



**RESEARCH
REPORT**

Final Report

The costs, barriers and
benefits of involving
volunteers from under-
represented groups

June 2010

Produced by:

CSV Consulting (Community Service Volunteers) in collaboration
with PERU (Policy Evaluation and Research Unit) at MMU
(Manchester Metropolitan University)



Authorship

This report was researched and written by Arnie Wickens and Sophie Earnshaw of CSV Consulting and Professor Chris Fox and Dr. Kevin Albertson of Manchester Metropolitan University.

Publication date: June 2010
© Commission for the Compact

The text in this document may be reproduced free of charge in any format or media without requiring specific permission. This is subject to it not being used in a derogatory manner or in a misleading context. The source must be acknowledged as copyright of the Commission for the Compact.



RESEARCH REPORT

The costs, barriers and benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups

Contents

Foreword by Sir Bert Massie CBE	3	Appendices - case studies	
Executive summary	4	1. RAMFEL Barking and Dagenham	52
Introduction	6	2. RNID Cornwall	56
Literature review	8	3. BTCV Durham	60
Summary of methodology	10	4. CSV East Riding	64
General observations	17	5. Medway NHS Trust	68
Potential costs of involving VURGs	21	6. Envision Newham	72
Summary of actual costs analysis	22	7. Inspire Nottingham	76
Principle barriers for VURGs	33	8. Greater Manchester Police, Oldham Division	81
Main barriers for organisations involving VURGs	36	9. DIAL-Solihull	85
Overcoming barriers to involving VURGs	41	10. Home-Start Mid Suffolk	89
Main benefits of involving VURGs	43		
Main benefits to volunteers	45		
Recommendations	48		
Acknowledgements	50		







Foreword

by Sir Bert Massie CBE,
Commissioner for the Compact

As a long-time campaigner for equal opportunities and rights for disabled people, I know that volunteering is an empowering experience for people who might otherwise be marginalised, excluded or discriminated against. The Compact is absolutely clear that nobody should be barred from volunteering, whatever their age, sexuality, disability, race, gender, religion or family situation.

This research is important in setting out, not only some benchmarks of the real costs of volunteering to organisations which involve disadvantaged groups, but also the massive benefits which accrue to organisations in bringing a range of people on board. The phenomenon of the “diversity dividend” is recognised across the private sector, as banks, law firms and other major private sector employers try to widen the variety of people in their workforce – why shouldn’t that be true of the voluntary sector?

This research is a starting point, illustrating how the Compact principle that volunteering should be open to all can be made to work in practice. Further, the Compact requires organisations to work actively to give opportunities to volunteers from under-represented groups. The case study examples, which show organisations overcoming barriers of cost and attitude to open their doors to diverse volunteers, are particularly inspiring. But it should also be a wake-up call to funders, showing the real costs to organisations of involving people from under-represented groups. I call upon funders, even in these straightened times, to show that they mean business when they say they want diverse volunteering opportunities. The extra support, training and investment in facilities this requires do not come for free, but the benefits are significant.

I hope this report, released in Volunteers Week 2010, is a useful contribution to the debate on how we make volunteering truly open to all.





Executive summary

In a report published by the Commission on the Future of Volunteering in January 2008, one of the recommendations was to assist the involvement of groups who face barriers to volunteering. The under-represented groups mentioned in the report were people with disabilities, single parents and refugees and asylum seekers. In response to this recommendation, the Commission for the Compact subsequently commissioned CSV Consulting (Community Service Volunteers) working with the Applied Policy and Practice Research Unit (APPRU), now renamed as the Policy and Evaluation Research Unit at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), to investigate the costs, barriers and benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups (VURGs). The two stages of the research and their outputs were designed to deliver a robust assessment for the Commission of the ancillary costs of volunteering by under-represented groups, which will be useful for commissioners and volunteering project managers.

The first phase of the research started with a brief online literature review to identify some relevant existing studies. Ten local authorities were then selected based on a dimensional sampling frame populated with a broad range of organisations that involve volunteers. Following a stakeholder consultation session, an online survey on the costs and benefits of engaging with these volunteers was sent to a large number of organisations across the public and third sectors in the 10 local authorities. In addition to data gathered from the survey, interviews were conducted in 10 case study organisations to provide supplementary information on involving volunteers from under-represented groups and in-depth data on the costs incurred in doing so.

The survey results presented an initial assessment of the costs and benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups. The response was limited and so its results could not deliver an adequate representation of the needs and costs incurred by different types of organisations. From the case studies, a number of barriers were highlighted. Some related to cost, as well as examples of how organisations overcame particular challenges.

An interim report was produced for the Commission, published in September 2009, in which the initial major costs identified from the case studies were found to be for additional support needs for volunteers, primarily staff time to support volunteers. Other costs identified included travel expenses and resources for volunteers with certain disabilities.

In the second phase of the research, a further in-depth cost collection exercise was undertaken with a further sample of organisations. The cost analysis confirmed the findings from the first phase, showing ongoing staff costs to support volunteers from under-represented groups as the highest cost to an organisation. Principal barriers to involving these groups in volunteering were:

- Low self-esteem
- Lack of childcare provision

- Difficulty in access to volunteering
- Transport
- Criminal Records Bureau checks
- Language skills.

The majority of examples of how to overcome barriers centred on spending extra time and thought on devising suitable volunteering activities, a positive attitude and creative thinking. All of the organisations emphasised the importance of involving volunteers from under-represented groups and the benefits they bring to a service. The personal benefits to the volunteers themselves could be applied to any volunteer; however, it was the general belief that benefits gained from volunteering by these groups were of greater significance because the step into volunteering for people who are under-represented was a bigger one for them to take in the first instance. Benefits for both the organisations and the volunteers include:

- Language skills
- Specialist knowledge and experience
- Community cohesion and social inclusion
- Increased confidence
- Development of skills
- Enhanced employability.

In addition to findings from the case studies, some general observations were made by the research team. These are speculative and emerge from how the research project developed alongside an examination of the material gathered. These initial assessments discuss observations on:

- Public perception and the stereotype or stigma attached to certain under-represented groups
- The lack of flexibility and 'thinking outside the box' by organisations with regards to involving volunteers considered to be 'difficult'
- Volunteers from under-represented groups being attracted to volunteering for organisations serving people like themselves
- A generally poor level of information and rigour in equal opportunities and diversity recording and monitoring.

The final report explains all of the steps taken during the both stages of the research including a detailed methodology, the main discussion on costs, barriers and benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups, and a section outlining the revised methodology applied for the second stage. Included in the final report is a chapter giving a summary of the costs analysis detailing how the data was gathered, collated and analysed along with the findings from the quantitative analysis. This provides organisations with a reference tool for making the kinds of comprehensive calculations that they can undertake for themselves when budgeting or planning to involve volunteers from the different under represented groups that were the subject of this research.





Introduction

About the Commission for the Compact

Established in 2007, The Commission for the Compact is an independent body responsible for overseeing the Compact. It was set up to improve awareness of the Compact and to address barriers to its adoption and implementation. The Compact, originally launched in 1998, is an agreement that provides an overall framework for promoting effective partnership working between the Government and the third sector.¹

About CSV Consulting (Community Service Volunteers)

CSV is the UK's largest volunteering and training charity. Established in 1962, it involved 180,000 volunteers last year. It is a Strategic Partner of the Office of the Third Sector (OTS). CSV Consulting started in 1999 and helps organisations expand, develop or improve their volunteer programmes and the effectiveness of their volunteer management.²

About the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)

PERU specialises in applied research and evaluation for public and voluntary sector clients. Its multi-disciplinary team includes evaluators, economists and social scientists.³

Background to the research project

The Commission on the Future of Volunteering published its final report in January 2008.⁴ One of its key recommendations was that the Government should take steps to assist the involvement of groups who face barriers to volunteering. Initially, the focus of this was to be on facilitation of volunteering by disabled people, but the report envisaged that it would be extended to include 'volunteers from single parent households, refugees and asylum seekers and others who are currently less likely to volunteer.'⁵

¹ For more information see <http://www.thecompact.org.uk>

² For more information see <http://www.csv.org.uk/Services/Consultancy/>

³ For more information see <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/>

⁴ The Commission on the Future of Volunteering (2008), *Report of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering and Manifesto for Change*: http://www.volcomm.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0B8EC40C-C9C5-454B-B212-C8918EF543F0/0/Manifesto_final.pdf

⁵ Ibid

The Commission for the Compact is mindful of the fact that the involvement of under-represented groups may incur extra costs, both in engaging and supporting these volunteers. The refreshed Compact⁶, published in December 2009, states in its introduction that ‘the contribution of volunteers is one of the special characteristics of the third sector. Volunteers commit their time and energy to benefit society and communities by providing services and activities in many different ways, from acting as trustees through to active engagement.’ It states four principles as fundamental to volunteering: choice, diversity, mutual benefit, and recognition. In its commitments, the government accepts ‘the recovery of costs associated with volunteering, such as managing volunteers and reimbursing expenses’ and to ‘work with the third sector to identify and remove any barriers that prevent volunteering by people with protected characteristics.

However, there is a lack of information on the additional cost of removing barriers to, and making special arrangements for, volunteering by vulnerable groups. This project aims to contribute to the evidence base in this area.

About the research project

The Commission for the Compact commissioned CSV Consulting working with PERU at MMU to undertake research investigating and evaluating the costs and benefits of engaging volunteers from under-represented groups.

In the 2008 *Report of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering*,⁷ these groups in volunteering are defined as:

- People with disabilities
- Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants
- Single parents.

In order to aid better implementation of the commitment in line with the Compact's Volunteering Code of Good Practice, this research aims to:

- Arrive at a better understanding of the benefits and costs of engaging volunteers from under-represented groups
- Provide a basis for assessing the cost of involving volunteers from under-represented groups, which will be useful for commissioners and volunteering project managers alike.

Ten local authorities were selected from across the nine Government Office regions to be the sample areas used for the fieldwork for this project. An online survey about the costs and benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups was widely circulated to projects, organisations and services across the public and third sectors and later, detailed case studies were conducted.

⁶ The Compact on relations between Government and the Third Sector in England – 2009 - COI reference number 298441

⁷ The Commission on the Future of Volunteering (2008), *Report of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering and Manifesto for Change*: http://www.volcomm.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0B8EC40C-C9C5-454B-B212-C8918EF543F0/0/Manifesto_final.pdf





Literature review

The literature review found that there is little research on under-representation in volunteering. Although core issues have been identified, most literature concentrates only on the barriers volunteers from under-represented groups face and makes recommendations as to how challenges can be overcome or improved. There is a lack of investigation into the actual costs organisations incur when engaging people from these groups.

