child.

Often men don't think about the positive influence they can have on children especially if they haven't yet become a parent and sometimes they are worried about what others might think.

The campaign was implemented using a PR agency and cost £2,000. At the time only one in eight volunteers were men, yet 80% of the children Chance UK worked with were boys, many without a positive male role model in their lives. The challenge was to make men understand that they can be a positive influence in children's lives. By 2003 the number of male mentors on the programme had grown to 25%.

In 2004 advertising agency Vitamin V and Chance UK designed an advertising campaign to attract Male and BME Mentors and won a European campaign competition prize of 50,000 Euros. This paid for the campaign to be put into practice.

The advertising campaign was centred on the Tottenham area in North London, which has the highest population of BME men aged 25-35 in the UK. The campaign was designed to attract more men as mentors, particularly those from BME communities to become positive role models to children.

The images appeared on buses, bus stops, bus tickets as well as roadside posters and specifically targeted the home football matches at Tottenham Hotspur with ad bikes and leafleting.

The campaign has led to a significant increase in BME male mentors.

2



As with any charity whose aim is to help young people, effective methods of engagement with them is imperative. **Envision** has recently completed good practice guidance for the Russell Commission on engaging and supporting young people from diverse audiences.

With Envision there is consensus around the logic that the programme is youth-led and that the young people have ownership of their projects.

Initial contact with young people through presentations is considered to be key, and time is taken to develop engagement materials and processes that are interactive, fun, and open to everyone, with Co-ordinators, adult volunteers and ex-students taking part.

The approach taken by Envision ensures that:

- Engagement tools are effective in engaging young people from different audiences;
- Engagement material is culturally relevant with appropriate role models in face-to-face, media, and paper based communication;
- Language used is appropriate when dealing with young people;
- Young people are given effective opportunities for feeding back on volunteering opportunities.

Notes

2

Recruitment

Encouraging people from socially excluded groups to undertake voluntary work activities can be a difficult challenge. Some of the approaches that appear to work particularly well include:

- Providing appropriate information to prospective volunteers;
- Supporting volunteers at the recruitment stage;
- Recruiting service users;
- Ensuring selection procedures are effective.



“As organisations, we have to remember that the majority of the population are not thinking about volunteering. We have to go to them and ask them to volunteer, tell them we need their skills and expertise. As well as using our tried and tested methods we also need to put our information in places where people not thinking of volunteering will have access to it. Think laterally and be bold and don't be afraid to use the media to tell your story.”

Gracia McGrath
Chief Executive
Chance UK

Providing appropriate information to prospective volunteers

Information for prospective volunteers not only has to be clear and comprehensive about volunteering activities and the process of becoming a volunteer, but critically, it must be in a form that is culturally appropriate for the target population. This information should also highlight the potential benefits to them of volunteering.

Volunteer Centre Carlisle target promotional material to particular target groups and always ensure that the material highlights the potential benefits of volunteering. *Manchester Events Volunteers* produce a volunteering handbook that contains comprehensive information and advice to potential volunteers. *121 Befriending* target hard to reach communities in a variety of ways, including a bespoke website that uses four other languages besides English. *Thirsk Sowerby and District Community Care Association* cover a rural area so a range of methods is used to communicate information about volunteering opportunities and the training and support that is provided for volunteers.

1



Publicity and promotional materials of a general nature are produced by the **Volunteer Centre Carlisle**, but it has found that targeting such material at particular groups, where experience indicates difficulty in reaching and recruiting yields more effective results. Of particular importance are the following:

- *Relevance of content* - the material clearly needs to include content that is of relevance to the target group, for example, for people with no qualifications opportunities to learn new skills and to face new challenges are emphasised;
- *Identify the problem* - the Centre has decided to target particular groups who are difficult to reach, or who experience barriers to volunteering, for example, the disabled and those with no qualifications;
- *Work in partnerships* - the Centre works in partnerships with referral agencies and the local media;
- *Careful selection of distribution locations* - these can include community centres, post offices, libraries, jobcentres, connexions, doctors, hospitals, social workers, and village halls;
- *Involve the volunteers* - many promotional materials from the Centre have been created by volunteers from the target group.

2



A handbook has recently been developed by **Manchester Event Volunteers (MEV)**, which explains the service in detail. This includes policies (e.g. equal opportunities, code of conduct), procedures and contact details. This is issued to new volunteers during an initial induction session and includes the following sections:

- Welcome and Introduction to Manchester Event Volunteers;
- Before you start volunteering;
- Working at long and short term events and opportunities;
- Useful tips;
- Useful documents.

3



121 Youth Befriending helps children offload stress, regain lost self-esteem and restore a belief in themselves. Befrienders also act as role models and give young people the chance to trust an adult outside the family.

The ability to attract potential volunteers from hard to reach communities is critical to the success of the **121 Youth Befriending Project**. Therefore time and effort is spent being seen and heard in these communities in order to win their confidence, and this effort is sustained over time. Similarly, where target communities have a focus around places of worship the Project seeks to win the support of respected elders and community leaders/clerics.

121 Youth Befriending has a bespoke website outlining different activities, which provides information on overall activities with different projects, together with specific activities undertaken through the Zero Project. This includes a Zero Project worker profile accessible in four languages, other than English, these being Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu and Chinese.

Radio and volunteer centres across West Kent are targeted at known areas of high ethnic population and social deprivation.

Recruitment is via media, local radio, magazines and papers. Leaflets are distributed locally in a range of venues, including libraries, railway stations, shops and leisure centres. Talks are also given to local groups.

4



The Association has produced a whole range of good practice guidelines on engaging and retaining volunteers. These can be found on their web site at www.tscca.org.uk

The **Thirsk, Sowerby and District Community Care Association** has successfully recruited and trained a diverse range of local volunteers from this predominantly rural area. Many potential volunteers locally face issues common to many rural areas, such as social isolation and poor transport services.

A wide range of different recruitment techniques has been employed in order to engage different volunteers. This has included use of:

- Newspapers and publications;
- TV, including Commercial Link (Tyne Tees TV) and Timestars (Channel 4);
- Buses and car stickers;
- The Post Office, including TV screens, leaflet drops, billboards/banners;
- Radio advertising;
- Northallerton Employment Centre;
- GP surgeries, Dental surgeries, personnel departments of local businesses, the project's own public display board in the market place, public houses, libraries, leisure centres, and local gyms.

Supporting volunteers at the recruitment stage

It is essential that the volunteering organisation understands the barriers to volunteering faced by different groups and also the support needs of the potential volunteers. In this way it can ensure that it has measures in place to facilitate the recruitment process effectively, such as appropriate help with the process itself, and finding suitable volunteering roles.

Volunteer Centre Sutton engages volunteers with additional support needs through a range of measures. *Active Futures (Westminster and Chelsea Volunteer Centre)* facilitate volunteering opportunities for those with learning disabilities.

1



Volunteer Centre Sutton has been successful in attracting resources to enable engagement with volunteers who have additional support needs, and with older people. This includes a Tenants Garden Maintenance Scheme where volunteers with additional support needs provide gardening services for 300 older, vulnerable tenants, plus the setting up of a new Social Enterprise to enable volunteers with additional support needs to participate in supported horticultural volunteering and training.

A number of practical steps have been put in place to encourage recruitment and retention and support of volunteers at risk of social exclusion including the following:

- Production of a range of recruitment leaflets and posters that are colourful and attractive, in large print, provide unambiguous information, are available in other languages and display a range of diverse images;
- The Centre is accessible for people with disabilities including ramps and toilet provision. A text phone is available for people with hearing disabilities;
- Volunteers complete Equality & Diversity monitoring forms and the information is collated and compared with local demographics on a monthly basis. Appropriate action is taken to address any issues that arise;
- Based in the Volunteer Placements Section, the Good Practice Co-ordinator works closely with all the other Centre projects and operations staff. Issues and concerns about recruitment and retention are shared through structured systems of monitoring, evaluation, consultation and analysis of customer feedback;
- Effective partnership arrangements ensures the project receives firsthand feedback from volunteers with additional support needs and also facilitates the identification of young people and sharing of good practice when working and engaging with "hard to reach" young people;
- The project co-coordinator liaises with Sutton Racial Equality Council to identify BME groups, especially new and emerging groups and those working with refugees and asylum seekers to encourage and enhance good practice in volunteer management amongst these communities.

2



The **Volunteer Centre Westminster** targets specific groups of volunteers (Those from the BME community, those with learning disabilities, those at risk from being homeless). In each case a dedicated outreach worker is assigned.

In relation to developing volunteering opportunities for people with learning difficulties the project was established in 1996 and is managed by a part time Development Officer, who works with an advisory group of volunteers with Learning Disabilities, (The Happy Group) to help ensure that the project is user led. The project aims to make volunteering more accessible to people with learning disabilities throughout the process of obtaining a voluntary placement and during the first few months of working as a volunteer.

The Development Officer offers support to potential volunteers in many ways, including the use of sensitive interviewing techniques, providing accessible information on volunteering, empowering the volunteer to choose from a variety of opportunities, offering tasters of voluntary work, giving support in completing application forms, taking up references, providing voluntary job coaching and careful matching to appropriate types of work.

The project has enabled many people to successfully pursue voluntary work in a variety of placements including: working in charity shops, with children and older people, in day centres, on gardening projects, in offices and with practical tasks. Activities for volunteers who may not be ready to work independently or who simply enjoy the social side of volunteering are also undertaken.

The project has enabled many people to successfully pursue voluntary work in a variety of placements.

Recruiting service users

Service users from socially excluded groups should also be seen as potential volunteers. The personal knowledge that they have can be very useful, particularly in helping to break down barriers, but also because for many, the advantages of being a volunteer can be a major factor in tackling their own social exclusion. The involvement of service users in volunteering can help ensure the volunteering organisation adapts its recruitment measures to the needs of different groups.

Most of *Wai Yin* volunteers come through the organisation's own services and are encouraged to volunteer as part of their personal development and confidence building. *Multiple Choice* also stresses the importance of encouraging ex service users to progress into volunteering.

1



Currently, about 70% of volunteers are ex service users.

Wai Yin Chinese Women Society target and engage mainly unemployed Chinese volunteers, as supporting the Chinese community is the main objective of the organisation. Volunteers are recruited in three principal ways:

- 1) Promotion of specific volunteering opportunities as they arise;
- 2) As part of Wai Yin service user's personal development organised by project staff;
- 3) Individuals proactively approaching Wai Yin in search of volunteering opportunities.

Most of Wai Yin volunteers come through the organisation's own services and are encouraged to volunteer as part of their personal development and confidence building. Currently, about 70% of volunteers are ex service users.

The wide range of activities undertaken through Wai Yin means that a particular strength of the project is the ability to access service users and also link volunteers to their particular volunteering interests.

2



Multiple Choice, which is a community-based drug rehabilitation programme, actively encourages volunteers with previous experience of using services (drugs, mental health, other support).

In relation to recruitment of volunteers *Multiple Choice* stresses the importance of encouraging ex-service users to progress into volunteering (About 75% of volunteers are ex-service users). *Multiple Choice* does not go through an advertising process unless it is for specialist volunteering positions and it was indicated that they would be inundated with responses if it did. Every person that applies as a volunteer is invited to attend a training session, with interviews held after this has taken place. *Multiple Choice* stresses the importance of potential volunteers understanding the boundaries that have to be maintained as a volunteer, this being a key aspect of the training. It was also indicated that help is provided for those not able to fill the application form in. Given the high proportion of ex-service users taken on as volunteers, the importance of being able to manage people in and out of service was also stressed.

Ensuring selection procedures are effective

The selection of those who offer themselves for volunteering needs to be effective in terms of their capability or potential to carry out the activities in question, and indeed to gain some personal benefit from it. The image and credibility of the volunteering organisation also needs to be protected. The process should mirror that used for employment. At this stage the issue of legal requirements will arise, for example in relation to access to minors and vulnerable groups. It should also be clear within the organisation, who is authorised to decide to recruit a volunteer.

Cheetham Hill Advice Centre has a deliberately lengthy process, including training to prepare the volunteering activities and matching volunteers to appropriate work. There is a strong degree of structure and formality in the procedure.

1

The selection process deliberately target volunteers at risk of social exclusion rather than prioritise them on qualifications or written English standards.



*Ahmed Shazad
Volunteer Cheetham Hill*

Cheetham Hill Advice Centre recruits about 15-20 volunteers a year. The project focuses in particular on the recruitment of volunteers in groups at risk of social exclusion. This is achieved through paid adverts in the Manchester City Council Jobs Update publication.

This advertising also attracts people from BME communities, by stating that the organisation are *“particularly interested in applications from asylum seekers, refugees, and bilingual speakers of Urdu/Punjabi or other community languages.”*

Most of the Centre's clients are those at risk of social exclusion. Some users of the Centre, who have benefited personally from the advice service, enquire about volunteering at the Centre. Many of these might not have done so at another agency.

The selection process is used to target volunteers in groups at risk of social exclusion. In recent years there have always been more suitable candidates applying than volunteer places available. 'Additional Criteria for Selecting Volunteer Advice Workers' are therefore used to encourage recruitment of those at risk from social exclusion. The project does not prioritise people based on qualifications or standard of written English, but rather on such criteria as 'future plans' (i.e. how helpful the volunteering will be for the individual's personal development), speaking community languages and living locally (and therefore more at risk of social exclusion than residents of many other areas).