In 1996, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation produced a paper for Social Policy Research. In the paper 'Involving Volunteers from Under-represented Groups', five under-represented groups were identified from survey evidence, which were: young people; older people; unemployed people; disabled people; and people from black and minority ethnic communities.⁸ The study focused on the reasons why volunteers from these groups were under-represented and on how barriers could be removed by using information from organisations that had tried to address these issues. The research paper is relatively short and is chiefly a summary of the issues surrounding under-representation. The actual costs of involving volunteers from under-represented groups is not included or discussed as part of the research.

Other research tends to centre on individual under-represented groups at a time: either people with disabilities, or refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. No research paper on single parent volunteers was found in the online search. The Refugee Council, a national agency which provides advice and support to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK along with other related services, released a research report in 2007, which evaluates the volunteering opportunities provided to refugees and asylum seekers by the Refugee Council.⁹ The report does not give any costs, but it highlights the benefits both the organisation and the volunteers gained from the experience of volunteering, in particular the transition from volunteering to paid employment and increased employability by the refugees who volunteered.

Another refugee-specific study is 'A Part of Society: Refugees and asylum seekers volunteering in the UK' by Tandem Volunteering, a project that works to promote good practice in volunteering, and to encourage volunteering initiatives that involve migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and others.¹⁰ The paper investigates refugees and asylum seekers volunteering in non-refugee specific organisations. Its evidence shows that the majority of refugees and asylum seekers who volunteer do so with organisations that support and/or work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. It asserts that volunteers from this group are more inclined to participate in volunteering within their own communities. The report is based on the experiences of 10 organisations that have three or more asylum seekers or refugees volunteering for them. The 10 organisations are selected from the public and third sectors, each have a different focus and cover regions across the UK. The report focuses on the potential benefits refugees and asylum seekers can bring to non-refugee organisations and aims to encourage policy makers,

⁸ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1998), 'Involving Volunteers from Underrepresented Groups' in *Social Policy Research*, no. 105: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/sp105.pdf>

⁹ Refugee Council (2007) *An Evaluation of the volunteering opportunities provided to refugees and asylum seekers by the Refugee Council using funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundations 2004-2006*: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/OneStopCMS/Core/CrawlerResourceServer.aspx?resource=77ADCEC7-29AF-4BF8-8824-FC3ECD742504&mode=link&guid=a2103f3d85e84b1186a0684b1d198b4e>

¹⁰ Lewis, Hannah and Wilson, Ruth (2006), *A Part of Society: Refugees and asylum seekers volunteering in the UK* (London: Tandem): <http://www.tandem-uk.com/APartofSociety.pdf>

organisations and volunteer managers to do more to enable people from these communities to be involved in volunteering. The report makes recommendations on how to break down some of the common barriers that can prevent or deter refugees and asylum seekers from volunteering as well as looking at challenges a non-refugee specific organisation may face as a consequence of involving volunteers from this under-represented group. Although the report does not address the exact costs of involving volunteers from this group, it does raise the issue of access to resources, in particular the exclusion of particular groups from funding, such as asylum seekers.

On disability and under-representation of people with disabilities in volunteering, the most recent and relevant report found was 'Time to get equal in volunteering: tackling disabilism' released by Scope, a charity working for and supporting people with disabilities.¹¹ Disabilism is a term Scope introduced to describe the prejudiced and discriminatory manner in which disabled people are sometimes treated and perceived as inferior. The report examines disabilism in the voluntary sector and aims to build on previous research on the link between volunteering and social exclusion carried out by the Institute for Volunteering Research and work done on access to volunteering done by Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities. The report concentrates on the experiences of disabled volunteers and, to a lesser extent, the way organisations interact with volunteers who have disabilities.

Evidence found that similarly to the situation with refugee and asylum seeker volunteers, disabled people are more likely to volunteer for disability specific organisations rather than organisations with a different or more general focus. Difficulties of accessibility and provision for adjustments hinder volunteers with disabilities from working with some organisations. Another hurdle to volunteering is attitudes towards disability and people with disabilities. Volunteers reported that they faced prejudice in the work place and felt isolated. This problem also arises when an organisation does not realise the potential and skills of the individual and if he or she is not placed in an appropriate role. While the report is predominantly qualitative, one of the principle recommendations made is that funding for reasonable adjustments is essential in order to tackle some of the practical challenges volunteers with disabilities face.¹²

The shortage of research and literature on any actual figures relating to the costs of involving people with disabilities, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and single parents as volunteers confirms the importance of conducting detailed research investigating the actual costs incurred when involving these volunteers as well as the barriers and benefits associated with their participation.

¹¹ Scope (2006) *Time to get equal in volunteering: tackling disabilism*:
<http://www.scope.org.uk/disabilism/downloads/ttge-execsummary07-web.pdf>

¹² Ibid





Summary of methodology¹³

1. Sampling design

1.1 Local authority selection methodology

To ensure that the research achieved a geographical and representative spread across England, 10 local authorities were selected across the nine Government Office (GO) regions using selective criteria.¹⁴ One local authority per GO region and two London boroughs were selected. In order to meet other criteria for the research we required that the selected local authorities included a mix of County Councils, Unitary Authorities and Metropolitan Boroughs.

Three main criteria were taken into consideration for the local authority selection: profile classification (rural/suburban/urban); levels of deprivation; and percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population.

Rural/Urban Profile

Each local authority has a rural, suburban or urban profile with at least one local authority match per profile. The profiles were determined by Local Authority Classification introduced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in 2005.¹⁵ For inclusion in the research project, local authorities could be in one of these three categories: Urban, Suburban or Rural.

Levels of Deprivation

Levels of deprivation in the potential local authorities were used in the selection process to ensure that the local authorities spanned the socio-economic spectrum. Using the rankings of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007, local authorities were selected accordingly. The ranking is a combined deprivation score that combines various indicators covering economic, social and housing issues per Lower Super Output Area across England.¹⁶ These areas are ranked alongside each other according to their level of deprivation where one is the highest ranking (most deprived). The indices are presented in a lengthy list of local authorities and to guarantee an equal spread of local authorities of different economic and social status (i.e. deprivation in each of the local authorities range from high to low) the indices were split into quartiles. Local authorities were then selected from each quartile.¹⁷

¹³ See separate methodological paper for full details.

¹⁴ Government Office Regions are North East, North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East and South West.

¹⁵ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2008), *Rural Definition and LA Classification*: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/ruralstats/rural-definition.htm#class>

¹⁶ See Department for Communities and Local Government (2007), *Indices of Deprivation 2007*: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation07/>

¹⁷ Ibid

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population

BME population was used as one of the criterion for selection. Using figures from the National Statistics Census 2001, local authorities with different BME population percentages were chosen with some under the national average and others with a high BME population exceeding the average of nine per cent. It is important to note that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) does a census every 10 years and estimates every five years. The last census was the 2001 census and there were mid-year estimates in 2006.¹⁸ Some organisations and local authorities refer to the 2001 census, and others use the mid-2006 estimates and it was difficult to decide which statistics to apply for this research. For continuity, the research refers to the statistics taken from the 2001 census; however, eight years have lapsed since then and the demographics will have shifted. In the 2001 census, the BME population was around nine per cent, in the mid-2006 estimates, this figure had increased to approximately 13 per cent.¹⁹

Table 1: Selected local authorities and respective features.²⁰

Gov. Office Region	LA	Type of Authority	Rural / Sub-urban / Urban	IMD Quartile	BME Population
London	Newham	Borough Council	Urban	1	61%
London	Barking and Dagenham	Borough Council	Urban	1	19.1%
South West	Cornwall	County Council	Rural	1	Less than 1%
South East	Medway	Unitary Authority	Suburban	2	7.8%
West Midlands	Solihull	Metropolitan Borough Council	Urban	3	5.4%
East Midlands	Nottingham	Unitary Authority	Urban	1	19%
East of England	Suffolk	County Council	Rural	4	2.67%
Yorkshire and the Humber	East Riding of Yorkshire	Unitary Authority	Rural	3	1.22%
North East	Durham	County Council	Rural	3	1.03%
North West	Oldham	Metropolitan Borough Council	Urban	1	13.8%

1.2 Sampling frame

A table was populated comprising various organisations with a range of differently focused service areas across the public and third sectors. The main objective in creating this list was to ensure that the survey would reach all possible types of organisation in each local authority. For example, service areas such as health, social care and housing were covered in both the public and third sectors with organisations or bodies to whom the survey should be sent such as NHS Trusts, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), homelessness

¹⁸ Office for National Statistics, *2001 Census*: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/access_results.asp

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ All the percentages for BME population are based on figures from the 2001 Census. National Statistics have released mid-2006 estimates, which will indicate higher figures but as these are estimates, for this research 2001 Census results will be applied. See Office for National Statistics, *2001 Census*: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/access_results.asp



charities and charitable/social enterprise health-focused organisations. It was imperative to cover all services that may host volunteers so that on circulating the survey, all types of organisation would have the opportunity to participate in the research. Please find below an example to show how the sample frame was populated.

Table 2: Example of the sample frame with organisations and areas to cover on circulation of the survey.

Sector	Service	Type of organisation	Organisation
Public	Health	Primary tier health management services	Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), NHS Trusts
Third	Health	Mental health	Mind, Rethink, Together
Third	Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants	Advice and support	Refugee support councils, Time Together, Refugee Action

2. The survey: Questionnaire on the costs and benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups²¹

2.1 Developing the questions for the survey

The questions aimed to identify the costs that organisations and services incur when involving volunteers from under-represented groups. The questions were made deliberately detailed so that respondents would be able to answer them according to each type of under-represented volunteer. The survey questions focused mainly on costs and how much expense, if any, organisations incur when engaging with volunteers from under-represented groups.

2.2 Definitions

The three groups identified as under-represented in volunteering are very broad terms.

For the disability group, different types of disability were separated out and categorised for the survey. Particularly with disability, breaking the term down into specific categories was paramount as disability is a broad concept and encompasses a range of different types of disability, for example learning disability, hearing loss, or physical disability. Differentiating between adults, and children and young people (18 years and under), also guaranteed that respondents could associate particular costs with specific disabilities and age of

²¹ Questionnaire is reproduced in the methodological paper, available online: <http://www.thecompact.org.uk/publications/>

volunteers. For example, we can assume that the cost of a volunteer who is a wheelchair user will most likely be higher than that of a person with dyslexia or someone with a progressive health condition such as cancer. The aim of specifying all the categories covered by the term 'disability' meant that cost per type of disability could be identified more easily.

The group 'refugees, asylum seekers and migrants' was split into different categories and then further divided into adult refugee/asylum seeker/migrant and child refugee/asylum seeker/migrant. It was important to separate these as there are different potential costs and barriers for organisations that involve volunteers from each of these groups. For example, an asylum seeker may face barriers such as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks which require them to give previous addresses and often, when the person has not been in this country for a long time, an official letter and three forms of identification, which many asylum seekers will not have.