Notes



3

Matching volunteers

In volunteering organisations, particularly when seeking to recruit volunteers from socially excluded backgrounds, it is good practice, and mutually beneficial, to match volunteers to appropriate roles, that take account of volunteers capabilities, skills, other development needs, interests and aspirations. It will enable volunteers not only to get maximum benefit from being a volunteer, but will also contribute strongly to the satisfaction that they will derive from their volunteering activities. For the volunteering organisation, having volunteers matched to appropriate roles is likely to lead to improved quality in the service provided, and will also contribute to volunteer retention rates.

In order to match volunteers to roles effectively it is essential that this is done systematically, with effective measures in place at the outset and during the period that the volunteer is with the organisation.

Four critical success factors have been identified in relation to matching volunteers:

- Understanding the needs and motivations of volunteers;
- Induction and training;
- Ensuring a range of volunteering opportunities;
- A flexible approach.

Picture

"Volunteering organisations should not fall into the trap of asking 'how can we use volunteers?' A better question is 'how can volunteers use the opportunities we can present?' The point is to work from the starting point of volunteer motivation (skills, social contact, sense of achievement etc) rather than organisational need."

Miles Sibley

Development Director
British Trust for Conservation Workers

Understanding the needs and motivations of volunteers

It is important to gather information on the needs and motivations of individual volunteers in order to ensure they are suited to the volunteering opportunities that are available. This information can also be useful in order to identify new projects and volunteering opportunities.

A+ Volunteering at *Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea* works closely with both the volunteer and the chosen placement to ensure that a good match is made. The *Renewal, Refugee and Migrant Project (RAMP)* set out the factors that need to be carefully considered when the one to one matching of mentors to mentees is carried out in practice.

1



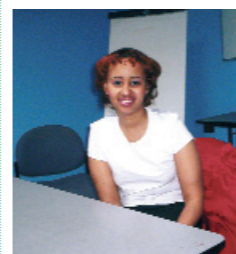
A+ Volunteering at **Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea** encourages and supports disabled people and people with mental and physical health needs to have a positive volunteering experience in their local community. In every case A+ Volunteering works closely with both the volunteer and the chosen placement to ensure that a good match is made.

All new volunteers have an initial one to one meeting with the A+ Volunteering staff to establish interests, current skills and experience, availability, and what support the volunteer would like from either the Volunteer Centre or a placement project in order to volunteer successfully. The aims of the meeting are to:

- Make the prospective volunteer feel welcome and comfortable with the Volunteer Centre;
- Ensure the prospective volunteer understands what A+ Volunteering does and offers;
- Discuss what kind of volunteering the prospective volunteer is interested in;
- Discuss volunteer support needs and what they think they would need and from whom they would like this support;
- Agree on a plan of action.

When the potential volunteer is referred to the project from Social or Health Services or a voluntary sector organisation, a keyworker (or equivalent) is often involved with this initial process, if this is helpful to the individual volunteer.

2



The **Renewal, Refugee and Migrant Project (RAMP)** highlights how recruiting mentors and mentees is a balancing act of obtaining the right people at the right time and for the right match. It needs adequate planning before reaching out to people. RAMP Volunteer Mentoring Handbook sets out how one to one matching of mentors to mentees is carried out in practice, with the following factors looked at carefully:

- Proximity - locations of both the mentor and mentee;
- Age - the mentor should be a bit older than the mentee;
- Gender - Generally female mentees are matched with female mentors unless they want to be matched with a male mentor;
- Profession - pairs people with similar professions as much as possible;
- Interests/hobbies - pairs people with similar interests/hobbies;
- Preference of both mentors and mentees are considered based on their application forms and interviews.

Induction and training

Organisations aiming to match volunteers to appropriate volunteer work will need to ensure that the induction process and training given can contribute towards that goal. This may include exposure to various volunteering activities through, for example, taster sessions in order to ensure an appropriate match to volunteering roles.

Age Concern Islington provides ongoing training that is tailored to individual roles and is ongoing to satisfy a wide range of diverse projects. At *Barnardo's North East* training and personal development plans are put in place for those who want to use their volunteering as a means to develop career skills.

1



ACI also provides training, support and placements for people aged 50+ that suit every individual's particular interests.

Age Concern Islington (ACI) manages a number of diverse projects and activities and has developed good practice with the aim of ensuring that volunteers are given induction and training that is tailored to their individual roles. In assessing training needs ACI give particular attention to:

- *ongoing training needs* - new volunteers are given induction training, but they are also invited to quarterly training sessions on ACI policies, and offered role specific training;
- *personal safety* - for example, for those who visit people's homes;
- *consideration of client needs* - for example, day centre volunteers need training in such matters as first aid, manual handling, and the language of care settings;
- *specialisms* - training in specialist subjects has included: dyslexia and the specialised reading programme "Catch-up"; food and hygiene, and adult abuse training;
- *accredited training* - for example, IT training for administrative volunteers, working towards ECDL/CLAIT accreditation.

2



Barnardo's NE project, 'The Party' promotes training to volunteers and engages them in activities to raise their self-esteem and encourage them to realise that they have transferable life skills that they can use elsewhere in work.

Learning and Development is considered a high priority for the Project, particularly as service users may have no formal qualifications. For some volunteers achievement of Open College accreditation may be the only chance they have to gain a "certificate" and be a significant personal achievement.

Personal development plans are put in place for those who want to use their volunteering as a means to develop career skills.

Part of "The Party's" aims is to develop opportunities that take into account the needs of the individual. So instead of just advertising a particular opportunity, The Party will develop a new opportunity to respond to a volunteer's interest or need.

This care with matching volunteer to opportunity and creating specific opportunities ensures greater retention of volunteers.

Range of opportunities

Wherever possible, volunteering organisations need to consider how they will be able to provide a range of opportunities that will offer something to the target beneficiaries and at the same time enable disparate groups of potential volunteers to be offered a suitable match for their own needs and capabilities. The availability of well prepared role descriptions can be used to define the various opportunities. Involvement of volunteers in designing their own volunteer roles can also work well in some circumstances.

North Tyneside Voluntary Organisation Development Agency give young volunteers an active role in designing volunteering activities. Having a wide range of volunteering opportunities is seen as a key method for engaging volunteers by *Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project*, while *WORLDwrite* identifies a wide variety of volunteering opportunities as important to ensure such opportunities suit the needs, interests, and aspirations of the individual volunteers.

1



North Tyneside Voluntary Organisation Development Agency (VODA) gives young volunteers an active role in designing activities. This involves giving support, ensuring that projects undertaken are realistic and achievable, and critically, not underestimating young people's capacity to respond positively to responsibility.

Among other things, VODA organises a range of volunteer challenges, which have proved to be successful in both involving and providing a range of volunteering opportunities for young people. The main features of the volunteer challenges are as follows:

- *A flexible and open minded approach* - many of the ideas for challenges come from young people themselves and may not seem promising at first sight;
- *Involve specific groups of young people who face additional barriers*, for example, challenges for wheelchair users that takes into account such things as accessibility;
- *Encourage ownership* - VODA enables young people to plan and execute their group projects and assess the risks involved;
- *Organic movement in challenges* - challenges do not need to be static in form. An example of this at VODA was the young persons' radio station broadcasting where during the four weeks of the project more than 200 people were involved in running a range of shows including live music, phone-ins, and interview with the Mayor, and topical discussions on challenging subjects;
- *Give control* - young people were given complete control over the content and style of the radio broadcasts, as long as they avoided using offensive language;
- *Widen horizons* - for example, the opportunity to enable young people from different countries and cultures to mix with and learn from each other has been taken at VODA with projects such as the Active Youth International Exchange and the International Youth Forum;
- *Formal evaluation* - this is a key part of the volunteers' input, and young people themselves have been involved in the design of forms.

2



The aim of the **Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP)** is to relieve poverty, distress, and hardship among unemployed, poorly housed, and low-waged people and their families.

One of the ways that BUCFP seeks to achieve its aims is by promoting and facilitating volunteering participation. The ability to offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities is seen to be a key to engaging people in the Project. To make this approach work in practice the BUCFP seek to ensure that there is:

- *Clarity of purpose* - that a wide range of activities reaches out to a broad range of service users to engage them with the Project;
- *Explicit details of opportunities* - the Project produces information leaflets and other written material about opportunities;
- *Volunteer job descriptions* - regular volunteers have detailed job descriptions setting out responsibilities and tasks;
- *Promotional activities* - are designed to introduce existing and potential volunteers opportunities available;
- *Guidance and help* - volunteers receive guidance toward appropriate volunteering opportunities and help, e.g. with volunteer application forms;
- *Targeting* - working creatively to find effective ways for different people to participate, with particular effort to reach out to the most deprived and disadvantaged;
- *Reducing barriers to participation* - examples include on-site childcare, high levels of support, training, and a welcoming and supportive community;
- *Drawing attention to the lasting benefits of participation* - these include gaining new skills, building confidence, less isolation, better social networking, and access to other sources of advice and support;
- *Individual outcomes* - participation can lead people into external volunteering and training opportunities or paid employment;
- *Spreading the net* - continue to develop new volunteering opportunities and projects;
- *Monitoring and evaluation* - to ensure that the Project is on track and developing.

3



Angela Kolongo's film training at WORLDwrite attracted her to the project and became a stepping stone to career opportunities.

WORLDwrite believes that volunteering opportunities need to suit the needs, interests, and aspirations of the individual volunteers and assist them in developing these flexibly, according to ability and need, avoiding an "off-putting" allocation of tasks that may be too hard or belittling in scope. A wide variety of volunteering opportunities available through activities, projects, and events is important and in order to achieve this WORLDwrite:

- *Draws on the ideas of the young people* - WORLDwrite provides young people with an opportunity to express creatively their concerns and develop their aspirations by addressing disadvantages across the globe;
- *Facilitates engagement through training* - for example, WORLDwrite has established a national award winning documentary film facility and accredited training programme where talented yet disadvantaged young people were provided with cutting-edge new media skills and a chance to shape the future;
- *Undertakes youth led initiatives* - the Shoot it, Save it, and Share it volunteering programme has three youth-led initiatives that aim to harness young volunteers' aspirations, experience, and the heightened sense of social injustice peculiar to young people who feel socially alienated themselves;
- *Try something unique* - for example, the Shoot it strand of the programme is unique in its endeavour to provide young people with free access to new media technologies with essential training and support;
- *Avoid exclusivity* - WORLDwrite ensures that film training volunteers and crews are not just for those in it from the start; throughout the year at any time, new volunteers can "chip in" if this is their interest, and assist with all aspects of the programme.

Flexible approach

The volunteering organisation should be prepared to change course if the initial assessment is leading to an unsatisfactory outcome, and also to permit a change of course in the interests of the development of the individual volunteer through suitable training and work experience.

Sports Volunteering NW Ltd (VNW) has developed a 'cascade' system through which sports organisations in the North West region seek to match the choices of young people to a wide variety of appropriate volunteering opportunities/placements. *CSV Volunteering Partners* develop volunteering opportunities based on young peoples' wants and needs. This requires an open-minded approach with taster sessions, diverse activities, together with ongoing training and support.

1



Volunteers completing 200 hours are encouraged to and empowered to become mentors for new volunteers.

The process that **Sports Volunteering NW Ltd (VNW)** has adopted in terms of recruitment and selection across the North West region has been to match the choices of young people to a wide variety of appropriate volunteering opportunities/placements, linking the experience that they seek with local availability. Placements have been provided through established routes, such as partnerships with National Governing Bodies of Sport, Sports Development Units within local authorities, local clubs and organisations, together with one-off events.

The 'cascade' system developed by Sports Volunteering through County Sports Partnerships, local authority sports development units and local clubs, schools and colleges ensures that opportunities in all areas are created to engage and support young people in volunteering.

Volunteers are encouraged to gain coaching and leadership qualifications through the project and to make use of these qualifications during their placement in a club or organisation. Volunteers who complete 200 hours are encouraged and empowered to become new mentors for new volunteers within the project and are also encouraged and supported to carry on volunteering.

The wide variety of volunteering opportunities within the programme, ranging from coaching to web design, database management, marketing and officiating, is changing the philosophy of volunteering across the region to one which fosters an inclusive atmosphere. Widening the range of opportunities has greatly increased the number of young people who now access the programme and benefit from this support to develop confidence and skills in a secure and friendly environment.

2



Community Service Volunteers (the Yu-act project) recognises that its volunteering opportunities need to be attractive to young people if they are to be encouraged to participate and has developed a flexible approach around the idea of volunteering opportunities based on what young people want or are interested in. The main features of this flexible approach are:

- *open mindedness* - i.e. not simply trying to find young people to fit existing volunteering opportunities;
- *taster sessions* - the Yu-act project does not recruit young people for long-term specific roles, but rather to experience volunteering as a "taster session";
- *role of the Project Worker* - when a volunteer first becomes involved with Yu-act they meet with the Project Worker to discuss what they want to get out of volunteering;
- *designing the volunteers' roles* - with the young people's input, a role is designed that will enable them to try and achieve their aims;
- *diverse activities* - the result of this approach is a diverse range of activities being organised and carried out, including challenging subjects such as working with families who have been affected by HIV/Aids;
- *training and support* - the training and support needed for such diversity is properly identified and provided.