The group 'single parents' was divided into only two categories: adult single parents and children; and young single parents. In retrospect, this term should have been broken down even further into more categories. This is because the barriers a single parent may come across in volunteering will have a lot to do with the financial status of the volunteer and the support network available to that person. For example, a single parent with sufficient income and resources is more likely to be able to volunteer compared to a single parent on a low wage or benefits. Not only will wealthier single parents be able to cover childcare costs themselves, they will also be able financially to support themselves in their volunteer role. Single parent volunteers on low or no income on the other hand will find it difficult for a number of reasons, such as meeting the childcare costs, travel expenses and allocation of their time to be able to participate in voluntary work.

2.3 Stakeholder workshop

A cross section of different types of national voluntary sector organisations and representatives from public sector organisations was invited to contribute to a stakeholder workshop to validate the survey. The workshop, which was held at the Commission for the Compact office in Birmingham, focused on particular questions in the survey and on the language used for categories and terms in the research. Interactive sessions at the workshop gave participants the opportunity to provide feedback to the research team and the Commission about the whole survey and on specific questions in it that required revising. In addition to helping improve the survey, the workshop was also a useful networking opportunity for those attending.



2.4 Stakeholder list

Before circulating the survey, an extensive stakeholder list was developed which corresponded to the populated sample frame. Key contacts for organisations and services that involve volunteers in the third and public sectors were identified and recorded. To ensure that the survey would reach widely to a range of types of organisations and services, intermediary agencies were contacted and asked to circulate the questionnaire to their members and through their networks. For each selected local authority, Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) or an equivalent intermediary body agreed to forward the survey to their members; this was very helpful as it meant that the survey would reach a high number of voluntary sector organisations of various sizes and types. Contact information of relevant managers from the headquarters of national organisations was gathered and they were requested to forward it to their projects offices in the selected local authorities. Organisations running Goldstar Projects in the selected local authorities were also added as stakeholders.²²

In the public sector, local authority council officers were approached directly to ask if they would be willing to circulate the survey to those of their departments and services that involve volunteers; and those key contacts were identified.

2.5 Circulating the survey

The survey was uploaded onto a website so that respondents could answer online and submit the results automatically by return to the research department at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). Once the survey had been uploaded and tested, an email was sent to inform all the contacts from the stakeholder list that the survey was live. There was initially a two-week deadline for completion and return which was extended due to a low response rate. Reminder emails were sent to contacts and those people who were forwarding the survey to a large number of organisations were contacted directly by telephone to ensure the survey went out as planned.

2.6 Compiling the data

Results from the online survey were compiled and analysed by the PERU at MMU. The response rate was low considering the very wide circulation of the survey. This could have been due to a number of factors such as time constraints, not being relevant to an organisation, non-involvement of the specific volunteers being investigated in an organisation, not understanding the questionnaire well enough to participate, or lack of data. Follow-up with a selection of non-responders gave the main reasons for not completing the survey as being shortage of time and the decision of those who were sent the survey not to prioritise completing it. There were 46 replies in total with around half of the responses coming from one specific local authority. There is no immediately obvious reason for this.

²² 'The GoldStar Project is designed to encourage and enable voluntary organisations and projects throughout England to realise the potential of volunteers, mentors and befrienders from socially excluded groups.' Goldstar projects are funded by the Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector (2006): http://www.goldstar.org.uk/about_what_is_goldstar.html

2.7 Revising the methodology for Stage 2

In view of the limited success of the survey, the research team took action to adapt the methodology for the second stage of the research to bolster the data from the survey and ensure usable indicative costings could be developed. In this second stage, we focused on collecting further data from 12 or more project sites and gathering detailed economic data using the quantitative assessment questionnaire used in the case studies. Telephone interviews were conducted with volunteer managers/coordinators for specific organisations. The sampling of organisations was through non-random quota sampling. A review of the organisations included in the first round of fieldwork helped to identify gaps in the current research base. Coverage of different types of organisation and different groups of volunteers from under-represented groups were considered in the selection for the second phase sites. Where possible, sampling drew on organisations located in the 10 local authority areas originally selected for the research. However, the low response rate to the survey did, to some extent, undermine the value of confining research to those 10 areas. Therefore, some organisations outside of the ten areas were included. This strategy was applied where expanding the area would result in filling important gaps in the current sample.

A second important factor for adapting the methodology to be used in the second stage of the research was that the Commission's original brief required projects that were to be funded by the government's new Access to Volunteering scheme be included. By the end of Stage 1 of the research, an announcement about Access to Volunteering was still awaited from the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) and the projects to be funded had not been established, meaning that it would no longer be possible to include them in this research.²³

3. Case studies

3.1. Identifying organisations for the case studies

The next part of the process in the first stage of the research was to conduct detailed interviews with selected organisations and services that involve volunteers from under-represented groups. The purpose of the case studies was to provide illustrative examples of the added value of involving volunteers from under-represented groups, to identify detailed costs incurred by involving these volunteers, and to research the non-financial barriers to involvement. Ten organisations were identified, one from each of the selected local authorities. The criteria for selection were:

- A mixture of different sized organisations, local and national
- At least one public sector body that involves volunteers

²³ The OTS has since made an announcement and has launched a programme of grants to organisations for involving volunteers with disabilities as part of the £2 million Access to Volunteering Fund. This was developed by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office as a pilot scheme in Greater London, the West Midlands and the North West. See Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector (2009): www.accesstovolunteering.org



- At least one organisation with a Goldstar project²⁴
- At least one organisation specific to each of the under-represented groups: people with disabilities; single parents; and refugees, asylum seekers and migrants
- Each organisation or service has to involve at least one volunteer from an under-represented group
- A mixture of organisations with various focus and client groups.

3.2. Interviews

The researcher travelled to the 10 local authorities to interview people working for the organisations selected. Members of staff, volunteers and service users were interviewed on site. The staff involved in the interviews were directors, managers, or volunteer managers/coordinators. In three cases, three service users were interviewed, two of whom were service users as well as being volunteers of the organisation.

The interviews with managers consisted of two sections, the qualitative assessment of the volunteering programme and the quantitative section which aimed at gathering detailed data on costs of involving volunteers from under-represented groups. The main section of each interview focused on the extent of the organisation or projects' involvement of volunteers from under-represented groups: an overview of the organisation/programme; a description of the work of the volunteering programme; challenges for the organisation of involving volunteers from under represented groups and how they are, or were, overcome; benefits of involvement to both volunteers and the organisations. There were 32 interviews undertaken in total across the 10 organisations. The majority of interviews at an organisation were conducted on the same day except for on one occasion when the volunteer was unavailable and the researcher arranged to do a later telephone interview as an alternative.

3.3. Case study methodology

Information from the interviews including the costing data was compiled and summarised with examples included in two-three page case studies for each organisation. The case studies all follow a similar format giving an overview of the organisation and volunteering programme and outlining the reported barriers and benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups. In each case study, there is a volunteer's story or account of their volunteering experience. Please refer to appendices 1 to 10.²⁵

²⁴ See Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector (2006): http://www.goldstar.org.uk/goldstar_projects.php

²⁵ See Case Studies in Appendices 1-10



General observations

General observations about the reasons that lie behind under-representation in volunteering were noted during the course of the research and throughout the entire process of conducting the project including the development of the stakeholder list, the circulation of the survey, identifying organisations for case studies and the telephone interviews. It seemed important to draw on these observations which, although they were mainly speculative at the interim stage, did however come to call into question throughout the research the initial hypothesis that it is cost which is the principle barrier to volunteering by people from under-represented groups. These observations are not based on any one or particular type of organisation, but are drawn together from experience of conducting the research, such as the difficulty in identifying organisations that involved volunteers from under-represented groups at all; and a general lack of information in organisations about these volunteers.

The research project was conducted in response to reported under-representation in volunteering by people with disabilities, single parents and refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.²⁶ The initial hypothesis for under-representation across these particular groups was that the cost of involving these volunteers presented the principle barrier. The assumption to be tested was that the reason why these volunteers have lower levels of participation is because they present an extra cost burden to organisations in terms of adaptations, resources and staff time they require. The research and fieldwork examined the evidence for these possible factors as well as looking into those non-cost factors that can be barriers to these groups in volunteering and the explanations for them. However, there are other possible reasons to suggest under-representation in volunteering other than cost and physical barriers. Some observations are made below in respect to these.

Stigma and public perception

The research identified a stigma attached to people from the group 'refugees, asylum seekers and migrants' in volunteering, as well as to the group 'people with disabilities', although to a lesser extent. Despite organisations having all-inclusive equal opportunity and diversity policies, it was found that refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are generally under-represented as volunteers but are frequently found to be volunteering in refugee specific organisations. There seems to be an assumption that engaging people from this group may be difficult due to a negative public opinion of immigration. Aware of how they are perceived by some people, refugees and asylum seekers may be inclined to either not volunteer at all or stick to refugee-specific organisations where they are confident people will have more understanding and where value judgements will not be made about them.

²⁶ The Commission on the Future of Volunteering (2008), *Report of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering and Manifesto for Change*: http://www.volcomm.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0B8EC40C-C9C5-454B-B212-C8918EF543F0/0/Manifesto_final.pdf



Negative media and misinterpretation of asylum and immigration law coupled with a lack of knowledge of the reasons behind immigration, contribute to perceptions of this under-represented group. This misunderstanding or lack of awareness of UK asylum and immigration law and practice can create uncertainty in organisations when involving a volunteer from this group. The fact is that anyone can volunteer if they have a legal right to remain in the UK, which includes asylum seekers awaiting a decision even during an appeal process. Only when an asylum seeker has been refused asylum to remain in the country, is it illegal for that individual to participate in any kind of voluntary or paid work.²⁷

Our research found that there is also a certain amount of stigma attached to disability. For example, mental illness continues to be commonly misunderstood. We discovered that there is often an assumption that volunteers with a disability will prefer to volunteer for an organisation with a disability focus, which is by no means necessarily the case, (please refer to 'Under-represented groups volunteering for specific-group organisations' section below) and may be restricting the choices open to people with disabilities who want to volunteer.

Flexibility in involving potential volunteers

By rejecting a potential volunteer who is offering their time and skills without good reason, an organisation jeopardises its reputation and is not practising good customer care. Volunteers from under-represented groups are, by definition, more vulnerable and so are less likely to challenge organisations' decisions, making such decisions less open to question or scrutiny. Volunteers can require extra support time in order to be able to carry out their volunteering, which may still result in the volunteer dropping out or not successfully fulfilling their role. However, the organisation can be confident that effort was invested and that the volunteer could always return in the future when ready.

Organisations may be approached by potential volunteers whose abilities are not at first clearly evident as to how and where they will fit in the organisation. Creative thinking and identifying possible alternative volunteer opportunities to suit the individuals' skills and ability will likely be fruitful to both parties.

Under-represented groups volunteering for specific-group organisations

It was found that volunteers from the under-represented groups 'people with disabilities' and 'refugees, asylum seekers and migrants' often tend to identify with and to volunteer for organisations that reflect their own 'group'. In other words, the volunteers are part of the organisation's client or user group and may be service users themselves. Our research found that refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who volunteer are more likely to volunteer for a refugee-specific organisation rather than a 'mainstream' organisation. Similarly, a volunteer with a disability will often be found working at an organisation that focuses on their disability. It is not to suggest that simply because someone has, for example, a learning disability they will want to do voluntary work only for a learning disability-focused project, or that a refugee will only be interested in refugee support work.

²⁷ See Volunteering England (2009) 'Can Refugees and Asylum Seekers Volunteer for us?' in *50 Frequently Asked Questions*: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/resources/information/faqs.htm>

However, this does seem to be the pattern and there must be some explanation as to why this tends to be the case.

We suggest that there are a number of possible reasons.

- Firstly, it could be that volunteers from under-represented groups approach organisations they feel most affiliated with and where they are more comfortable and confident in the surroundings and company of people they identify with as being like themselves. Volunteers may also want to give back to communities and individuals they can relate to and feel strongly about. For example, a single parent who has sought advice and assistance from an organisation working with single parents may want to volunteer for this particular organisation as it helped him/her a great deal and therefore wants to be a part of that support network serving others. The single parent may also feel that he/she has more to offer by working for a single parent organisation than for a different type of service.
- Secondly, some organisations prefer to have a service that is user-led or to deliver a service by involving volunteers and staff from a specialist client group. It is advantageous to have volunteers drawn from that client group, as the service benefits from their personal experience and knowledge and makes it easier for the organisation to reach out to and communicate with potential service users. Similarly, organisations might encourage service users to become volunteers, which results in a number of the volunteering team all belonging to a similar group who hold things in common. Organisations that prefer to have volunteers who reflect the makeup of their client group actively encourage such people to apply to be volunteers with them and this can be a beneficial approach. However, there is a flip side to this strategy. By concentrating on involving only one particular under-represented group, is the organisation ignoring people from other under-represented groups? And if a person from another under-represented group approaches it to become a volunteer, will that organisation be flexible and able to accommodate the individual in a suitable role?
- Thirdly, do volunteers from under-represented groups find themselves with certain organisations because they have been unable to secure other suitable volunteer roles through or with 'mainstream' organisations? As mentioned above, it is not the case that people can be assumed to want to only volunteer for an organisation that focuses on their group. For example, a wheelchair user may prefer to work for a refugee support organisation or in a school working with children; a person who is deaf may love football and would prefer to volunteer for a youth sports club. Does the search for volunteering for these groups lead them to organisations that can fit them and their disability, status and/or life situation in more easily? If they are unable to find organisations that can or are prepared to take them, they have little choice other than to end up in roles that may be very interesting and enjoyable, but with an organisation working with their own client group.



Equal opportunities and diversity monitoring in volunteering

An observation made from the survey results, but also gathered throughout the research project, is that there is a lack of detailed information in many organisations about who their volunteers are. In some cases, the backgrounds, ethnicity and diversity of volunteers are either not being monitored thoroughly; or the data is incomplete; or it is inaccurate. Some organisations did not know if they involve volunteers from the investigated under-represented groups and of those that did, some were unable to provide any more than very basic details about the volunteers.

Where individuals from under-represented groups were known to be involved in an organisation, it was generally at a lower proportion than one might expect, given the prevalence of some indicators in the population as a whole. For example, the Mental Health Foundation states “1 in 4 people will experience some kind of mental health problem in the course of a year”²⁸, yet more than half the respondents (representing a total of 12,000 volunteers) stated that none of their volunteers had mental health problems. Similarly, between four and five per cent of the UK population is dyslexic,²⁹ yet more than two thirds of respondents (representing a total of 11,000 volunteers) indicated none of their volunteers are dyslexic. Similar results might be cited for people with asthma or other less obvious conditions. Although this may result more from a lack of information about whether volunteers suffer “hidden” conditions such as long-term illness, dyslexia or mental health issues, the shortage of information itself raises further questions about how well understood the risk management and health and safety of vulnerable volunteers is being managed in organisations.

If equal opportunities recording and diversity monitoring is not being completed there is a lack of solid evidence about whether or not these volunteers are truly under-represented. The weakness of monitoring data would lead to questioning whether this under-representation is a perception among organisations that is based on their anecdotal evidence only. Our case studies and survey results would suggest that the former is nearer to the truth but without further investigation, this is not something that we can assess with further accuracy from the scope of this research.

²⁸ See Mental Health Foundation (2006), *Statistics on Mental Health*: <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/information/mental-health-overview/statistics/>

²⁹ See Dyslexia Action, *Frequently Asked Questions*: <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/Page.aspx?PagelD=75#q4>



Potential costs of involving VURGs

Additional time with/for the volunteer

Nearly all of the organisations highlighted that extra time is required when they involve certain volunteers from the under-represented groups. At Inspire Nottingham, where some service users are also supported volunteers at some point during the week, staff have to spend additional support time with these volunteers. At RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People) in Cornwall, the volunteers who are deaf or hard of hearing do not need extra support time, but placements often require a bit more thought and setting up time particularly where an interpreter is needed.³⁰ Organisations that involve these volunteers, especially those that actively encourage people from under-represented groups to volunteer with them, appreciate that extra time spent with some volunteers is absolutely necessary and part of the service that they want to provide. However, this extra time spent on volunteers represents a real cost to the organisation and it is deciding to prioritise its expenditure on giving this support to its volunteers rather than on other things.

Resources for volunteers with disabilities

Involving volunteers from under-represented groups can incur extra set-up costs and particularly so when involving volunteers with disabilities. At RNID, the majority of volunteers are either profoundly deaf or have hearing loss that requires communication equipment, which RNID provides. Communication equipment is expensive, as are interpreters. In addition to the cost, interpreters are in high demand for their specialist skills. They require significant periods of notice and therefore providing support for a profoundly deaf volunteer can not be done spontaneously, it always requires time allocation and advance planning. In an interview with RNID, an interviewee gave an example of a deaf person who approached RNID wanting to volunteer. There were not enough funds to cover interpretation expenses. Keen to involve the volunteer, RNID arranged for the volunteer to work once a month. Although this issue was resolved, it was done by limiting the frequency of volunteering according to the funds available to provide an interpreter.

Travel costs for volunteers with disabilities and/or support volunteers for volunteers with disabilities

Some volunteers with disabilities have extra support needs and organisations may decide to 'buddy' these volunteers with another person, usually a support volunteer. Although this is creating two volunteering opportunities rather than just one, it is also increasing the travel cost to the organisation. CSV East Riding covers the whole of the East Riding of Yorkshire, placing young people (16-25 years) into volunteer opportunities and a significant item in their budget is expenditure covering travel due to the rural nature of the area. Every volunteer who has a learning disability has a support volunteer to assist them in their volunteering, as do some volunteers with mental health issues and a few who have additional physical disabilities. Where support volunteers are needed for the placement, the cost of volunteers travel increases significantly.

³⁰ See Appendix 2: RNID Cornwall Case Study





Summary of actual costs analysis

Data sampling

The initial stage in developing the actual costs analysis was to gather data through an online survey. This comprised questions aimed at identifying the costs that organisations and services incur when involving volunteers from under-represented groups, as well as the benefits gained. The survey was circulated to volunteer-involving organisations and services across 10 selected local authorities. The results were collected and analysed accordingly.³¹

During this stage, case study interviews were conducted across the 10 local authority areas. Whereas the survey was sent out to a high number of organisations in the public and third sector either directly or via intermediary bodies such as Councils for Voluntary Service and similar bodies, the organisations for the case studies were selected using a more structured criteria and keeping strictly to the 10 selected local authority areas. A separate costing sheet was developed for the case study organisations to complete. These costing sheets required organisations to provide greater detail, accuracy and levels of information. During the on-site interviews the costing sheets were filled out by a relevant member of staff, usually a Manager or Volunteer Coordinator, who was able to provide accurate financial information on volunteers and staff.

The returns from the online survey were low and, in view of this, the research team adapted the initial methodology for the second stage of the research in order to gather sufficient data to successfully develop a robust costing framework. Using the more detailed costing tool from the case studies, further interviews with volunteer-involving organisations were then conducted. As the information required from these organisations was solely quantitative, telephone interviews were arranged rather than one-to-one interviews which were easier to organise with respondents and took less time. The researcher drew on organisations located in the original 10 local authority areas. However, due to low response and to some difficulty in finding suitable organisations in the 10 local authorities alone, some organisations were chosen outside of these areas. These either cover a larger area (such as a London programme area) or a neighbouring local authority. The sampling of organisations was a non-random process. Gaps in the research selection were identified by checking back at the first stage of the research. To ensure adequate representation, different types of organisations and different groups of volunteers from under-represented groups were then covered by this second phase.

Through collating the data from the completed costing sheets, from the case studies and from the telephone interviews, there was more detailed data available for the researchers to use to develop a functional costing tool. Altogether 41 data sets³² were collated from the fieldwork, not including the results from the survey.

³¹ Please refer to the 'Summary of Methodology'

³² One data set is one costing sheet. For the purpose of the analysis, completed costing sheets from the interviews will be referred to as data sets. As some organisations/programmes involved different groups of under-represented volunteers in some instances there are multiple data sets per organisation/programme.

Data gathering

Data was gathered separately for each group of volunteers from under-represented groups with which an organisation worked.³³

Data gathering distinguished between one-off ‘set-up’ costs and ongoing running costs. Set-up costs were those additional costs incurred by the organisation/programme to partially or wholly involve and support volunteers from under-represented groups.

Set-up costs were divided into:

- Capital expenditure on equipment (where equipment was not exclusively allocated to the particular group of under-represented volunteers, organisations were asked to give an estimate of the proportion of the year it was used for VURG group)
- Capital expenditure on property (where the use of property was not exclusively allocated to the involvement of volunteers from under-represented groups, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of the year the accommodation was used for VURG group)
- Expenditure on recruitment (where the recruitment of staff was not exclusively for the purpose of supporting volunteers from under-represented groups, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of the year the staff worked with VURG group).