Notes

4

Progression pathways

Ensuring clear progression pathways to training, employment, or other volunteering opportunities is particularly important for those groups most disadvantaged in the labour market. For some individuals volunteering may be the only realistic route on the path to paid employment. This ties in strongly with other aspects of good practice such as the assessment of volunteer support needs, and monitoring of individuals progress against an agreed action plan. There are certain factors that are critical to the success of this good practice.

- Developing clear progression pathways;
- Visualising progress;
- Formal structures and links with other organisations.

Picture

"The value of volunteering in helping people to realise their potential should never be underestimated. From personal experience, volunteering can often be like flicking a switch in someone's head, a switch that makes them realise that they have valuable skills and experiences that can be used by others. It might lead them onto to further training or a job or another volunteering opportunity, but the key is providing them with confidence in their own abilities."

John Knights

Policy Manager - Volunteering
Office of the Third Sector
Cabinet Office

Developing clear progression pathways

The identification of clear progression pathways needs to be seen as a strategic objective for the volunteering organisation, and it follows from this that other measures are in place to ensure this happens in practice. The different stages through which a volunteer may progress should be identified and set out.

Progression to further training and/or employment is actively encouraged by *Cheetham Hill Advice Centre (CHAC)* through implementation of individual development plans and access to a range of further training and skill development opportunities. *Leeds Homestart* provide detailed support at the recruitment stage followed by ten weeks of structured induction linked to NVQ accreditation. There is active encouragement for volunteers to progress into further training and/or employment.

1



Rob Clarke
Cheetham Hill Advice Centre

Cheetham Hill Advice Centre (CHAC) invest considerable resources both in the recruitment and retention of volunteers. However, many volunteers do not stay with the Project for much more than a year. This is mainly because they move on to further study, volunteering or paid work in advice or related fields. As long as people are moving on for positive reasons, as part of their own personal development, having benefited from the volunteer project, and are becoming more active citizens in the process, the Project consider this to be a success. However, this approach does mean that CHAC have a continuous cycle of volunteer recruitment.

CHAC do not see retention for its own sake as a necessary indicator of success, if impact assessment shows that volunteers have moved on to other things at an appropriate time in order to continue the process of personal development, which began through their volunteering. This is a lesson that CHAC seek to share with other organisations: that it is the reason that the volunteer leaves that is more important than the fact they have left in assessing the effectiveness of the project. This approach also provides volunteering opportunities for new people who would not be able to access the project if volunteers never moved on.

Once volunteers have completed the 10-day advice workers training with CHAC various progression training is also available depending upon particular volunteering positions, including in relation to generalist advice work, welfare benefits advice, housing advice, debt advice and immigration and asylum/refugee advice.

2

At Home Start, one volunteer progressed from no qualifications to a University degree.

Leeds Home-Start actively encourages volunteers to progress into further training and/or employment. Considerable support is provided to volunteers by Home-Start at the recruitment stage. A structured link has been developed with Leeds Metropolitan University that enables those that want to use the 10-week induction process and associated NVQ accreditation as a stepping stone to a degree in Social Work at Leeds Metropolitan University. 8 volunteers have successfully completed this route. Home-Start Leeds also encourages progression on to further training through other routes, as illustrated by the case study below.

Mary is a 39-year-old mother with twin children. She became a volunteer about four years ago and through volunteering with Home-Start Leeds has progressed to university undertaking a social work degree.

After undertaking extensive training through Home-Start Leeds and completion of a two-year access to social work course through Thomas Danby College, she is now coming up to finishing her first year as a Social Work student at Bradford University.

Mary identified her motivation for undertaking the course as *“Helping people. I thought if I could just help somebody on a voluntary basis, just on a couple of hours a week, what could I do if I was to do that full time?”*

She identifies her volunteering experiences with Home-Start Leeds as critical to progression on to her current course. She commented:

“Without being a Home-Start volunteer I would never have had the courage to do this.”

“The confidence that I have gained in the last four years is tremendous.”

Before Mary started volunteering she had no qualifications. She attributes getting on to her social work access course at least in part to experience of volunteering at Home-Start, commenting:

“Getting on that I think it helped that I had the experience through Home-Start.”

Some practical experience with Home-Start in relation to issues such as child protection is also identified by Mary as of help in terms of her current course.

One of the most important aspects of these experiences has been an increase in her confidence. She indicated that previously *“I really lacked in confidence”*.

Her future aspirations are to become a qualified social worker in two years time and hopefully still have the volunteering role at Home-Start Leeds.

Visualising progress

Volunteers should be able to visualise their progress. Preparation for this should begin at the recruitment and induction stages in a way that enables the volunteers to see how experience and qualifications will mark their progress along the pathway and against an individual development plan. This needs to be implemented in such a way that volunteers from diverse backgrounds can understand the potential progression routes that may be available to them.

121 Youth Befriending have produced a volunteer open learning pack that contains information about: the training process and feedback; follow-up training; and, peer group sessions. They also use an educational consultant. Implementation of mentee and mentor Individual Development Plans at *CAN Footsteps* provides a structured basis to monitor, assess and review their progress.

1



Suzy Messenger
Project Director
121 Youth Befriending

In order to address the difficulties of organising training at times and dates to suit volunteers, **121 Youth Befriending** developed an Open Learning Pack in order that volunteers could work at home, in their own time and at their own pace. This has worked well, but the Project felt volunteers missed out on an important part of training which they get from being in a group situation, with associated peer support and sharing of ideas and concerns.

The solution for this has been the development of a 121 Volunteer Preparation pack. All new volunteers receive a pack containing information on befriending and worksheets, which they complete and return to the person responsible for this part of training. They receive brief feedback on their responses and will then be expected to attend further training/support sessions where they will also meet with other volunteers. These sessions are tailored to the groups needs by using the information from completed worksheets.

The 121 Volunteer Preparation pack covers a number of areas of befriending, these being:

- The Way it works;
- Dealing with difficult behaviour and creating boundaries;
- Confidentiality, child protection and other policies;
- Coping with different cultures;
- Befriending and supporting Young Carers;
- Befriending and supporting young people with disabilities and special needs;
- How to motivate and set goals.

This approach has been recognised by Home Office evaluators as an innovative way to engage volunteers with busy lives and will hopefully be linked to an online text messaging facility in the future.

An educational consultant helps to ensure that it uses the most effective teaching and it is continuously developed to reflect current needs. Participants receive feedback and support on each area before proceeding to the next. They are given a contact name, telephone number and an e-mail address for support and their views and comments on the pack are invited.

2



Both mentors and mentees at **CAN Footsteps** have Individual Development Plans [IDP] in order to monitor, assess and review their progress.

Implementation of the Mentee IDP comes after the mentee has been matched to a mentor. At this stage any personal goals that the mentee may have should have been identified. IDP's exist in order that these goals can be written down and a path plotted towards achieving them. It is suggested that the majority of mentees will benefit from these personally tailored plans.

However, at this stage in their recovery the mentee may not have a clear idea of where they want to go. The desire to move away from the past should be great, but it's possible that they have not yet identified their goals. Where the mentee does not have existing goals, or is unclear as to their nature, the very first task of the IDP process is to establish these.

This will require an open and honest conversation between the mentee and mentor and may not be achieved in the very first session. All avenues should be explored along with their consequences, good or bad, and any possible sacrifices required, should be examined.

Having established the mentee's aims, the next, and equally important step is to create a means of achieving them. In effect this means mapping a route from 'here to there'.

In many cases the mentee's overall aims can seem distant and the prospect of accomplishing them can be daunting. By outlining objectives that have to be met along the way, the mentee can reduce the enormity of the task and see the journey as a series of small and achievable steps

During the first few months of any recovery process, change is constant and rapid. This change may well give rise to a shift in focus on the part of the mentee. It is of great importance that such adjustments in direction should not be viewed as failure or lack of commitment to original goals, but that these changes are to be expected and are often a positive result of reflection or evaluation. When they arise a new IDP may be started and new objectives set. The preceding IDP should be kept on file and the reasons for the change, as well as an outline of thought processes, should be recorded on the mentees Record of Progress.

Having established a mentee's aims, the next and equally important step is to create a means of achieving them.

Formal structures

Some volunteering organisations may have formal structures that can be used for the purpose of progression pathways. Such structures may be able to indicate volunteering activities that become open to volunteers as they demonstrate their capability in those areas. A number of organisations have developed structured links with particular educational organisations or employers that help provide progression routes for individual volunteers.

Groundwork Rossendale have developed a set of structures to help young people progress into further volunteering, training, or employment that provides a formal structure with key features to

- a) demonstrate a belief in young people,
- b) provide meaningful training,
- c) support young people's initiatives, and
- d) work closely with partners.

1

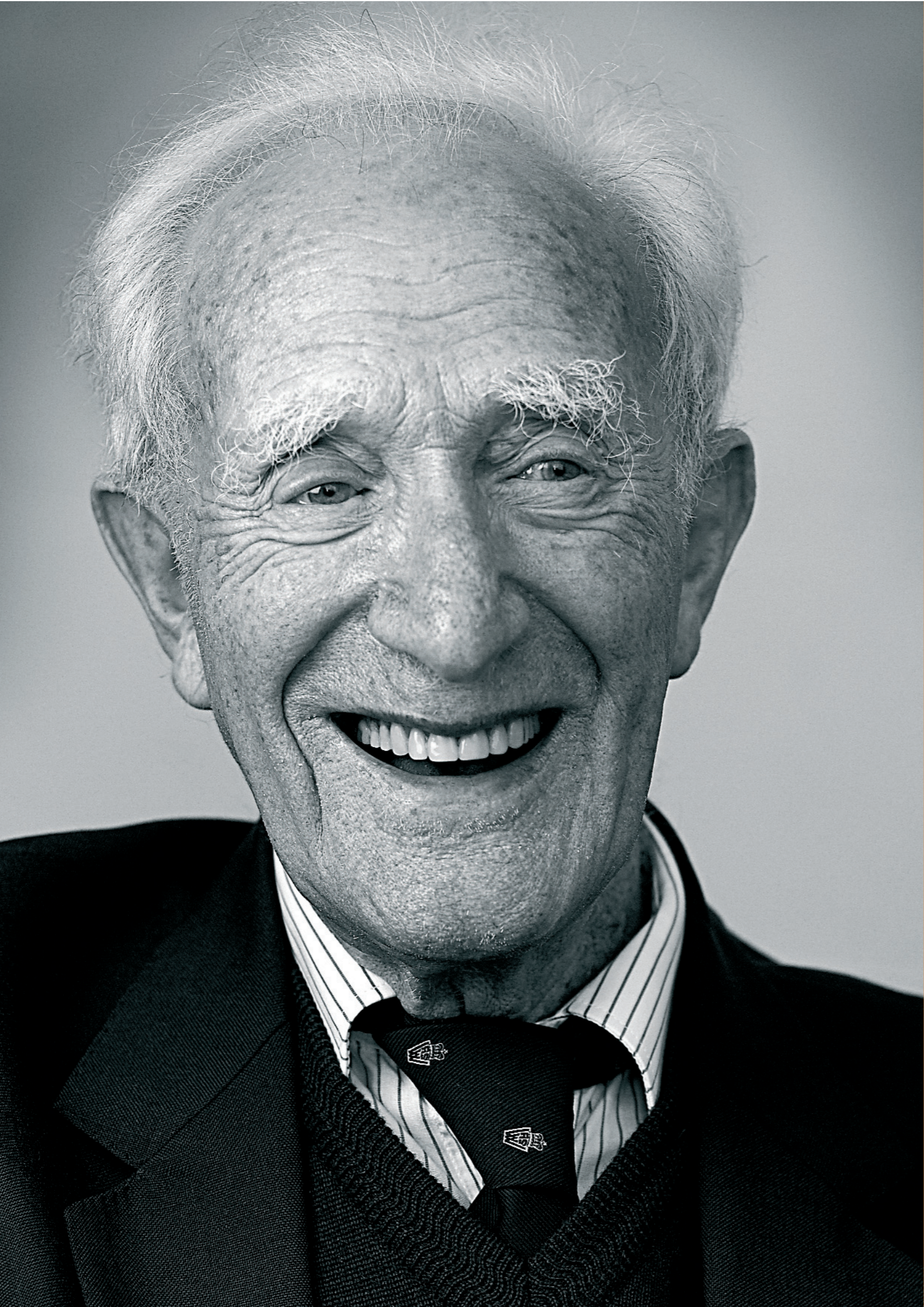


Groundwork Rossendale's Youth Works programme has proven the link between harnessing the energy of young people and dealing with issues connected with crime and criminality. This is because involvement in the programme allows young people to develop greater self esteem and confidence, which help to reduce the risk of involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Groundwork Rossendale have developed a set of structures and associated opportunities to help young people to progress further into volunteering, training and work. The key features of this approach are in:

- *showing confidence* - the belief in young people is exemplified by encouraging positive involvement, for example, by enabling them to run steering groups themselves;
- *providing meaningful training* - training opportunities in-house include accredited learning, for example, the young person in a case study progressed to Level 1 NVQ Horticulture;
- *supporting initiatives by young people* - an example is where one young person had taken on responsibility for updating other young people about project progress and in the formation of a new group of volunteers;
- *working with partners* - the Groundwork Youth and Learning Team worked successfully with Greenvale Homes, Rossendale Police, and Rossendale Borough Council in an intervention that contributed considerably to reducing the incidence of anti-social behaviour in the area;
- *attracting new support* - successful working with partner organisation leading to new sources of support where partners look for grant funding to assist the Group in its work.