Running costs were requested for a recent 12 month period: either the organisation’s last financial year or the last complete calendar year. Running costs were then divided into a number of categories:

- Salaries of staff whose role was partially or wholly in support of volunteers from under-represented groups (where salaries were in support of a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of salaries allocated to the support of volunteers from under-represented groups)
- The market value of volunteer time that was partially or wholly in support of volunteers from under-represented groups (where volunteer time was in support of a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of volunteer time allocated to the support of volunteers from under-represented groups)

³³ These were i) Adults with autism, Asperger’s Syndrome and related conditions ii) Children and young people with autism, Asperger’s Syndrome and related conditions iii) Blind and partially sighted adults iv) Blind and partially sighted children and young people v) Deaf and hearing-impaired adults vi) Deaf and hearing-impaired children and young people vii) Adults with dyslexia viii) Children and young people with dyslexia ix) Adults with learning disabilities (specific and non-specific) x) Children with learning disabilities (specific and non-specific) xi) Adults with mental health conditions xii) Children and young people with mental health conditions xiii) Adults with physical disabilities xiv) Children and young people with physical disabilities xv) Adults with speech and communication impairments xvi) Children and young people with speech and communication impairments xvii) Adults with long-term health conditions, e.g. diabetes, arthritis, asthma and epilepsy xviii) Children and young people with long-term health conditions, e.g. diabetes, arthritis, asthma and epilepsy xix) Adults diagnosed with progressive health conditions, e.g. multiple sclerosis, HIV and cancer xx) Children and young people diagnosed with progressive health conditions, e.g. multiple sclerosis, HIV and cancer xxi) Single parents under the age of 18 xx) Single parents 18 years and over xxi) Adult refugees xxii) Children and young people refugees xxiii) Adult asylum seekers xxiv) Children and young asylum seekers xxv) Adult migrants xxvi) Children and young migrants



- Training specifically for staff and volunteers to enable them to support volunteers from under-represented groups (where training was in support of work with a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of expenditure relevant to volunteers from under-represented groups)
- Travel costs for staff and volunteers providing support to volunteers from under-represented groups (where travel costs were in support of work with a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of expenditure relevant to volunteers from under-represented groups)
- Travel costs for volunteers from under-represented groups that were over and above the travel costs that would be claimed by volunteers who were not from one of the under-represented groups
- One-off capital costs incurred during the year in question specifically in the support of volunteers from under-represented groups (where the cost was in support of work with a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of expenditure relevant to volunteers from under-represented groups)
- Equipment costs incurred during the year in question specifically in support of volunteers from under-represented groups (where equipment costs were in support of work with a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of expenditure relevant to volunteers from under-represented groups)
- Accommodation costs incurred during the year in question specifically in support of volunteers from under-represented groups (where accommodation costs were in support of work with a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of expenditure relevant to volunteers from under-represented groups)
- Service charges incurred during the year in question specifically in support of volunteers from under-represented groups (where service charges were in support of work with a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of expenditure relevant to volunteers from under-represented groups)
- Other costs incurred during the year specifically in support of volunteers from under-represented groups (where other costs were in support of work with a broader group of volunteers, organisations were asked to estimate the proportion of expenditure relevant to volunteers from under-represented groups).

In addition, information was gathered on the total number of volunteers and the number of volunteers from under-represented groups that the organisation had worked with in the same 12 month period for which running costs were gathered.

At the end of the data gathering stage 27 projects had provided data. Some projects supplied data sets for more than one group of VURGs and so, in total, 41 data sets were compiled.

Initial data cleaning and analysis

Initial data cleaning identified missing values and far off values that deviated significantly from the mean set of results. It was possible to address some of these via queries with data providers. In two cases, a lack of data resulted in a data set being excluded from the analysis. Therefore, analysis was performed on data from 25 projects which provided 39 data sets.

Analysis was firstly undertaken on each data set in order to calculate the set-up cost and annual running cost per volunteer from an under-represented group. A number of assumptions were made during this process:

- Organisations were asked for the projected life-time of equipment and property purchased with capital expenditure. These costs varied widely with some organisations projecting over a 10 year life-time for IT equipment and very long projected life spans for property modifications. Therefore a maximum lifespan of five years was assumed for IT and electrical equipment unless the organisation specified a shorter lifetime. Similarly a maximum 20 year lifespan was assumed for property expenditure, including expenditure on property modifications.
- Due to the limited information available and the relatively small proportion of overall costs that they accounted for, capital costs were not amortised. Amortisation is a process whereby costs are allocated over a number of years in a way that reflects their relative worth to an organisation over that time span. The process of amortising costs is relatively complex, requiring various pieces of information. Instead, capital costs were simply apportioned over their projected lifetimes. Any variance introduced by apportioning capital costs rather than amortising them is likely to be marginal.
- Salary 'on-costs', which cover the employer costs for National Insurance and pension contributions, were all assumed to be at 20 per cent. In reality, the precise employer on-costs are likely to vary depending upon factors such as the size of an individual's salary. However, limitations in the data provided would have made it difficult to calculate on-costs for each individual for whom salary details were available. Any variance from the estimate used is likely to be marginal.
- Where organisations struggled to apportion costs between a wider group of volunteers and volunteers specifically from under-represented groups, then the default approach that was adopted was to apportion costs in accordance with the ratio of volunteers from under-represented groups to the overall group of volunteers that the organisation involved. The fieldwork suggested that, given the specific needs of the volunteers from under-represented groups, this was likely to be a conservative estimate.



Overview of findings

Following the initial process of data cleaning and analysis described above, the analysis set out in Figure 1 was produced. A summary of this data is set out in Figure 2.

There are different ways of representing the average cost per volunteer. As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, the unit cost per volunteer from an under-represented group ranges from £0 to £25,938.96 per annum. Taking the 39 sets of data laid out in Figure 1, the median unit cost is £1,328.21 per annum. All of the data was then pooled and the results from this analysis were as follows:

- The total number of volunteers that the organisations worked with annually was 6,804
- The total number of under-represented volunteers that organisations worked with annually by the organisations that participated in this study was 526
- The average number of under-represented volunteers per organisation was 21³⁴
- The mean annual set-up cost per under-represented volunteer was £29.52
- The mean annual ongoing cost per under-represented volunteer was £1,587.33³⁵
- The total mean annual cost per under-represented volunteer was £1,616.85.

³⁴ Although this is a relatively high number, it should be considered that some organisations, particularly those with a high number of volunteers in general, also had a large number of volunteers from under-represented groups. Specialist organisations which involved volunteers from the client group also had high figures, particularly where volunteers from the focal client group was central to the service and ethos of the organisation. Other organisations had as few as one volunteer from an under-represented group.

³⁵ Often staff costs are equally divided to all volunteers and that in some cases the cost of a volunteers from an under-represented group will be the same as any other volunteer. i.e. there is no differentiation between the costs of volunteers. However, as this costing tool focuses on involving volunteers from under-represented groups these costs have been included as additional running costs.

Figure 1: Output from initial analysis

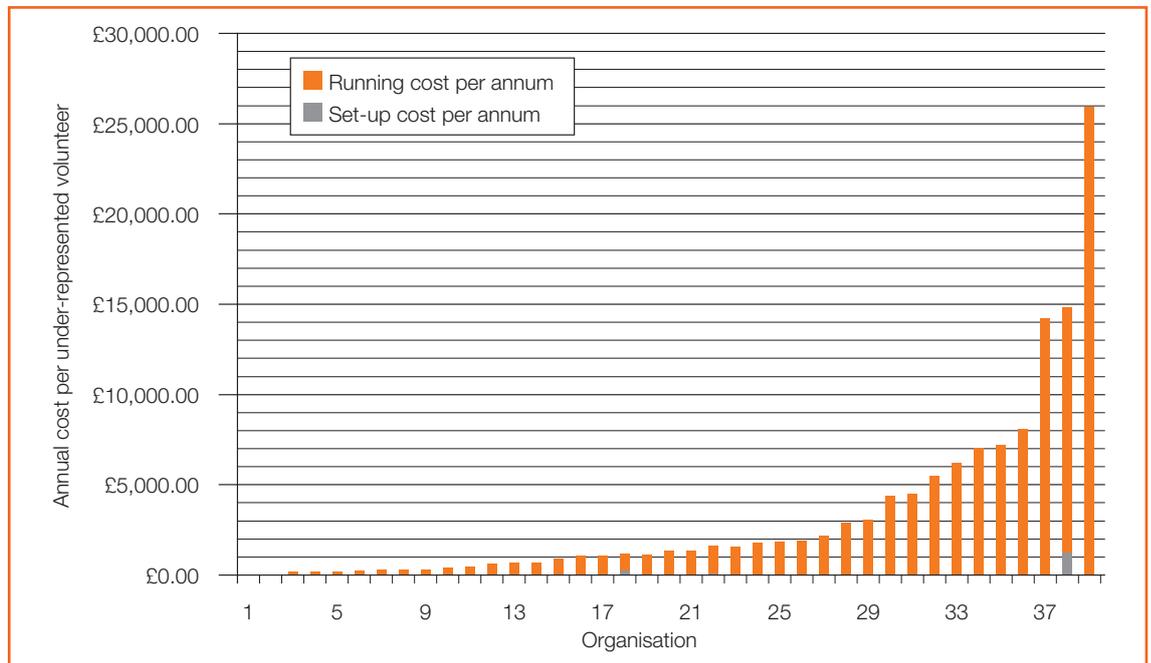
Organisation	Volunteer Profile				Unit costs per volunteer from under represented group		
	Type of volunteer from an under represented group	No. of Volunteers organisation works with per annum	No. of VURGs organisation works with per annum	VURGs as proportion of all volunteers	Set-up cost per annum	Running cost per annum	Total cost per annum
Museum	Learning disabilities (adults)	186	1	0.5%	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
National charity	Progressive health conditions (adult)	534	115	21.5%	£0.00	£11.90	£11.90
Museum	Learning disabilities (adults)	243	5	2.1%	£0.00	£178.46	£178.46
Local charity	Progressive health conditions (adult)	15	1	6.7%	£0.00	£184.27	£184.27
Branch of national charity	Long term health conditions (adult)	22	2	9.1%	£0.00	£176.80	£176.80
Branch of national charity	Single parents (adult)	22	5	22.7%	£0.00	£241.10	£241.10
Branch of national charity	Migrants (adult)	47	9	19.1%	£55.56	£254.65	£310.21
National charity	Refugees (adult)	16	15	93.8%	£6.67	£312.03	£318.70
National charity	Speech & communication impairments (adult)	25	2	8.0%	£0.00	£320.00	£320.00
Branch of national charity	Refugee (adult)	10	1	10.0%	£0.00	£439.18	£439.18
Police division	Physical disability (adults)	10	1	10.0%	£0.00	£456.00	£456.00
Regional charity	Autism (young people over 16)	1000	50	5.0%	£60.00	£602.02	£662.02
Branch of national charity	Physical disability (adults)	100	5	5.0%	£0.00	£690.00	£690.00
Branch of national charity	Long term health conditions (adult)	100	15	15.0%	£0.00	£690.00	£690.00
Regional charity	Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (adult)	1000	70	7.0%	£29.43	£841.14	£870.57
Local charity	Physical disability (adult)	21	1	4.8%	£0.00	£1,067.29	£1,067.29
National charity	Blind or partially sighted (adults)	179	6	3.4%	£65.00	£1,011.53	£1,076.53
Museum	Physical disability (adult)	243	1	0.4%	£250.00	£892.32	£1,142.32
Branch of national charity	Asylum seeker (adult)	36	1	2.8%	£0.00	£1,148.00	£1,148.00
National charity	Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (adult)	200	40	20.0%	£21.00	£1,307.21	£1,328.21



Summary of actual costs analysis

Organisation	Volunteer Profile				Unit costs per volunteer from under represented group		
	Type of volunteer from an under represented group	No. of Volunteers organisation works with per annum	No. of VURGs organisation works with per annum	VURGs as proportion of all volunteers	Set-up cost per annum	Running cost per annum	Total cost per annum
Branch of national charity	Refugees (adult)	36	1	2.8%	£0.00	£1,340.00	£1,340.00
Local charity affiliated to National Charity	Physical disability (age group not stated)	12	12	100.0%	£105.33	£1,469.17	£1,574.51
Branch of national charity	Mental health (adults)	47	1	2.1%	£0.00	£1,581.61	£1,581.61
Branch of national charity	Single parents (adult)	34	5	14.7%	£0.00	£1,781.83	£1,781.83
National charity	Mental health (adults and children)	250	50	20.0%	£13.26	£1,840.70	£1,853.96
National charity	Physical disability (age group not stated)	250	17	6.8%	£23.40	£1,838.91	£1,862.31
Branch of national charity	Mental health (adults)	11	2	18.2%	£0.00	£2,190.24	£2,190.24
Volunteer centre	Mental health (adults)	197	11	5.6%	£0.00	£2,910.33	£2,910.33
Branch of national charity	Asylum seeker (adult)	10	3	30.0%	£0.00	£3,045.74	£3,045.74
Local charity and umbrella body	Asylum seeker (adult)	19	2	10.5%	£60.80	£4,361.72	£4,422.52
NHS Trust	Physical disability (adults)	1400	47	3.4%	£8.51	£4,513.86	£4,522.37
Local charity	Learning disability (adults)	21	4	19.0%	£0.00	£5,483.07	£5,483.07
National charity	Learning disability (adults and children)	250	15	6.0%	£23.57	£6,209.00	£6,232.57
Local charity	Long term health conditions (adult)	21	1	4.8%	£40.00	£6,950.98	£6,990.98
National charity	Refugees (adult)	22	2	9.1%	£0.00	£7,201.10	£7,201.10
Local charity affiliated to National Charity	Blind or partially sighted (age not specified)	12	1	8.3%	£0.00	£8,098.65	£8,098.65
Branch of national charity	Visual impairment	22	1	4.5%	£27.00	£14,161.10	£14,188.10
Branch of national charity	Deaf and hearing impaired (adult)	5	4	80.0%	£1,280.00	£13,567.05	£14,847.05
National charity	Physical disability (adults)	176	1	0.6%	£3.00	£25,935.96	£25,938.96

Figure 2: Summary of initial analysis showing the unit costs per identified volunteer from an under-represented group



In the majority of data sets, it is staff costs which account for most of the costs incurred. In 26 of the 39 data sets, the staff costs (i.e. support time) account for 75 per cent or more of the cost per under-represented volunteer. In 21 of the 39 data sets, staff account for more than 90 per cent of the costs.

Looking in more detail at the three data sets for organisations that reported very high unit costs it is notable that:

- These high unit costs related to volunteers from not just one but from several different under-represented groups working in the organisations
- All relate to organisations working with a small number of under-represented volunteers each year (this issue is explored in more detail below)
- The principal ‘cost driver’ is the cost of staff who support the work of under-represented volunteers.

Analysis by group of under-represented volunteer

Analysis was also undertaken by groups of under-represented volunteers. The 39 data sets were grouped according to categories of volunteer. The data for each group was then pooled. Mean annual costs per volunteer were then calculated. This analysis is set out in Figure 3. The annual cost per volunteer ranges from £144.25 for long-term or progressive health conditions; to £10,004.70 for deaf, hearing impaired or speech and



communication impairment. However, it is worth noting that the two highest unit costs (those for 'deaf, hearing impaired or speech and communication impaired' and for 'blind, partially sighted or visually impaired') are based on two and three sets of data respectively; and in both cases, the total number of volunteers for whom data has been pooled are small. Both of these factors suggest that these estimates may be less reliable.

Figure 3: Analysis by categories of under-represented volunteers

Group of under-represented volunteer	Number of data sets	Number of volunteers	Mean annual set-up cost per volunteer	Mean annual running cost per volunteer	Total annual cost per volunteer
Long-term or progressive health conditions	5	134	£0.30	£143.95	£144.25
Single parents	2	10	£0.00	£999.96	£999.96
Asylum seeker, refugees or migrants	10	144	£25.15	£1,064.48	£1,089.63
Learning disabilities or autism	4	74	£45.32	£1,973.39	£2,018.71
Mental health	4	64	£10.36	£2,023.21	£2,033.57
Physical disability	8	85	£27.23	£3,394.24	£3,421.48
Blind, partially sighted or visually impaired	3	8	£52.13	£3,494.49	£3,546.62
Deaf, hearing impaired or speech and communication impairment	2	6	£853.33	£9,151.37	£10,004.70

Analysis by organisation

Analysis was undertaken according to whether the organisation specialised or not in engaging volunteers from under-represented groups. Each organisation was categorised as being either specialist or non-specialist. Data for specialist organisations and non-specialist organisations was then pooled and analysis undertaken. A summary of the analysis is set out in Figure 4. It shows that the annual running cost per under-represented volunteer was less for specialist organisations when compared to non-specialist organisations.

The analysis indicates that the mean set-up costs are higher for specialist organisations than for non-specialist organisations. One hypothesis for this could be that specialist organisations are more likely to have dedicated funding to cover set-up costs for both service users or volunteers, for example to purchase equipment that fits with the needs of the client group. Non-specialist organisations, on the other hand, are less likely to make adaptations or to purchase equipment in preparation for the eventuality of such volunteers

requiring them; and they may instead place the volunteer elsewhere in a setting which has adequate facilities already in place. Accommodation, particularly in the public sector, is likely to be DDA compliant so it is the outlay on other support resources such as interpreters, special monitors or hearing loops that possibly increases the set-up costs for certain specialist organisations.

By way of significant contrast, it is non-specialist organisations which have much higher running costs per under-represented volunteer than specialist organisations. One possibility for the high ongoing costs that were found for non-specialist organisations could be that this is due to the types of programmes the organisations run and report on. Four of the non-specialist organisations provided data sets for programmes that they manage which have a specialist focus. For instance, in Figure 1 there is a non-specialist national charity that involves adult refugees. The data it provided was for a programme that had a specialist focus in which a number of the service users were refugees and therefore staff were recruited and employed specifically to support this group along with refugee volunteers. Three organisations had similar profiles; they did not specialise in supporting or working with under-represented groups, but they ran programmes that supported an under represented group and involved volunteers from that group as part of the service.

Another hypothetical explanation for these findings is that specialist organisations which normally work with clients from under-represented groups have staff already employed with the knowledge and skills for also working with volunteers from that client group. Specialist staff with experience may require less time in setting up roles and working with the volunteer/s. In a non-specialist organisation that cannot afford to recruit a specialist member of staff or which does not have a specialist programme area, a Volunteer Coordinator/Manager will probably take responsibility for any volunteers from under-represented groups alongside their general body of volunteers. Depending on the support needs of individual volunteers, the member of staff may have to set aside additional time for these. If volunteers require ongoing support, in the absence of a specialist member of staff, a support volunteer may be recruited to work alongside them. The data gathering process asked organisations to estimate the salary equivalent they would have paid if they had employed staff to fulfil a support volunteers' function. Non-specialist organisations which depended upon the involvement of support volunteers in working with volunteers from under-represented groups, would have then shown this as a substantial cost to supporting those volunteers from under-represented groups.

Figure 4: Analysis by type of organisation

Type of organisation	Number of data sets	No. of under-represented volunteers	Mean annual set-up cost per volunteer	Mean annual running cost per volunteer	Total annual cost per volunteer
Specialist	13	154	£45.04	£913.67	£958.71
Non-specialist	26	372	£23.10	£1,866.21	£1,889.31

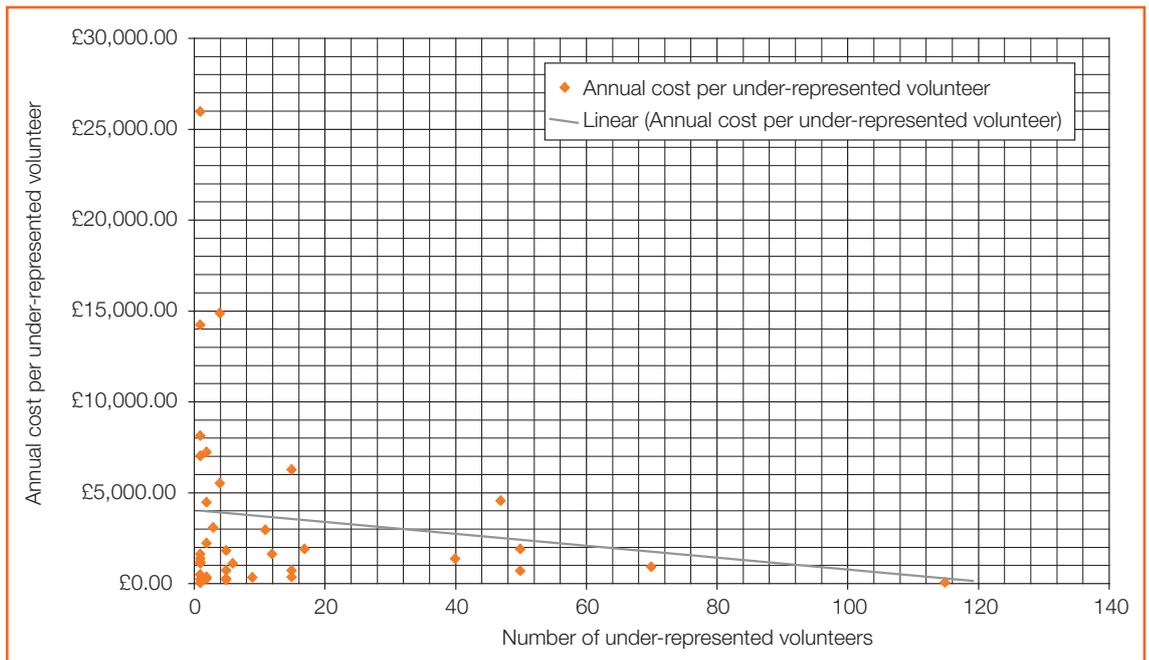


Data for each organisation was then pooled and analysis was undertaken using the number of volunteers an organisation worked with as the unit of analysis. The analysis shows that the more volunteers from under-represented groups that an organisation works with, the lower the unit cost per volunteer. This could be due to the fact that once resources are purchased in the set-up stage and which then, throughout the year, become ongoing costs, the greater the number of volunteers subsequently utilising these resources will have the effect of decreasing the overall unit cost per volunteer. The greater the volume of volunteers, the less becomes the ongoing cost to the organisation. This also applies to ongoing staff costs, where staff supporting volunteers and/or volunteers from under-represented groups reprioritise and reallocate their time over a wider population of volunteers.