Notes



5

Training and induction

In any organisation, training is an important activity. In volunteering organisations the training of volunteers from socially excluded backgrounds is particularly important in enabling them to do their volunteering work satisfactorily; but it can be much more than this in terms of helping with fundamental educational, social, and employment skills that are needed in so many other walks of life, not least in paid employment.

Therefore, in considering the factors that are critical to the success of training it will be necessary to take these other matters into account. Critical success factors in relation to training and induction are summarised under the following headings:

- Understanding the individual needs and barriers of the target volunteering population;
- Tailoring training to individual needs;
- Appropriate training processes;
- Accredited training.

Picture

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Understanding the individual needs of the volunteering population

The target volunteering population will often have needs that can be addressed effectively by appropriate training provision. Ensuring all groups of volunteers can access training effectively will not only be important for each individual volunteer, but critical for the efficient running of the volunteering organisation. An important aspect of this will be to understand and address barriers to training faced by individual volunteers, such as childcare, or lack of transport. It is also extremely important that workers or volunteer coordinators are trained to carry out this role.

The Renewal Refugee and Migrant Project uses the different cultural backgrounds of volunteers as a positive aid to understanding when training mentors. The Volunteer Centre Tameside (VCT) believes it is essential that those who fulfil the role of volunteer coordinators have adequate training in this role.

1



Interpreters are assigned as necessary for those mentees whose level of English is low.

The underlying philosophy of the **Renewal, Refugee and Migrant Project (RAMP)** is to facilitate progress toward full integration into the mainstream communities in a self-reliant way as soon as possible. One of the ways that this is done is by mixing the cultural backgrounds of the mentors and mentees, but ensuring that they have something in common. Mentor induction, training and assessment processes follow the Rogerian approach of 'learner-centredness'.

Dr Hailu Hagos who manages the Refugee Mentoring Service commented, *"It is such a diverse group and it is very difficult to set a standard for these groups. So we are flexible and diverse in our activities. What we are proud of is it is a multicultural organisation. The mentors are as diverse as the mentees themselves"*.

Mentors and mentees are offered separate mentoring inductions to help them familiarise themselves with RAMP's mentoring programme. They learn what mentoring is and how they can benefit from it in plain English. Interpreters are assigned as necessary for those mentees whose level of English is low. Induction is considered crucial, as both mentors and mentees need to have a clear idea of their roles and responsibilities in the mentoring relationships from the outset.

As well as group inductions, the Mentoring Co-ordinator organises three-way meetings with individual mentors and mentees. Apart from background information about RAMP and the Mentoring Scheme, ethical codes of practice, such as confidentiality and boundary issues, details of the support system of the mentoring project are provided during induction.

Within the induction process steps are taken to address the complexity of a range of languages, cultural sensitivities, etc. to ensure a good match between mentor and mentee.

2



Yashti Moss
Development Worker
Volunteer Centre Tameside

The Volunteer Centre Tameside (VCT) acts as a broker, matching volunteers to volunteering opportunities throughout Tameside. The Centre can give advice, training, and support to organisations that seek volunteer help. VCT also runs a variety of volunteering related projects.

VCT is the borough's only volunteer development agency and it supports over 100 volunteer recruiting organisations, matching more than 750 volunteers per year with them. In these circumstances it is essential that those who fulfil the role of volunteer coordinators have adequate training in this role. VCT provides this training as a best practice, the main features of which are as follows:

- *Comprehensive* - training should cover all aspects of work with volunteers;
- *Interaction among coordinators* - VCT runs a successful forum that involves volunteer coordinators from a range of volunteer recruiting organisations from Tameside and elsewhere;
- *Produce information packs* - VCT has produced a publication, "Information for Groups Working with Volunteers" that covers all of the essential elements for setting up and running a volunteer project;
- *Good practice* - the training will cover aspects of good practice on matters such as recruitment and selection, support and supervision, and involvement and recognition.

Tailoring training to individual needs

It is essential to tailor training to the specific needs of individual volunteers. For example, training involving those whose first language is not English may need to differ from other volunteers. Discussion with individuals helps to identify correctly the needs of individuals in terms of both course content and timescale. In this context induction training is important and can be a key component for volunteers.

Training within *Richmond CVS* is tailored to meet the needs of women from a variety of backgrounds and capabilities who wish to be volunteers in local governance, which in itself requires role specific training provision.

1



Training within **Richmond CVS** is tailored to meet the needs of women from a variety of backgrounds and capabilities who wish to be volunteers in local governance, which in itself requires role specific training provision. A key element on their WinG project is the delivery of high quality training and induction.

WinG provides an initial taster training day followed by a 10 week training programme for all volunteers, covering all aspects of decision-making roles in the community and ICT training. This training is delivered by two highly qualified project staff.

Although there is a lot of training material already developed in relation to supporting volunteers and management issues, the project identified a lack of developed training material specifically aimed at diverse groups of women to get them into decision-making, so project staff decided to write this from scratch.

The Open College Network (OCN) has accredited the WinG training programme units "Power & Diversity" and "Participation in Local Governance" at Levels 2 and 3, offering external confirmation of the quality of the training provided as well as formal recognition of the volunteers' achievements. 35% of volunteers have gained the accredited qualification through participating in the WinG training.

In order to cater for women with school age children the project made a commitment to teach between 10 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. so participants got an hour either side to drop off and collect their children. The project also pays for childcare for pre-school children, for carers, and for transport and in special circumstances for taxis. One of the key challenges for the project has been finding affordable and accessible venues (The project has a limited budget).

The project tries to encourage volunteers by doing things like sample assignments so they can see the sort of thing they might want to aim for, having individual learning plans fairly near the beginning of the course so the trainer gets to know the individual learners and what their sticking points might be, where they might need support and what might make them more comfortable. Volunteers have emails and telephone numbers of key staff and even the trainers' mobile numbers. At the end of the course a "coursework surgery" is held in order to resolve any issues. Volunteers are encouraged to form coursework networks, to communicate and support each other.

The project made a commitment to teach between 10am and 2.30pm, giving participants an hour either side to drop off and collect their children.

Accredited training

For many volunteers from socially excluded backgrounds, success will be the completion of an accredited training programme, not only from the point of view of personal achievement, but also as a step toward paid employment or further volunteering. It should be noted however that while this may be a critical success factor for the training of some volunteers, it might not be appropriate for others.

Age Concern Islington provides IT training for admin volunteers who are working towards ECDL/CLAIT accreditation. The *Renewal, Refugee and Migrant Project* provides mentor training that is accredited by the Open College Network London. *Cheetham Hill Advice Centre* works with Manchester Adult Education Service to provide a ten-day Advice Work training course that is accredited by the Open College Network NW Region.

1



Age Concern Islington manages a number of diverse projects and activities and aims to ensure that volunteers are given training that is appropriate for their individual roles. The main features of this approach are as follows:

- *ongoing training* - new volunteers are given induction training, but they are also invited to quarterly training sessions on ACI policies, and offered role specific training;
- *personal safety* - for example, for those who visit people's homes;
- *consideration of client needs* - for example, day centre volunteers need training in such matters as first aid, manual handling, and the language of care settings;
- *specialisms* - training in specialist subjects has included: dyslexia and the specialised reading programme "Catch-up"; food and hygiene, and adult abuse training;
- *accredited training* - for example, IT training for administrative volunteers, working towards ECDL/CLAIT accreditation.

2



The accreditation offers volunteers at RAMP the opportunity to work towards a qualification during their volunteering.

The mentor training at **Renewal, Refugee and Migrant Project (RAMP)** is delivered in 10 weekly sessions spread over two and a half months. The weekly session runs for three hours between 10am to 1pm on Saturdays or between 5.30pm and 8.30pm during weekdays. After three trial training sessions mentors are matched with mentees. Subsequent training continues side by side with mentoring activities until the ten sessions are completed. This enables mentors to apply what they have learnt in class into their mentoring practices in the training sessions.

The mentor training is accredited by the Open College Network London (OCN). The accreditation offers volunteers at RAMP the opportunity to work towards a qualification during their volunteering. The qualification is a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Mentoring Refugees that is accredited at levels 2 and 3. The ten training sessions are structured as follows:

- Introduction to RAMP and the Mentoring Service;
- Aims of Mentoring - The role of the Mentor;
- Stages of Mentoring relationship;
- Active listening;
- Refugee issues/barriers;
- Motivation;
- Legislative framework and key agencies;
- Values, culture, identity and integration;
- The mentees experiences (Case studies);
- Learning review and evaluation.

3



Potential volunteers at **Cheetham Hill Advice Centre** receive an in house 10-day Advice Work Training Course, that is currently delivered through a franchise with Manchester Adult Education Service and accredited by the Open College Network North West Region. This "professionalisation" of volunteer training has ensured that the project's systems withstood the scrutiny of auditors and other regulators and provided assurance for volunteers that they were received a high standard of training. The advice work training course has been one of the major achievements of the project so far, in terms of:

- the benefit to individual volunteers in their personal development;
- developing the high reputation that the project has both locally and within the advice sector in Manchester;
- attracting on average over 100 enquiries per recruitment drive, and;
- promoting good practice in training (the course has already been delivered to another organisation's volunteers).

The project has also developed a clear progression route for volunteers and created links between academic learning and practical reality. Initially the 10-day course was viewed as an Induction Course which had to be completed before volunteers started volunteering at the Centre. It was found that this separated the course too much from the volunteering in the Centre and that some volunteers found the transition from the "classroom" to the "workplace" quite difficult.

To address this issue the course and activities at the Centre were packaged together. As new volunteers learn about the principles of advice work on the course, such as confidentiality, they are also observing how these principles are worked out in practice in the advice centre at the same time. Volunteers also complete induction tasks in the Centre, such as telephone and door answering, and using the computer network, so that they begin to feel involved in the life of the Centre from an early stage. This approach has helped volunteers to settle in more quickly and feel part of the advice team, develop working relationships between new volunteers and other staff members, and assisted volunteers with differing learning preferences to successfully engage with the volunteering experience.

There is a progression for volunteers from filling in basic forms for clients, through to giving basic information advice to clients, to the volunteer managing their own caseload and eventually being mentored to assist with and then conduct their own, tribunal cases. The speed of progression and destination of each volunteer is dependent on their own individual development plans. For example, at present some volunteers only fill in forms, whilst others are assisting with tribunal cases with a view to securing paid employment in advice work in the near future.

Appropriate training processes

The training opportunities provided need to be relevant and appropriate for participating volunteers as well as the work that they will be doing. There should be opportunities for feedback on training and direct input from volunteers. The delivery of training needs to be flexible to the needs and constraints faced by different individuals.

Multiple Choice spends six weeks on induction training. This covers policies and procedures, but also training that is specific to different volunteering roles. Feedback is an important part of the process and there is ongoing training for volunteers throughout. The *Volunteer Centre Sutton* recognises that from the outset the needs and capabilities of potential volunteers is an important factor and tailor training, and structure the induction process accordingly. *Barnardo's* services have designed and compiled "Clued up", a peer participation training programme that involves guidance and training being provided by young people, for children and young people.

1



Having completed the 6 weeks Induction Programme, volunteers can take part in group work support roles, with a progression on to being a rehab escort or buddy a client.

A comprehensive six-week training programme is provided by **Multiple Choice** to volunteers as part of their induction process. This is provided by the Volunteer Coordinator, peer mentors and paid staff (who provide induction for specific roles).

The induction process covers all the basic policies and procedures and includes specific training around roles. Multiple Choice stress the importance of potential volunteers understanding the boundaries that have to be maintained as a volunteer mentor, this being a key aspect of the induction training.

The six-week induction course is treated as a part of the recruitment process, "to filter people out". It was commented that many potential volunteers who have been service users "don't actually understand a lot of what goes on behind the scenes when they are a client". The approach of Multiple Choice is to provide clients with a safe and supportive environment without bothering them too much with how this is done, but when ex-service users come to Multiple Choice to volunteer that need to learn how this process works in practice. As result some potential volunteers drop out. "They say, actually I didn't realise it was that difficult."

This induction process has already been shared with similar agencies in Leeds.

The induction process is only one part of a continuous process of training of volunteers. In relation to training it was indicated that this "never stops really" and should be seen as a process of personal growth. It was commented: "I don't like using the term professional development because that can be a bit scary, so it is growth. Volunteering is about starting with the individual and allowing an individual to get to where they want to be."

2



The **Volunteer Centre Sutton** recognise that from the outset the needs and capabilities of potential volunteers is an important factor. Therefore the induction is structured, training provision tailored and the programme is varied, relating to both the volunteering work and the individual volunteer.

In relation to training and induction Volunteer Centre Sutton provides all in-house volunteers with a Volunteer Handbook as part of a structured induction training programme and offers a variety of training provision relevant to specific roles, such as: Health & Safety, Manual Handling, Befriending/ Mentoring, Disability Awareness, First Aid and Appropriate Adults.

Volunteers are asked what training they would like and the Centre ensures financial provision is made within its budgets to provide targeted volunteer training.

A certificate of attendance is given to each volunteer when they have been to a training session organised by the Centre.

Volunteers may themselves identify training that is relevant to their Centre work and is provided externally. In such cases they may apply for the Centre to fund, or partially fund, this training.

The main purpose of volunteer training is to provide the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge, which will enhance the volunteer's competence in their volunteering. Volunteer training should thus improve standards of service.

The Project identifies a number of equally important benefits to the organisation from providing training. It:

- Demonstrates to volunteers that the Centre values their contribution by investing some of its resources in this way;
- Is one way of showing recognition to volunteers;
- Provides the opportunity to meet other volunteers, which is itself a form of support;
- Provides volunteer managers the opportunity to meet face-to-face with volunteers they may otherwise rarely see.

3



Because young people don't always come ready equipped for voluntary work **Barnardo's NE** services have designed and compiled "Clued Up", by young people, for children and young people (8 years plus). These are peer participation training programmes. This is a ground breaking, successfully piloted concept, with guidance and training coming from a young person/ child centred perspective.

Service users, volunteers and young workers were involved in designing this training and it will be delivered by young workers and volunteers in the near future.

Young people will deliver this accredited course to other young people, assessing their peers' success and ensuring that some of the most disadvantaged young people gain an accredited qualification.

Although "Clued Up" is being accredited through the Open College Network, the Project is also looking into how young people's developing skills could be recognised through the National Qualifications Framework.

Barnardo's also offers other more conventional staff and volunteer training. The organisation has an accredited training pack called "Working for Children" reflecting the belief that all volunteers can access this training, whether or not they work with children.

This will be made accessible to all volunteers by taking into account those with learning disabilities or physical or sensory impairments.

All Volunteers attend an induction programme.

Notes



6

Support and supervision

Giving adequate and appropriate support and supervision to volunteers who are drawn from socially excluded communities is a vital part of ensuring a productive and enjoyable volunteering experience. This support and supervision needs to be applied consistently throughout the period the volunteer is with the organisation. Particular approaches will work well in particular circumstances, but a number of factors are critical to the success of this process.

- Assessing support needs;
- Peer and mentor support;
- Monitoring volunteer progress;
- Effective communication with volunteers.

Picture

Volunteering used to be mainly altruistic, but more people are looking to volunteering for career enhancement. It is now seen as an important step into employment. The support from volunteering organisations is a fundamental step in motivating volunteers and enhancing their skills and confidence."

Paul Brent

*Regional Manager
Volunteer Reading Help*

Assessing support needs

As early as possible in the recruitment process there needs to be a formal assessment of the needs of each volunteer. A record of this assessment will form the basis for an action programme and ongoing appraisal.

A+Volunteering at *Volunteer Centre Kensington and Chelsea* support people with disabilities and people with mental and physical health needs to get involved in volunteering. Therefore assessing their needs is of paramount importance. The support needs can range from providing help through the application stage to practical help in getting to a project, confidence building, and volunteering skills themselves. *Thirsk, Sowerby and District Community Care Association* has appointed a Volunteer Coordinator with responsibility for volunteer induction and ongoing support.

1



Andrew Croxford
Re-Settlement Scheme Manager
Kensington & Chelsea Volunteers

A+ Volunteering at **Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea** helps disabled people and people with mental and physical health needs to get involved with volunteering. The project works with volunteers who have additional support needs resulting from:

- Physical or sensory impairment;
- Mental health issues;
- Learning disability or difficulties;
- Other hidden disability or illness.

Flexible ongoing support is provided to volunteers to make a valued contribution to their communities through volunteering, and to develop new skills, interests, confidence and independence.

Support ranges from practical help with application forms, travelling to a project, or meeting new people, simple reassurance that an impairment or health concern will not preclude volunteering, and encouragement with taking the initial steps. The Volunteer Centre may also discuss with an organisation how a role could be developed or adjusted to suit an individual's particular skills and needs.

2



The **Thirsk, Sowerby and District Community Care Association** has structured procedures for arranging and agreeing ongoing supervision and support with volunteers.

The volunteer arrangement for supervision/support form sets out the principal functions of the supervisory process, which are to:

- To ensure that that the volunteer understands their role;
- To enable the volunteer to carry out their responsibilities according to policies, procedures and role description;
- To be a source of support for the volunteer, recognising the demands of the volunteer role;
- To assist with personal development.

Supervisory sessions include a review of the volunteer role, agreeing goals and forming a social action plan, developing the volunteer's skills and knowledge base, a reflection on the volunteer's own practice as part of the learning process, constructive feedback and support.

Support for volunteers is provided by the Volunteer Co-ordinator who is responsible for volunteer induction and on-going support. A confidential volunteer support/supervision record is maintained, which for each session records the agreed agenda and notes down in relation to each topic/issue: the points raised, action required and agreed action by whom.

Peer and mentor support

Volunteers will be supported through the supervision provided, but it may be critical to the success of the volunteering experience that this is supported by peers and mentors as appropriate.

Somerset Youth Volunteering Network's Youth4Youth mentoring project has training that draws on a range of methods that allow the young people to interact with and learn from each other. *Darlington Association on Disability* sees peer support from people with disabilities who have already overcome barriers of self-confidence, negative attitudes, lack of skills, and physical access as a key element of their project. A peer support group has been set up to provide mutual support, identify training needs, and to promote the service.

1



Youth 4 Youth mentoring training draws upon non-traditional school based teaching methods such as role play, drama, video making, art and game playing.

Somerset Youth Volunteering Network (SYVN) Youth 4 Youth Project adopts an operational philosophy that recognises that young people are more likely to stay and perform well as volunteers if it is an enjoyable experience. Youth 4 Youth mentoring training draws upon non-traditional school based teaching methods such as role play, drama, video making, art and game playing. Adopting such methods makes for a more relaxed, fun and interactive training experience which helps to ensure that volunteer mentors keep coming back for more.

The success of this approach is underlined by the fact that the Youth 4 Youth reputation as being a dynamic and fun organisation to be part of, means that two thirds of all the volunteers SYVN work with have had a personal recommendation to join given by a close friend.

The organisation recognises that young people volunteer to do something they enjoy and feel respected in. Training is therefore not undertaken in conventional classroom settings but in all sorts of different locations, including skateboard parks.

As part of the whole process of keeping young people engaged and ensuring volunteering is perceived as an enjoyable experience the importance of treating paid staff and volunteers equally is also underlined.

2



Darlington Association on Disability, (DAD) has an equal access volunteering project to recruit, support and train disabled people and young people into volunteering. Disabled people are actively engaged in the recruitment process. The main features of the approach adopted by DAD are:

- *Targeted use of volunteers* - a disabled person works alongside the volunteer coordinator to promote volunteering opportunities within areas where volunteering is traditionally under-represented;
- *Peer support* - a key element of the project is peer support from disabled people who have already overcome barriers of self confidence, negative attitudes, lack of skills, and physical access, in order to volunteer successfully in a range of different roles and organisations; a peer support group has been set up to provide mutual support, identify training needs, and promote their service to other potential volunteers and service users;
- *Role models* - encourage and arrange for volunteers to act as role models by sharing their experiences with prospective volunteers.

Monitoring volunteer progress

The progress of each volunteer, both in terms of their volunteering activities and personal development, must be monitored systematically, and action taken to address any matters arising from the appraisal. Log books and action plans may be an important aspect of this. In a broader way, finding out what the volunteers are experiencing may be done collectively through volunteer satisfaction surveys or feedback forms. It is also important that the workers involved in carrying out volunteer appraisals are effectively trained to do so.

The Prince's Trust use an annual review to maximise the contribution that volunteers can make to the Trust, and to ensure that they know that they are a valued part of the organisation.

1



The aim of the Annual Review is to maximise the volunteer's contribution to the Trust and to ensure volunteers feel valued and part of the organisation.

The Prince's Trust East Lancashire Community Project carefully monitors the progress of volunteer mentors. The involvement of support workers is critical and this is done regularly and with a degree of formality. The project has clear procedures in place to guide the monitoring of volunteer mentors by support workers, set out under a number of principles for volunteer management:

Know your volunteer: It is considered to be important to build a relationship with the volunteer and to understand their needs and motivations. This is identified as the best form of management and will help both the support worker and volunteer achieve the joint goals set for time with the Trust.

Regular contact with the volunteer: It is important for both parties that regular contact is kept between the Trust and the volunteer to ensure that:

- The volunteer is kept informed of developments and events so they can contribute effectively to the business plan objectives;
- The Programme is kept informed about progress of the volunteer and any issues arising;
- The volunteer has an opportunity to be consulted and feedback information on new ideas and the plans for the future.

Annual Review: The aim of the Annual Review is to maximise the volunteer's contribution to the Trust and to ensure volunteers feel valued and are part of the organisation. It provides an opportunity for the support worker to discuss issues of concern, agree priorities for the coming year and thank the volunteer. It is also an opportunity for the volunteer to discuss any issues in relation to the role they are undertaking.

Regular contact and good management ensure that problems are identified at an early stage when they are more easily dealt with. The Review Process offers one opportunity to do this.

Effective communication with volunteers

A critical success factor for good support and supervision is good two-way communication with volunteers. A variety of communication methods are used by volunteering organisations including face to face discussions, group meetings, newsletters and social events. Many organisations also seek to address language and cultural barriers to effective communication with volunteers. The opportunity should always be taken to communicate in a supportive way, and there are many examples of how different organisations have done this.

Torrige Voluntary Services operate in a rural community in Devon where effective communication is a must. One way that they do this is through the development of a "grassroots" toolkit that is designed to enable the community contacts to function as "micro" volunteer centres in their particular communities. The *Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre in Cornwall* use a buddying system to help new volunteers to integrate into the organisation as quickly as possible.

1



The Grassroots Project offers good practice help with all aspects of engaging, recruiting and retaining volunteers at www.torrigevcs.org.uk/Resources.htm

The Grassroots project at **Torrige Voluntary Services (TVS)** aims to create a sustainable culture of volunteering in rurally isolated and hard to reach communities, and a collective approach to enhancing community well-being. Effective communication in relation to volunteering has been developed through the provision of a "toolkit and information pack". This is provided to all of their Community Contacts to help them to function as "micro" volunteer centres in their particular community. The main features of this Toolkit are the:

- Grassroots Guide to Happy Volunteering;
- Grassroots Guide to Safe Volunteering;
- Factsheets aimed at groups covering; recruiting, screening and supporting volunteers; volunteer expenses; insurance and other information;
- Guidance for engaging volunteers with support needs;
- Directory of Services - A comprehensive list of services available locally to support local people covering areas such as young people, older people and addiction, with associated contact details;
- Volunteer recruitment tracking sheet;
- TVS policies and procedures.

2



The **Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre in Cornwall, (WRSAC)** recognise the importance of helping new volunteers to integrate into the organisation as quickly as possible, and the idea of using a buddying system to help this process has been adopted. The main features of this system are:

- *Getting off on the right foot* - newly trained volunteers meet their buddy and the rest of the volunteering group at a "Buddy Night", which is a working/social event
- *Buddy responsibilities* - are set out in a written form together with a buddy checklist to help buddies and new volunteers with key information;
- *Making it stick* - it is a mandatory requirement at WRSAC that all volunteers attend monthly Group Support Meetings, and to undertake one-to-one supervision with the Agency Supervisor and/or Volunteer Manager;
- *Ad hoc element* - due to the extremely supportive culture of the agency, many volunteers exchange telephone numbers, and support and assist each other in an ad hoc way when required;
- *"Buddy Circles"* - these are formed to allow volunteers to meet more regularly in less formal situations.

Flexible support arrangements

It is essential that support is delivered in a way that is flexible enough to meet differing needs of particular volunteers.

Due to the nature of the volunteering work *Leeds Homestart* support is available on demand to volunteers at any time.

1



Due to the nature of the volunteering work, Leeds Homestart support is available on demand to volunteers 24 hours a day.

Home-Start Leeds provides extensive ongoing 24/7 support to volunteers delivering services to families.

Because Home-Start Leeds want to make volunteering accessible to anyone who feels they have something to offer a family, they accommodate volunteers in terms of the times they are able to offer.

However, Home-Start recognised that if they were going to open up volunteering at hours to suit all parties then *“we can’t say to the volunteers, if you have a problem with the family or have a child protection issue, you can only ring us between 9 and 4.30. This doesn’t work”*.

It was recognised that to have that flexibility, there was a need to have a contact that volunteers could use out of office hours. Otherwise volunteers would not feel confident to undertake volunteering at such times.

Therefore, there is a phone number that every volunteer can ring, no matter what time of day or night and get the particular issue resolved. In practice, it is very rarely used, because people respect it. All volunteers have a list of staff and trustees home phone numbers. Particular contacts are designated for particular days/times, but in the event these are not contactable, volunteers can use any of the other contacts on the list.

A range of other support is provided to volunteers including one to one support & supervision contacts (at least monthly), regular social activities, annual reviews, a bi-monthly newsletter and bi-monthly Team news sheet, access to 1-1 individual developmental reviews, learning portfolio support and references relating to individuals volunteering at Home Start.