A second possible reason for this finding is that organisations that involve a higher number of volunteers from under-represented groups have greater capacity for this involvement and are accustomed to managing volunteers from under-represented groups; whereas organisations that involve few volunteers from under-represented groups and which are not as experienced at engaging with these volunteers take more time and therefore cost in working with certain individuals. For organisations that regularly work with volunteers from under-represented groups, it will be easier to manage these volunteers as the process for doing so will have become mainstreamed into the organisation and its practice.

However this analysis needs to be treated with caution because 39 data sets were gathered from 27 organisations, with a separate data set being collected for each group of under-represented volunteers the organisation worked with. For this analysis, the data on individual groups of volunteers was pooled to provide a single set of data for each organisation. However, because the data was not gathered in this way, some assumptions had to be made in order to amalgamate the data.

Figure 5: Analysis by number of under-represented volunteers the organisation works with





Principle barriers for VURGs

This section is based on data gathered throughout the research process but takes as its focus information drawn from the case studies in particular.

Low self-esteem and lack of confidence

Volunteers from under-represented groups are often not confident about getting involved in voluntary work. Fear of how they will fit into an organisation and will be perceived by others is probably one of the main factors preventing their participation. For example, someone with a disability may worry that their disability will limit their role as a volunteer or that possibly other people in the organisation may not accept them for who they are. Envision, a charity supporting and working primarily with 16-19 year olds in schools, has a project based at Newham College. The volunteers, who are all adult refugees and also service users at the College, needed convincing that they could be volunteers and that they were able to succeed in their roles. Their transition into volunteering will be a great step for them to take and may require additional support and encouragement.³⁶

Understanding the concept of volunteering

For refugees, asylum seekers and migrants now living in the UK, the concept of volunteering can be a new one. In many countries the term 'volunteer' does not exist in the same way as it does in the UK, although this is certainly not to suggest that people do not volunteer in these countries. In other countries, people may be involved in community initiatives and projects or simply helping out, while in the UK this would be classed as voluntary work as the term has been formalised.

At the Envision Newham College project working with refugee students, the women had to be taught about volunteering before they could start to plan their community involvement. For most of them the idea was new and they were previously unaware of such volunteering programmes. Envision had not anticipated that lack of knowledge about volunteering might be one of the initial barriers. It took some time to convince the group that volunteering is not necessarily a big commitment and that they actually could do it and be involved. For example, the women were surprised that they were allowed to join in a marathon and that they would also be able to bring their children to the event. The group took a course about volunteering through Newham Council, and they found this helped. In hindsight, Envision would have spent more time ensuring their students were prepared for volunteering by providing them with more information on volunteering sooner and what it involves. This would have made the project move faster.

³⁶ See Appendix 6: Envision Newham Case Study



Childcare

For single parents it can be difficult to arrange suitable childcare. However, this is usually only an issue when the parent has young children. Once the children are attending school, childcare is not always such a barrier. On talking to a single parent volunteer at Home-Start Mid Suffolk, it was evident that her marital status did not make a difference to her volunteering. The only time the volunteer was unable to work was during the school holidays, but this may apply to a parent with a partner too, although that volunteer has the possibility of their partner looking after the child during their volunteering time. The organisation reiterated this and could not differentiate between single parents and parents with partners.³⁷ If the partner is working, the parent at home with the child/children will have the same issue as a single parent about their availability for volunteering regarding making arrangements for childcare. However, a single parent will have a lower income than a two-income household and, if reliant on state benefit, will be less able to afford to buy childcare if the child is below school age.

One principal feature of volunteering is that the individual undertaking unpaid work should not pay any extra cost in order to fulfil the voluntary placement. If childcare during the placement is arranged by the volunteer because the organisation does not cover this expense, then that volunteer is in effect subsidising their own childcare. If volunteers do not reclaim their childcare cost then this can be an obstacle for them, the organisation and future single parents hoping to volunteer. The cost of childcare becomes a hidden cost that the organisation may not recognise and therefore may not account for, which in turn will affect future funding should the organisation apply for financial assistance to cover childcare costs. On the other hand, if the volunteer does try to reclaim the monies then the organisation will realise this cost and will either be able to cover the cost immediately or apply for funding to do so in the future.

Disability access

Volunteers with disabilities may require extra support and adapted premises or facilities but can have difficulty finding organisations that will accommodate their needs. It is easier for volunteers with certain physical disabilities to access voluntary work within the building of an organisation that is 'disability friendly', for example, one with wheelchair access, disabled toilets, etc. Organisations providing services specifically for people with disabilities or that are in the public sector and DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant are likely to have funding to meet the cost of taking on both staff and volunteers with disabilities and their premises will already be suitably adapted and equipped. Other organisations not set up to involve people with disabilities or which are small voluntary sector organisations may not have resources to make adaptations for potential volunteers from this group.

³⁷ See Appendix 10: Home-Start Mid Suffolk Case Study

Transport

Transport for travel to and from the place of volunteering can be a barrier for everybody who volunteers, especially those without a vehicle or in areas with little public transport. However, for people with disabilities it can be more of an obstacle especially if the organisation is not able to reimburse travel expenses or if the volunteer lives off social welfare. For one volunteer with a motor neuron disorder, getting to work is the only aspect of the volunteering that he finds difficult. He gets a lift and does not have to cover this expense himself. However, if he was unable to get a lift it would be difficult for him to afford coming in to volunteer, especially considering that he works as a volunteer for three days a week. For other people facing similar financial or physical difficulties, access and the cost of transportation is definitely a major barrier to their volunteering.





Main barriers for organisations involving VURGs

Extra time required to support and guide volunteers

Volunteers with disabilities

Involving volunteers with certain disabilities can require additional time and support from staff. For example, volunteers with learning difficulties need extra input and guidance on how to successfully carry out their volunteering tasks and in some cases, may need a support volunteer to be working with them. Time spent supporting volunteers who require extra assistance can be monetised in hours spent on volunteers by paid staff members and support volunteers some of whom would otherwise be volunteering elsewhere in the organisation or who are especially recruited for the purpose of being a personal assistant/buddy/mentor/support volunteer.

At DIAL-Solihull, a charity providing advice and assistance to people with disabilities, all of the volunteers have a disability. People with disabilities are actively encouraged to volunteer with the organisation.³⁸ It prides its service on the premise that the organisation is run by people with specialist knowledge and personal experience of disability. Despite being fully set up to work with people with disabilities, extra time is still invested by the only two paid members of staff on running its volunteer programme and the smooth delivery of the service. Some of the volunteers attend home visits and meetings and so a member of staff has to assess the property to make sure it is 'disability friendly' before they can attend. In the time that the paid member of staff has taken to survey the facilities, they could have actually conducted the home visit; however, DIAL volunteers are so central in the organisation they think it is important that volunteers participate in a range of services and so they do not consider this to be an option.

There are other examples from the case studies that illustrate this same point. At Inspire Nottingham, an organisation working with people with learning disabilities, service users can become supported volunteers whereby for one or two days a week they take on responsibilities as a volunteer. This is described as part of Inspire's drive to encourage and achieve independent living and increased confidence in the members, who have a range of learning difficulties but are not classed as having severe difficulties. The transition from service user to supported volunteer requires extra help and time. Emma (name has been changed) has been with Inspire for a few years and has learning disabilities. Following her progress as an active member at Inspire, she has now become a supported volunteer for one day a week. Before Emma could begin volunteering, time was spent preparing her for

³⁸ See Appendix 9: DIAL-Solihull Case Study

the transition and she received some in-house training on how to volunteer and what was expected of a supported volunteer at Inspire. Although generally Emma gets on with her task, on occasion she needs to be reminded that she is a supported volunteer and not a member and that she has responsibilities on this particular day. Emma requires more help in performing her volunteering tasks. However, this is expected of all the supported volunteers who have achieved a great deal in developing confidence and ability since acquiring the status of being volunteers.³⁹

Whereas at Inspire, paid staff and volunteers share the duties supporting service users into their positions as supported volunteers, at CSV East Riding, volunteers with learning difficulties are allocated their own personal support volunteers who are always alongside them as an aid when they are volunteering. Support volunteers are also assigned to some volunteers with mental health issues and physical disabilities, although not so often with the latter group. For CSV East Riding, the 'buddy' volunteers means doubling the cost in travel which in a predominantly rural area can amount to a significant expense to the volunteering programme.

Single parents

Our research found that most organisations did not think that being a single parent required any more time and support from staff than is given to volunteers who are not single parents. There was no indication that single parent volunteers had any extra support needs. For example, at Medway NHS Trust no additional provision has been made for single parent volunteers, many of whom work in the Midwifery department. In interviews with the Voluntary Services Unit (VSU) it was highlighted that they had not faced any barriers in recruiting single parents as volunteers and therefore have not assigned any extra provision or support for this specific group.⁴⁰ Home-Start Mid Suffolk pointed out that there is no difference between a parent whose partner works and a single parent when it comes to finding time to volunteer, as both would require childcare support if they have young children.

However, it should be considered that where there are two working parents in a family unit, the household income will be higher so that it will be more affordable for the parents to volunteer than in a family where there is only one. In two parent families, a rotation system for childcare may be arranged particularly if one parent is home-based. Although Home-Start Mid Suffolk has not had any significant barriers to involving single parents apart from not having access to a project vehicle (which could also be a disadvantage to non-single parents as well), it could be that single parents are not applying for voluntary work because they do not think that an organisation would be able to cover the expense of their childcare. This disincentive for single parents could be the case across many organisations in which single parents will effectively be out of pocket if they are paying for childcare themselves for their volunteering time which they would not have otherwise purchased.

³⁹ See Appendix 7: Inspire Nottingham Case Study

⁴⁰ See Appendix 5: Medway NHS Trust Case Study



Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

Inspire Nottingham and Envision both noted that when involving volunteers from this under-represented group, some extra time was needed for their support. Envision is involved in a project at Newham College in east London for refugee students studying English and helping them to develop a community project on which they can volunteer. Usually, Envision works with students who do not need extra support and who can develop their own projects, but for this particular project, a volunteer from Envision visits the college each week to guide and support the students. Extra support is needed because the students are still learning English and it takes them longer to coordinate and develop their project in English. Secondly, the students come from a range of countries and most are not familiar with the concept of volunteering so need guidance and information on their role as volunteer. Although this is an additional expense for Envision, it is not a high cost and the support volunteer enjoys the voluntary role of working with the student group. In the past, Inspire Nottingham has found that a little bit more time is spent explaining the volunteering role to refugees. However, time spent is minimal and the key is to use clear instructions.