Notes



Involvement and recognition

Volunteering organisations whose aim is to recruit volunteers from socially excluded groups need to have measures in place to involve the volunteers in their work and also to ensure that their efforts do not go unrecognised. This will benefit volunteers because it will enable them to maximise the benefits of volunteering, and it will also benefit the organisation because it will contribute positively to volunteer retention rates and help to sustain good quality service provision. A number of aspects appear to be critical to the success of a policy of involvement and recognition.

- The intention to seek to involve volunteers should be reflected in organisational policies and procedures;
- Recognising the efforts of volunteers;
- Involving volunteers in decision-making;
- Clarity about relationships.

Picture

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The intention to include volunteers should be reflected in policies and procedures.

It is essential the commitment of the volunteering organisation is clear to volunteers and staff alike from the outset. It is implicit in this approach that there are no breaches of such policies or procedures as this would quickly undermine the trust of the volunteers.

Carlisle CSV incorporates their intention to involve volunteers in their policies and procedures in relation to, for example, agreements, assessments, and retention.

1



Volunteer Centre Carlisle is conscious of the value of involving volunteers and this is reflected in a range of practices and procedures such as Volunteer Agreements, which set out the organisation's commitment to its volunteers and to involving them in the general life of the organisation.

Volunteer get togethers are also organised that provide an opportunity for volunteers to come together socially, to share experiences, ideas and help to make volunteers feel part of a team.

Recognising the efforts of volunteers

It is essential not just to recognise the efforts of volunteers, but also to try to find ways of doing this that will be valued by those volunteers. A wide range of methods are used and it is likely that a combination of these will work best. These might range from direct feedback to an individual, to collective recognition of a group of volunteers through a newsletter or award.

Age Concern in North Tyneside uses official publications such as newsletters to publicise and recognise volunteer achievements, while *Age Concern Gateshead* attributes good retention rates for volunteers to the range of policies and actions that are designed to ensure that volunteers are always aware of how much they are valued.

1



ACNT's Annual Review pays tribute to the 26,350 hours of work provided by 277 volunteers aged from under twenty one to over seventy five.

All of the services and activities offered by **Age Concern North Tyneside (ACNT)** are underpinned by volunteers who play a crucial role in the work. It is vital to the success of ACNT that the volunteers who give their time freely are duly recognised. ACNT ensures this is the case in a wide range of ways:

- *A Volunteer Handbook* - contains much information for volunteers, and the general theme underlines how valued they are by ACNT;
- *General recognition in official publications* - ACNT's Annual Review pays tribute to the 26,350 hours of work provided by 277 volunteers aged from under 21 to over 75, and stated that much of its work could not be done without them and their support;
- *Media coverage* - many of ACNT's volunteering activities receive positive coverage in the local media;
- *Keep volunteers informed* - one of the ways that ACNT does this is with a Volunteers' Newsletter, as well as notices about specific subjects, such as volunteering and state benefits;
- *Awards to individuals* - the use of certificates to mark individual achievement, for example, at ACNT certificates and commemorative pins are awarded for long service;
- *Social events* - for volunteers recognises contributions from volunteers and provides opportunities for them to mix with staff and trustees;
- *Personal marks of recognition* - examples of this at ACNT include remembering birthdays, and a diary and card at Christmas;
- *Routine processes* - ACNT undertake evaluation exercises that are highly thought of by the volunteers;
- *Representation* - volunteers are encouraged to get involved as representatives on the Board of Trustees. There are also regular Volunteer Consultative Group meetings.

2



Age Concern Gateshead attributes good retention rates for volunteers to the range of policies and actions that are designed to ensure that volunteers are always aware of how much they are valued. It is typical of their approach that birthday and Christmas cards are always sent to each volunteer. There are social events and the involvement of local dignitaries at award ceremonies. Volunteers were included with staff when the organisation was pursuing the Investors in People Award, thus linking external and internal recognition, and demonstrating high-level commitment to training.

Different ways in which the contribution of volunteers is recognised include:

- Birthday and Christmas cards;
- Thank you cards during Volunteers' Week;
- Volunteers' Christmas Party (Where staff serve and look after volunteers);
- Certificates for long service;
- Special event opportunities. For example, Princess Anne opened the Age Concern Gateshead Resource Centre in 2005 and met volunteers and clients;
- Summer day trips for volunteers, including Scarborough, York, Edinburgh and Whitby, usually during Volunteers Week (Depending upon available funding);
- Age concern regularly communicates through the organisations internal newsletter for Volunteers ('Connect'). This is sent out every two months.

Anne Marshall, the Chief Officer at Age Concern Gateshead commented:

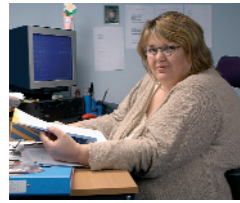
"Volunteering is crucial. The Management Committee always acknowledge that volunteers are just a complete part of the organisation."

Involving volunteers in decision-making

In some volunteering organisations more formal measures of inclusion will be appropriate, and can be a key aspect of volunteer recognition. This may include representation on the board of trustees, or indeed membership of the board. At another level it could be to give volunteers the responsibility for the design and/or operation of a project.

Gateshead Access Panel have a policy to involve volunteers at all levels in the organisation and within all appropriate programmes and activities, including the board of trustees, and can become members of the organisation with voting rights. *The Junction* takes a "bottom up" approach to policy development and training provision through the involvement of volunteers. *Student Community Action Newcastle, (SCAN)*, have a management committee made up of students who are elected at the AGM, and a traditional board of trustees that acts as an advisory group to the management committee.

1



Julie Earl
Volunteer Project Supervisor
Gateshead Access Panel

Volunteers at **Gateshead Access Panel (GAP)** are fully integrated as members of a team. GAP realises that the achievement of its goals is best served by the active participation of disabled people and people with limiting long-term illnesses. Volunteers at GAP are viewed as a valuable resource and have the right to be treated as co-workers. The volunteers are encouraged to be involved at all levels in the organisation and within all appropriate programmes and activities. Various mechanisms are in place for volunteers to share ideas and the project has developed a fully inclusive environment for volunteer involvement in all aspects of decision-making.

Key decision making structures include:

- A Board of Trustees made up of disabled people or people with limiting long-term illnesses, and who are involved on a voluntary basis. Members of the Trustee Board can become direct service volunteers within GAP;
- GAP volunteers are encouraged to take a full part in worker meetings;
- A volunteer representative, delegated from the regular volunteer meetings, attends the Board of Trustee meetings;
- Meetings between the volunteers and the volunteer coordinator to determine any decisions or issues relating to the volunteers;
- Volunteers are able to become members of the organisation and have voting rights.

2



The Junction takes a “bottom up” approach to policy development so that volunteers and clients have an input. An example of this is the recognition of the need to have a policy on the subject of sexual health. There is also a sub-committee whose function is to carry out a rolling review of policies on an annual cycle.

Accredited training provided by the Junction to all volunteers has been developed with their involvement and through their feedback. External training is also provided. Feedback from volunteers about external training also helps to develop future external training packages.

Volunteers are invited to attend all team meetings including volunteer-only meetings and are encouraged to help develop and shape the way services are delivered to young people. Volunteers influence the future work of the organisation through Annual Review and Vision Days, which are attended by all the Management Committee, staff and volunteers. Feedback from volunteers suggests that it is this inclusion and recognition that motivates them to make a long-term commitment to the project.

3



One of the principal features of **Student Community Action Newcastle, (SCAN)** is that it is a youth-led charity. The use of young people on the Management Committee is regarded as particularly important. SCAN sees this as a great opportunity for young people to develop skills and work within a team to affect changes. In practice this works as follows:

- Committee members are elected - the young person volunteer Management Committee is elected at the AGM;
- The Management Committee has full powers - the main duties and responsibilities include, strategic planning and decision making, and agreeing the budget and finances, and they are the "charity trustees" of the charity;
- Advisory group - SCAN has the benefit of a Board of Trustees drawn from the statutory, voluntary and business sectors to act as an advisory group to the Management Committee;
- Authorised signatories - bank accounts are operated by more than one person, at least two out of three authorised signatories;
- Training - members of the Committee need to be fully trained so that they understand the full range of their duties and responsibilities, and have details of key documents such as the constitution and policies;
- Regular meetings - the Committee meet regularly to discuss how SCAN should move forward, and formulate strategies to implement any changes needed.

Clarity about relationships

The relationship between volunteers and staff needs to be clearly defined for the avoidance of misunderstanding and kept to the forefront of organisational thinking. Many organisations have stressed the importance of ensuring the contribution of volunteers is recognised as of equal importance to the contribution of paid staff.

Wai Yin Chinese Women Society policy is to treat volunteers in the same way as staff, and have a number of measures in place to do this, whilst retaining a hierarchy of Director, managers, and project staff.

1



All staff, volunteers and placements are equally valued and respected and are as accessible to one another as possible.

Wai Yin Chinese Women Society seeks to totally integrate staff with volunteers and treat volunteers in the same way as paid staff. This is achieved in a number of ways. For example:

- The recruitment / induction process has a very strong lean towards making sure that the new volunteer really feels part of the 'Wai Yin Family'. Whilst the organisation does have a hierarchy of Director, Managers, Project Staff, Assistant Staff in the organisation structure, all staff, volunteers and placements are equally valued and respected and are as accessible to one another as possible. It is evident from volunteers and the various student placements and New Deal work placements that Wai Yin take on, that this atmosphere makes the organisation a place people want to work in;
- By placing volunteers (in the most part) within a particular service area, each volunteer is able to build a close working relationship with a small team of staff. This helps to build trust and confidence;
- Volunteers have the opportunity to participate in the Volunteer Working Group, which aims to meet once a month to discuss any issues arising and to keep policies and procedures up to date. The Volunteer Working Group presents its report to the organisation's Centre Meetings (all staff meetings happen once a month).

Notes



8

Effective management

The effective management of volunteering organisations is exemplified in many ways by different projects, but a common critical element of all successful volunteering projects is good leadership.

The particular challenges presented in relation to recruitment and support of volunteers from socially excluded backgrounds demands innovative approaches, an understanding of different volunteer needs, an ability to learn lessons from elsewhere and the need to develop and implement effective procedures within the context of stringent financial constraints. A dynamic leadership that can help inspire and motivate both paid staff and volunteers to meet these challenges is essential.

Other aspects of good practice in relation to effective management arrangements within volunteering organisations include.

- Clear policies and procedures;
- Practical methods for measuring performance in terms of impact and outcomes;
- Appropriate management information and records of volunteers;
- Effective working relationships with clients.



"Managing volunteers does not begin and end with management skills. At Changemakers, our Active Citizens strand of work brings to life the realities of volunteering; supporting young people in accessing the right kind of support and development to enable them to become passionate and engaged citizens. As managers we have the exciting opportunity to identify and recognise the strengths of people from different socio economic and cultural backgrounds and integrate their existing strengths to overcome needs in our communities. Matching a volunteer's passions, interests and values to create active citizens and inspired, effective communities - what an enviable role to have!"

Claire Aylett
Director
Changemakers

Clear policies and procedures

It is critical to the success of volunteering organisations that they can demonstrate that they have formally assessed and considered operational issues and that these are set out in a clear set of policies and procedures accessible to all groups of volunteers.

The *Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre Cornwall* state that the nature of the work means that it is essential that their policies are clear, and in certain subject areas a written policy is necessary for legal or contractual reasons. *The Volunteer Centre Westminster* have a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders into roles involving vulnerable clients.

1



The **Women's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre in Cornwall, (WRSAC)**, delivers accessible, reliable, and effective support services for women who have experienced rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence.

The nature of the work of the Centre means that it is essential that its policies are clear and accessible to all volunteers. The main features of these policies are as follows:

- In certain subject areas a written policy is necessary for legal or contractual reasons, e.g. health and safety at work, equal opportunities, fire safety;
- In other subject areas the policies are developed for operational reasons and to do with the nature of the work of the Centre, for example, policies on expenses, confidentiality, grievance and disciplinary matters;
- Each policy clearly sets out what it aims to do, for example, the overall aim of the health and safety policy is to describe WRSAC's way of working in relation to personal safety, including the safety of service users, volunteers, and staff who work in the organisation;
- Policies need to be part of everyday working, so for example at WRSAC policies are issued and addressed throughout the volunteer training course.

2



The centre has developed policies and procedures that are used both internally and also as examples of good practice in training courses for other organisations.

Due to the nature of some of the volunteer roles at **Volunteer Centre Westminster**, rigorous risk assessment has identified the need for (Criminal Record Bureau) CRB checks in some areas. The Centre became a CRB Umbrella body in 2004, which enables the organisation to carry out disclosure checks in-house. The Centre has since developed policies and procedures that are used both internally and also as examples of good practice in training courses for other organisations. This includes material relating to recruitment and selection and involving those with learning difficulties.

The Volunteer Centre Westminster policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders into roles involving Vulnerable Clients indicates that at interview, or in a separate discussion, the Centre will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position.

The policy makes it clear that having a criminal record will not necessarily bar applicants from working with the Centre, but this will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and the background of offences involved.

As part of the recruitment/appointment process, Volunteer Centre Westminster will consider:

- Whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- The seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviours or other relevant matter;
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and by the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person;
- Whether the applicant is banned from working with children.

The above policy is used in conjunction with the Volunteer Centre Westminster Disclosure Service Policy Statement

Practical methods for measuring performance in terms of impact and outcomes

Committed organisations will have set out their aims clearly, and the resources they need to be able to deploy. They will have a systematic approach to operational record keeping. Collectively these measures enable the organisation to conduct the critical task of assessing impact on the communities they serve, and the outcomes for individual volunteers and beneficiaries.

Refugee Action's Horizon Project has recognised the importance of a formal evaluation process and has adopted a number of approaches in order to achieve this. *BOST* is an example of a project with a strong evaluation culture.

1



Refugee Action's Horizon Project has recognised the importance of a formal evaluation of its activities. From March to June 2006 the Project commissioned an evaluation of the outcomes and benefits of the Horizon's project for clients and voluntary organisations.

A number of different approaches were used to hear from clients, placement organisations and members of the Project team. These included interviews, questionnaires and focus groups, which explored the client's experience, the benefits they have gained from volunteering and their perspectives of the Project.

The results of the evaluation demonstrate:

- A significant and positive impact on the lives of refugees and asylum seekers;
- That the Project has achieved the expected outcomes for clients;
- A significant impact for the voluntary organisations with which it has placed clients.

The evaluation concluded that Horizons has much to offer enriching the lives of its clients, raising awareness, supporting organisational change and making an important contribution to the local voluntary community through the volunteering resource it provides.

2



Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) has a strong culture of evaluating its outcomes, and sometimes even the impacts of its projects. The main features of the approach adopted by BOST are:

- *Clarity of aims and objectives* - this is necessary to provide benchmarks for evaluation purposes. At BOST these are first embodied in policies, procedures and business planning, then developed at a more detailed level specific to a project or activity;
- *Objectivity* - evaluation of projects and activities that are concerned with public open spaces is an opportunity to account for feedback from relevant organisations;
- *Spreading and developing expertise* - BOST has carried out evaluation of its own work and has previously been commissioned by the Pool of London Partnership and the ODPM to carry them out on community involvement in park projects;
- *Review the process* - because BOST is a community based organisation aimed at fulfilling the needs of local people, it is continually critical of its performance and impact and aims to collect information wherever possible to refine this;
- *Cost recovery* - wherever possible, BOST includes the cost of evaluation in any new major project before embarking on that project.

BOST also runs special workshops and events for schools and community groups, and an after-school club for children.

Appropriate management information and records of volunteers

A commitment to generate management information is a critical factor for any organisation that wishes to function effectively and efficiently. Similarly a commitment to keeping good personnel records is a critical feature of a well run organisation. These management information systems are also an important aspect of support for individual volunteers.

Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project has a process for ensuring that their aims are being achieved through monitoring and evaluating activities. *Bolton Lads and Girls Club* has developed a bespoke computerised system for maintaining records of volunteers. The Project has demonstrated this database system to other mentoring providers, who have visited the project and they have been impressed with the high level of information, statistics and records kept.

1



Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP) has sought to ensure that its aims were being achieved through monitoring and evaluation activities. Wide-ranging methods of evaluation have been employed by BUCFP to aid future planning and thus improve the quality of services including:

- Project worker's reports;
- Course feedback;
- Specific evaluation reports on individual projects e.g. creative writing project;
- A suggestions box;
- An annual user survey;
- Anecdotal evidence;
- Development plan reviews;
- Individual case studies;
- User participation in projects and other associated statistics;
- Monitoring of complaints.

Furthermore, collaboration with the University of Brighton will expand the work on evaluation to include:

- Tracking;
- Focus groups;
- Producing a report to evidence success criteria on recruitment and retention of volunteers.

BUCFP provides a full annual report of its activities and good practices every year. These can be viewed at: bucfp.org/about-us/report.htm

2



At **Bolton Lads and Girls Club** comprehensive records of volunteers are maintained through a database recording and management information system. This is a bespoke development based on a Microsoft Access platform.

The database system records all the information relating to the volunteer mentors. This includes personal information about all volunteers including when CRB checks are undertaken, reference checks, interviews and source of enquiry. The database then records all elements of each individual's induction and training package and highlights sessions that the volunteers may have missed for whatever reason. As a volunteer mentor is matched with a young person this information is recorded on the database together with every meeting date the mentor has with their assigned young person. Every contact Bolton Lads and Girls Club have with the mentor is recorded, together with a brief overview of the conversation.

Bolton and Lads Girls Club can view at a glance all contact made with the mentor, how often they are meeting their mentee, what training they require and when their supervisions have occurred and are next due.

Karen Edwards, the Mentoring Project Manager at Bolton Lads and Girls Club, underlined the importance of the database to the operation of the mentoring project:

"It's an Access database system that our project administrator has developed and created and it is the backbone to everything we do."

"When you think about the type of young people we are working with that have been referred maybe from a child protection committee or from the Youth offending team these are very vulnerable young people and we would expect nothing less than to be able to get hold of our mentors who are working one to one with them, touch base with them, find out how the meeting went, provide some support over the telephone and then be able to liaise back with the social worker or the teacher or whoever about how the relationship is going. All that information is input directly onto the database. Every contact we have we can view at the touch of a button to look at the whole relationship of how that young person and mentor have worked together"

Effective working relationships with clients

Clients are individual service users or beneficiaries, or other organisations that are helped or supported by the volunteering organisation. Commitment by the volunteering organisation to work with clients is critical in a number of ways, including a common understanding of what outcomes are intended, and eliciting helpful inputs from the client.

The Hull Volunteer Centre has taken the lead role in developing the Compact Volunteering Code of Practice within the local Compact. Bolton Lads and Girls Club has a highly developed referrals system, working closely with a variety of agencies and organisations.

1



The objective is to create a level playing field and ensure that services are delivered in the best possible way to meet the needs of local people.

Local Compacts are agreements between local government, local public bodies and voluntary and community sectors, which are designed to address the more enduring problems facing communities, clarify respective roles and generally improve partnership working between sectors.

Hull CVS has taken the lead role in developing the Compact Volunteering Code of Practice within the local Compact, consulting with volunteer involving organisations in the voluntary and public sectors.

All literature is designed to include people from the widest variety of backgrounds and abilities, with literature in other languages and formats to suit different needs.

The Compact for Hull is an agreement intended to provide a framework for developing effective relationships between the public and voluntary and community sectors in the city of Hull. Its objective is to create a level playing field and ensure that services are delivered in the best way possible and to the needs of local people.

The Compact has been drawn up in partnership, following extensive consultation between the public and voluntary and community sectors in Hull. The Compact is deliberately not exhaustive, but recognises the diversity of the voluntary and community sector and its activities. It is both a general framework and an enabling mechanism that enhances the relationship between the public and voluntary and community sectors.

The Compact has been supported by five codes of practice, covering:

- Funding and procurement;
- Consultation and Policy Appraisal;
- Volunteering;
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) voluntary and community organisations;
- Community groups.

1



Bolton Lads and Girls Club has established a highly developed referral system and no longer needs to promote the project to encourage referrals.

Bolton and Lads Girls Club now work closely with a variety of agencies and organisations that refer young people to the project who are experiencing difficulties of whatever nature. These agencies include social services, youth offending teams, schools, youth service, connexions, CAMHS and parents. A growing number of young people are even referring themselves. Karen Edwards, the Mentoring Project Manager at Bolton Lads and Girls Club, outlined their approach towards referrals:

"We don't have a specific criteria anymore for referrals. Basically our referral criteria is around whether a young person would benefit from one to one support from a volunteer mentor for whatever reason and whatever the issue is, then we will do our utmost to find an appropriate mentor to work with that youngster. So that might be around issues around substance misuse, youth offending or it may be around bullying within school or family breakdown. We have a wide ranging group of young people and therefore we need a wide ranging group of volunteers to be able to have the best matching process in place."

Notes

Inspiring volunteers

Inspiring volunteers is at the very heart of the GoldStar programme. It's amazing how much potential can be tapped into by reaching people from socially excluded groups who would not normally put themselves forward for volunteering work. Some of their stories are incredible. All are made possible by the GoldStar good practice critical success factors that enabled them to become volunteers and enhance their own lives as well as those of others.

And for each of them, there are many more inspiring stories out there waiting to happen.



"I know how hard it can be when there's nobody you can turn to. It's amazing how one act of kindness can change your life for the better. In my case voluntary work has also made me lots of new friends. For the first time in my life, it has made me feel part of the community."

Ahmed Shazad
Cheetham Hill Advice Centre
Volunteer and Manchester Young Citizen of the Year

1



"Spider's story shows that volunteering can give your life new purpose. That's why our Building Bridges project exists. We enable disabled people and those needing mental health support to explore volunteering opportunities. Then we build bridges between them and the volunteer recruiting organisations. For the volunteers, our whole set up is geared to understanding and facilitating their needs throughout the process - from initial meeting, identifying skills and building confidence to finding the best project and supporting them through it. Building Bridges provides individual opportunities for individual people."

Vashti Moss Development Worker
Volunteer Centre Tameside

2 years ago, Spider was pronounced dead. Now he's breathing new life into the community.

On his 40th birthday, Spider drank all day and died of an overdose that night. It was the culmination of an alcohol and depression problem that had lasted for some years. Fortunately, he was found by his wife and almost miraculously revived in hospital. Through a combination of rehab and mental health care, Spider began the long slow road to recovery. At times, he couldn't even leave the house without trembling and throwing up. Determined to make the most of his second chance in life, he asked the job centre about volunteering. They put him in touch with the Building Bridges project at Tameside Volunteer Centre. Apprehensive, but excited by the excellent choice of projects, Spider chose the Canal Boat Society because he knew the canal ways well from childhood and it was close to the sanctuary of home if anxiety set in. Three hours a week soon became a full time passion as Spider became more and more fascinated by the work of restoring barges using traditional craftsmanship and materials. As well as rejuvenating these elegant longboats and co-ordinating the volunteers, Spider sails them around the waterways to regional events, stopping en route at local homes to collect goods for the charity shop. Having recently qualified as a Drug and Alcohol Abuse Support Worker, he's also able to help others to get through problems he encountered himself. It's all been a revelation as he admits:

"It's as if I'd emptied half my brain and was given the chance to fill it again. By supporting me through every stage of my involvement, The Volunteer Centre and staff have restored my confidence, made me loads of new friends, given my life a new purpose and helped me spread the word about our wonderful waterways!
"

Spider is now hoping to teach barge restoration and save a dying art. Just as he was saved as a dying man.

2



"Rachael came to us through the Zero Project which targeted volunteers from hard to reach groups through zero tolerance of discrimination. She has benefited from all kinds of help we offer from focussed training and clear goals to rewarding effort and helping our volunteers with career development. By giving so much back and taking the key messages of volunteering and befriending to a wider audience, Rachael has more than paid back the good practice that we put in."

Suzy Messenger Project Director
121 Youth Befriending

Rachael could get almost any job. Her choice was to get people into volunteering.

Volunteering wasn't the first thing on Rachael Dublin's mind as a sixteen year old receptionist. However, having returned to education and achieved a degree in Social Policy and Administration, it soon became her vocation. Whilst at University, Rachael saw the need to give time and effort to help disaffected young people. Together with a friend she set up and ran an entire youth project, involving an X factor talent competition and lots of activities, career talks and presentations. By cashing in favours and handing out flyers, they pulled it off on a shoestring student budget. Motivated by the experience, Rachael decided to offer her talents to the voluntary sector, where she could not only contribute personally but also help spread the word, to others. Working for Medway CVS as a Training Co-ordinator, Rachael heard that 121 Youth Befriending needed BME volunteers. She soon became a voluntary befriender on the Zero Project, helping troubled youngsters to rebuild their confidence through mentoring and social activities. Then a vacancy as Project Co-ordinator came up and Rachael grabbed it with both hands. It gives her the chance not only to recruit volunteers and match them up with clients but also to go out and sell the benefits of volunteering to young people. Going a step further, Rachael is also taking a course to be a Voluntary Sector Ambassador, so she can promote volunteering to the youth market as a career of choice as she explains:

"I want to get young people volunteering as active citizens and realise it's not just a nice, middle-aged, middle-class pursuit. If there's an issue you care about, volunteering is a way to do something about it. It also changes your views, boosts your confidence and shows what can be done. In fact the only barrier to volunteering is yourself!
"

It's a strong message and one that won't be missed by anyone meeting Rachael Dublin.

3



"Ambassadors like Ralph are essential for recruiting senior volunteers. Nothing motivates recruits more than their own peer group. Ralph and his colleagues not only encourage lonely and isolated people to see the benefits of volunteering but also feedback valuable information about the kind of activities they like to be involved in. We also train our Ambassadors in public speaking and reward them with thank you lunches- and nobody enjoys a good lunch more than Ralph!"

Carrie Smith
Project Co-ordinator Poole CVS

At 90, Ralph is no junior. But he still helps senior citizens to get more out of life.

Ralph Monk's volunteer career dates back to World War II. Posted to India, Ralph put himself forward for unpopular hospital morgue work. Declared expendable by the chief pathologist, he was kept on and saved from a dangerous front line posting. For the next 30 years, he spent much of his free time helping out in London hospitals. After various spells of driving, weighing and refreshing patients, Ralph volunteered at Guy's Hospital Dental School, where he became the live 'guinea pig' as pupils were taught how to make good dentures! Having retired to Dorset and kept up the good work, Ralph still does enough voluntary jobs to challenge someone half his age. Apart from befriending, help and care work and helping children with reading, his chief role today is on the Poole CVS Ambassador project. Ralph is one of a team of six 'senior' Ambassadors who go out into the community and recruit 250 volunteers a year, aged 55 or over. Supported by project leaders and armed with 360 possible volunteering options, Ralph offers new opportunities to older and more isolated members of the community. So why work so hard when he could deservedly rest on his laurels? Ralph explains:

“ I thought about joining lots of clubs when I retired but my favourite club is the human race. The company of others, the friendships, the pleasure of feeling needed ... what better way to fill your time? All six of us Ambassadors have lost our partners, so we've become our own family in a way. We also get lots of help and thanks from our project leaders. Who would want to give all that up? ”

For his efforts, Ralph recently received a Community Champion Gold Award from the local mayor. His biggest reward though, is still being able to do it all at ninety.

4



"Neil typifies our mission to encourage and enthuse young people who might not normally come forward. We get them involved straight away in fun projects and encourage their ideas. That's why someone like Neil has been able to do amazing things like running a radio station. We also reward volunteers and get lots of PR. While Neil has starred at conferences and enjoyed lots of curry nights, other volunteers have even made it to meet the Queen and Tony Blair."

Rebecca Leary
Active Youth Project Worker VODA

Neil wants to improve his job prospects. So he's doing a great job helping the local community.

The North Tyneside Active Youth Project could have been named in honour of Neil Watson. He must be the most active youth in North Tyneside. Undeterred by Asperger's syndrome or the challenge of finding a job, Neil tackles every challenge life throws at him with energy and enthusiasm. In between contemporary dance classes in the week and cheering on his beloved Whitley Bay FC at weekends, Neil crams in a whole raft of voluntary projects that help the local community while helping him to build his credentials for full time work. Having entered the volunteer world by helping out at Newcastle's Discovery Museum, Neil quickly realised that meeting and talking to new people enhanced his social skills and increased his confidence. Since signing up for the Active Youth Project, he's done everything from whale watching, bird watching and gardening for the elderly to setting up (and hosting a show on) an online radio station called Youth Voice FM. Fired up by the confidence of hundreds of volunteering hours, Neil had the courage to do stand-up comedy at an awards event he helped organise. He was also prepared to get up at a conference and give a talk about bullying and how to combat it. His drawer full of certificates includes a 12 week Princes' Trust course and he's currently finishing off a three month job seekers programme based at South Shields YMCA. It's all part of a cunning plan, as he explains:

“ It's great having experience and certificates. It means I can brag to people in a suit. Because people at VODA have helped me, I'm able to help other people. I don't worry about making mistakes. I can go somewhere instead of staying at home. I can attempt everything. ”

And knowing Neil, he probably will.

5



"WinG is an inclusive programme supporting women like Neelam to take part in local democracy. It enables those from hard to reach groups to become valued decision makers in the community. Reaching volunteers is critical, which is why we take our message to the grass roots. The quality and empathy we offer in training are also key in helping our volunteers to build self-confidence, experience and ultimately careers. The more Neelams we can help, the better."

Jane Booth
Training and Development
WinG project

Neelam went through war, famine, exile and depression. But it didn't stop her becoming a school governor.

Born into a privileged family in Kenya, Neelam Baksh enjoyed an idyllic childhood. Then it was all cut short with war and political turmoil forcing her family into exile in Uganda. Later, things went from bad to worse as Neelam battled to protect her own young family from financial hardship, famine and direct murder threats in their home. Fleeing to England, she resettled her family but suffered badly from depression. She desperately wanted a job but couldn't get one because her schooling had ended abruptly at fifteen, with no qualifications. Fortunately, a fellow parent at her children's school knew that Neelam spoke several languages and asked her to come in and help immigrant children with their literacy. Keen to offer her skills, Neelam soon established a Womens' Friendship Group to help ethnic mothers improve their language skills and integrate into the community. Then she heard about The Women in Governance (WinG) project in Richmond that helps women from socially deprived backgrounds to train for decision making roles in the local community. The people at WinG not only gave Neelam confidence and training but also taught her new IT and business skills that she'd never had the chance to learn.

“ Through WinG, I've met people who have inspired me and encouraged me to value my own opinion. Because I know what it feels like to be excluded, I don't want it to happen to others. If you can do something that makes a difference, it makes your life feel worthwhile. ”

Now she has completed her training and become a school governor, Neelam can actively influence important decisions that affect the people she helps. She's living proof that no qualifications are no barrier to personal success.

6



"Helping positive thinkers like Earl is the whole point of our Offenders Re-Settlement Scheme. We try to create a seamless transition to employment by seeing offenders months before their release date and finding them suitable and vocational experience from a range of over 200 voluntary organisations on our books. As well as finding them work, we'll help in many other areas such as interview techniques and CV building. This is much more than conventional community work for offenders. It's volunteering with job pathway experience."

Andrew Croxford
Re-Settlement Scheme Manager
Kensington & Chelsea Volunteers

Earl found himself under lock and key. So he started opening doors to a better life.

One bad decision changed Earl's life. Having had a series of jobs, he ran out of work and luck and into the wrong people. As a result, Earl found himself at the wrong end of a seven year prison sentence. With time to think, he decided to turn the negative into a positive and use the experience to make more of himself. Inspired by the dream of starting his own removals business, Earl got busy studying Numeracy, English and Business Studies. He also got his HGV and Fork Lift licences. As a model inmate, he won a place at a more 'open' unit and is about to study Computerised Accounts. To help his job prospects, Earl also started volunteering through Volunteer Centre Kensington and Chelsea's Offender Re-Settlement scheme. Asked to work for 20 days at Furnish - a charity store for donating and re-allocating furniture to the needy, Earl has already clocked up 4 months there. He soon became a valued member of the team and trustworthy enough to drive the van on its rounds and have his own team. The work has increased his parole prospects, gained glowing references for job interviews and taught him valuable lessons about running a business. Perhaps most important of all, it's given Earl back his self-respect, as he explains.

“ When I started here I thought that everyone would label me but they only judge me on what they saw and it feels fantastic to be both trusted and valued. I'm really determined to do everything I can to run my own business and this is helping me big time. I know that if I keep trying, a door will open somewhere. ”

Earl has certainly learned a lot from his time behind closed doors. Thanks to volunteering and determination, he certainly holds the key to future success.

7



"Why do we attract people like Angela? I think its because we have a clear goal of global equality and we give all our volunteers the chance to develop their own solutions to it. It's easy to take part, which is a big plus for our many new recruits from the developing world. There's also lots of opportunities to learn new skills, be creative and put good thinking into practice. Like everyone else, Angela has an equal voice here and gets herself heard."

Viv Regan Assistant Director
WORLDwrite

Angela wanted to help her fellow Africans. So she came to England and volunteered.

If you want to put the world to rights, join WORLDwrite. That's certainly the message that Angela Kolongo got when she attended her first evening at the Hackney based global equality charity. Arriving in England from Nairobi (via schooling and community service work in Moscow), Angela wanted to combine volunteering with her University studies. Coming from a developing country, Angela knew how life can be there and wanted to make a difference. Invited to an introduction evening, Angela was impressed by the creativity of the young volunteers from ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups, particularly films they had made to highlight the African plight. Initially helping out with administration, promotion and publicity, Angela has been able to join a film-making project at the Centre. Totally planned and conceived by the volunteers, the film project is based on the Kipling poem The White Man's Burden and how the notion of helping the third world has failed to move with the times. As well as helping to get the right messages across to the right people, the project has given Angela training in film and editing that will help her future career. Keen to encourage other new young recruits from diverse backgrounds, she is also helping to review the barriers to volunteering and how they can be overcome. Helping others has also helped Angela in other ways, as she explains:

“ At WORLDwrite, volunteers are given the freedom to develop their own ideas and projects, not just given tasks to do. So you feel that you are helping to change the world through your own achievements. It's also wonderful to work with others who are as passionate about the same things as I am. ”

Having already come a long way to volunteer, it looks like Angela has the intention of going a lot further.

8



"Robert would be the first to admit that volunteering gives him something interesting and worthwhile to do. With our Yu-Act project, we've tried very hard to break down the negative stigma of volunteering by making it relevant and exciting to young people. It's easy to join, easy to find a project you enjoy and easy to make friends whilst helping others. We also work closely with Youth Offending organisations and local signpost hostels, which is how Robert found us."

Laura Barrie Project Worker
CSV Volunteering Partners

Robert used to be a joyrider. Now he brings joy to everyone who meets him.

Robert Day didn't have the easiest time as a teenager. Already suffering from mild learning disabilities and getting into trouble for joyriding, Robert then lost his Mum to illness. Finding himself in a Stage 1 hostel for homeless people, Robert was determined to make a fresh start. A staff member at the hostel put him in touch with Laura Barrie at CSV Millennium Volunteers and since then Robert has never looked back. Laura invited Robert to participate in the Yu-Act scheme which gives hard-to-reach young people a taster of voluntary work without all the usual entry forms and red tape. Discovering that (apart from his beloved Man United), Robert had a passion for gardening, Laura enrolled him in GroundWork, a scheme for restoring the garden and pond at a local school. Robert not only put in more time than anyone else but was also awarded a special certificate by the school. Since then, he's become a fully fledged CSV Millennium volunteer, moved into a more independent hostel and now introduces other new recruits through Yu-Act's open door policy. Up for most things and quick to make new friends, Robert has done everything from helping at the local Carnival and a Family Fun Roadshow to cleaning out the chimps at Whipsnade Zoo. He's even dressed as a monkey himself to hand out bananas to passers-by! Monkeying aside, all this activity seriously suits Robert, as he explains:

“ I was fed up with being in trouble. It's difficult getting a job and I needed something better to fill my time. Being a volunteer has made me lots of mates, improved my life and hopefully it will help me get a job I really want as a gardener. The people, like Laura, are really nice too. ”

Laura must have heard that bit. She's just signed Robert up for a week's residential course in conservation and she's promoting him to volunteering Ambassador. Laura must have heard that bit. She's just signed Robert up for a week's residential course in conservation and she's promoting him to volunteering Ambassador.



"WinG is an inclusive programme supporting women like Neelam to take part in local democracy. It enables those from hard to reach groups to become valued decision makers in the community. Reaching volunteers is critical, which is why we take our message to the grass roots. The quality and empathy we offer in training are also key in helping our volunteers to build self-confidence, experience and ultimately careers. The more Neelams we can help, the better."

Carol Hodgson
Volunteering & Befriending Manager
Age Concern North Tyneside

Alpha is stateless. But he has real status as a volunteer.

Alpha Diallo's story is both heartbreaking and heart warming. Aged just 18, he left his native Guinea and ended up in England. He knew nobody and spoke no English. His first night was spent in a London police station. After 3 weeks, he was suddenly despatched to Newcastle. Fortunately, he quickly made friends who found him accommodation and helped him to integrate. Needing to survive, he took English lessons at college. Needing a skill, he also took up IT. In spite of never having sat at a computer before, he sailed through his courses at astonishing speed. Within two years he had many qualifications and was volunteering at the Drop In centre in Gateshead, helping people with IT problems. Ever since, Alpha has been using his 'techno' talents to help the community and he's in great demand. His full time range of volunteering jobs includes 3 days a week for Age Concern, helping the elderly to learn IT and keep in touch with the world by email. Viewed cautiously at first, his sunny nature and friendly respect for older people soon made him Tyneside's most popular 'adopted' grandson! Frustrated at still having no status after 7 years (which means he can't get a paid job or marry his English fiancée) he would still rather give freely of his time and knowledge as a volunteer than dwell upon his misfortune, as he explains:

“ I came here and was amazed how friendly and supportive people can be if you make the effort to mix with them. It's great to be able to give something back to a community that has made me feel so welcome. In spite of the status issue hampering my progress, volunteering has been a great way to prove myself whilst helping others. ”

Alpha's story is living proof that those who start with nothing, are still capable of giving something.

Volunteering links

do-it.org.uk was launched in 2001 and is a national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK. www.do-it.org.uk

Queens Award is a new, annual Award to recognise and reward excellence in voluntary activities carried out by groups in the community www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk

The GoldStar Programme is a national initiative designed to encourage and enable voluntary organisations and projects throughout England to realise the potential of volunteers, mentors and befrienders from socially excluded or disadvantaged groups. www.goldstar.org.uk

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation aims to ensure that mentoring and befriending are at the centre of current and future national volunteering strategies. Through the promotion of standards and a range of support structures and services, the Foundation aims to provide a quality experience for the volunteer and a successful outcome for mentees and befriendees www.mandbf.org.uk

The Office of the Third Sector leads work across government to support a thriving third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals), enabling the sector to campaign for change, deliver public services, promote social enterprise and strengthen communities. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/volunteering.aspx

Vinspired, is a site dedicated to volunteering for 16-25 year-olds in England www.vinspired.com

Volunteering England is England's volunteer development agency, which works to support and increase in the quality, quantity, impact and accessibility of volunteering throughout England. www.volunteering.org.uk

www.goldstar.org.uk

Promoting good practice in
managing volunteers from
socially excluded groups

GoldStar