Language

A number of organisations mentioned language skills as a barrier to involving volunteers from the 'refugee, asylum seeker and migrant' group. Some organisations stated that there is an issue for them if the volunteer's English is poor. Even where organisations had not involved a volunteer from this group, the staff interviewed anticipated that language would be a problem for the organisation when finding volunteers a placement. At Medway NHS Trust, the VSU often receives applications from migrants from A8 countries hoping to gain experience working for the UK health service.⁴¹ Migrants from these countries often have good English language skills as well as medical qualifications and experience and therefore they are easily placed as volunteers. However, there have been occasions where either a migrant from an A8 country or a refugee (Medway NHS Trust rarely receives applications from asylum seekers) has either been advised to return to the Volunteer Centre from which they were referred, or to take up a language course as their English skills have been inadequate and the hospital felt unable to place them as a volunteer.

Among organisations, the assessment of an individual's English language capability seems to be largely done almost entirely subjectively. The attitudes of the organisation and/or service or of individual staff seem to be significant factors as to whether language skill is used as a reason for preventing people from volunteering. Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London (RAMFEL) referred to this as being a common perception by organisations which believe that a volunteer's language skills will be a major problem. RAMFEL has examples of its clients being turned down by mainstream organisations as volunteers with the reason given that the service users will not understand them. Although language does not have to be a hindrance, given the right position is found for the volunteer, it does seem to be one of the reasons why organisations would not, or have not, involved refugees, asylum seekers or migrants in their volunteering.

⁴¹ The A8 countries include Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. They joined the EU on 1st May 2004. All A8 nationals have the legal right to work in the UK.

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks

Some of the organisations interviewed raised the issue of CRB checks for volunteers working with vulnerable people who are in the group ‘refugees, asylum seekers or migrants’.⁴² People who have been in the UK a short time may have more difficulty completing a CRB form as they will be unable to provide addresses with the required amount of residency time. In this instance, information regarding the individual’s conduct and past history should be obtained via their Embassy in addition to verification of current and previous addresses in the UK and three forms of identification.⁴³ This lengthy process can be an obstacle. At Inspire Nottingham, there are two volunteers with refugee status and, as one volunteer has not yet completed the CRB process, he has to have another volunteer with him when he is working with the members and cannot be left unaccompanied with service users. This has also been an issue at Inspire in the past but it is a barrier that has always been overcome by pairing up with another volunteer even though this is not the ideal for the organisation. The extra resource required to involve volunteers while awaiting the CRB check to be completed is a cost in time to the organisation; however, volunteers are integral to the service Inspire provides and therefore they consider this additional effort is worthwhile in the long run.

Provision of childcare or crèche facilities

Some organisations reported this as a barrier when involving single parents (although the same actually applies to any parent). At the Envision Newham College Project, the volunteers are all women. The majority of them have children and most have partners. Childcare that is affordable and available remains a barrier to them volunteering, as they can only commit to volunteering during certain hours if their partners are unable, or in some cases unwilling, to look after the children. To overcome this, Envision suggests the women bring their children with them when they volunteer, even though this may not be the ideal solution. At Home-Start Mid Suffolk, all the volunteers are parents or carers including single parents. The volunteer’s task involves visiting and supporting families. There is no provision for childcare as the organisation is unable to cover this cost. For single parents on low incomes or receiving benefits, arranging childcare in order to volunteer would be financially unsustainable. In an interview with a single parent, volunteer childcare was not an issue as both her children were at school and she was financially independent. It would be beneficial to the organisation to provide this service especially as the organisation prefers volunteers to be parents themselves, but such an initiative would require finding new funding to cover the cost of doing so.

⁴² ‘There are currently two categories of ‘vulnerable person’: children and young people under age 18; and adults aged over 18 who fit the definition provided in the Police Act.. A vulnerable adult is described in the Police Act as a person “aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type: i) a learning or physical disability; ii) a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or iii) a reduction in physical or mental capacity.”’ Volunteering England (2009): <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/goodpracticebank/Information/whencrb.htm>

⁴³ Criminal Records Bureau (2009), <http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/>



A lack of childcare can cause problems for a volunteer's ability to commit regularly to their volunteering and results in discontinuity of attendance. At Inspire Nottingham, they have found that the hours single parents are able to commit can be an issue and depends upon whether they can find someone to look after the children. As Inspire pointed out, if the organisation is not able to fund childcare, then the ability to volunteer is largely dependent on the age of the child and the support network available to the single parent. At Inspire, they have also had a number of volunteer single parents who have experienced domestic violence. Often these volunteers do not stay long at Inspire, perhaps because they are unable to juggle their volunteering and being a parent, but also potentially out of fear of staying too long in one place or due to relocation. This does end up as being a cost to Inspire, which provides training for its volunteers because, if they leave early, the organisation does not get a return on that investment made.

In the quantitative analysis of the costs recorded in the costing sheets gathered, it was not possible to cover the potential cost of childcare to an organisation as none of the organisations interviewed provided childcare facilities and did not have resources to do so. One organisation interviewed reported that they had applied for funding to cover childcare costs so that the women could volunteer more regularly. They were not successful in their bid for funding and continue to find the issue of childcare for volunteers an obstacle.



Overcoming barriers to involving VURGs

The case study organisations provided examples of where challenges had been overcome with positive results. On the BTCV Green Gym project in County Durham, the interviewee was tasked with taking a group of autistic volunteers to participate in some outdoor conservation work. Unaware of their level of autism, she had arranged activities that she later discovered were too advanced for this particular group. When the group arrived on the first day she had to rethink the objectives for the day. She adapted the activities to better suit the group and they contributed to other duties such as a litter pick and some pruning. This example demonstrates creativity and flexibility without any extra cost to the organisation: *'It is like any task, you find a task suitable for that person within that activity day.'*⁴⁴ In another example where BTCV had single parents on a similar project and were unable to provide childcare, they liaised with the local community centre near the project site and arranged for the children to be looked after there where there were crèche facilities. The parents on the Green Gym project took it in turns to help out at the crèche which resulted in stronger community links being formed.

Organisations can decide to pair volunteers up with support volunteers when necessary. At CSV East Riding, this is an extra cost in terms of travel expenses and time taken in recruiting, preparing and placing volunteers; however, it does have the added benefit of creating more volunteer positions. Pairing disabled volunteers with support volunteers is mutually beneficial. Both volunteers are placed into a voluntary role, they can learn more from the experience of working together and the organisation where they volunteer feels confident that there is an adequate support system in place and gains the help of two volunteers rather than just one.

At Inspire Nottingham, they also apply a practice of pairing volunteers. John (name has been changed) has a learning disability and is both a service user and supported volunteer at Inspire. Although he is a very capable supported volunteer he has been paired with another volunteer for his new role at the charity shop. Working in the shop requires extra responsibility so staff at Inspire teamed him up with another regular volunteer to give him additional support. The match was carefully thought out beforehand as Inspire did not want the supported volunteer, who has made great progress, to feel deflated about not working single-handed. The volunteer they placed him with, who happens to be a refugee, is very receptive and knew how to approach the situation. Inspire Nottingham noted that it is great to see how two people from such different backgrounds and experiences are getting on. By being paired together, John has someone to call on if required while the support volunteer, a non-native English speaker, can improve his English and apply and develop skills in working as part of a team while learning more about learning disabilities. For shoppers and local residents, it is good for

⁴⁴ See Appendix 3: BTCV Durham Case Study



them to witness this interaction; a positive example of equality and diversity in their community. The organisation may also benefit from this positive PR if other residents, encouraged by Inspire's inclusive attitude to volunteering, offer to volunteer or contribute themselves to the organisation.

At DIAL-Solihull, the premises have disability access and are fully equipped. All of the volunteers are people with disabilities, including some who are wheelchair users. Despite having adequate facilities, there is not enough space to involve more than three wheelchair users at any one time. Instead of turning a volunteer away, staff members ensure that every volunteer is fully accommodated by operating a rotation system whereby volunteers who use wheelchairs can volunteer on alternate days. In another example, DIAL-Solihull was approached by an agency hoping to place a volunteer with a significant weight problem at their office. The volunteer was disabled and suffering from severe obesity. Unsure where to seat the volunteer and how best to apply his skills in the organisation, it was decided that a reception desk would be set up near the door where he could meet and greet clients as they come in and perform reception duties. Sadly he died before he had the opportunity to work at DIAL. However, this example illustrates that perceived challenges do not necessarily have to be barriers in volunteering and that there are ways of solving problems given extra thought and creativity, and which do not necessarily require money to be spent to be achieved.



Main benefits of involving VURGs

Volunteers add value to an organisation. They spread the workload, bring new skills and experience, innovate and bring fresh approaches and make the workplace more diverse and interesting. Volunteers from under-represented groups can bring a number of specific and distinctive benefits of their own.

Language

Where language is perceived as a barrier in one organisation, it can prove to be a benefit in another. At RAMFEL most of the volunteers are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants and their language skills are an important resource and can be a cost-saver. Imperfect English language skills are not viewed as detrimental to this service. Volunteers often act as interpreters and help with the translation of documents for staff supporting a number of clients from various non-English speaking countries. This has resulted in dramatic savings on the costs of interpreter fees. In addition to helping the staff out, volunteers are able to make the client feel more comfortable by speaking their native language and can assist them in general queries they might have, therefore saving the caseworker's time.

Although Medway NHS Trust cited language as a barrier to involving volunteers who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants, they also found it a benefit and the hospital holds a database of all the languages spoken by non-native English speakers. If a patient is unable to understand English, volunteers and/or paid staff on shift are used to interpret. Even if a volunteer does not speak English well, there are other ways their skills can be applied in a volunteering role.

Specialist knowledge and experience

Volunteers who are themselves from an organisation's service user or client group often bring specialist knowledge and personal experience that can be positively applied to the service. Organisations often encourage people from their client group to apply to become volunteers. By involving volunteers who have similar experiences and face the same problems with the clients, the service is developed through relationships built between the volunteer and the service user. This kind of relationship building can be found to have advantages for organisation and the quality of their services. RNID recruits volunteers who are deaf or who suffer hearing loss and their involvement is central to the service. For RNID it is important to have volunteers who are best able to understand issues surrounding hearing loss and deafness. RNID believe that members of the public who may be suffering from hearing loss feel more comfortable discussing problems with someone who has been through a similar experience. Volunteers who are deaf or have hearing loss will have first hand knowledge and experience of living with that disability and so can provide others with a service based on that personal experience.



At DIAL-Solihull, all of the volunteers are people with disabilities. A major part of the organisation's ethos is to fully involve people with disabilities and it believes that the success of the service is due to the expertise that disabled people bring. DIAL-Solihull points out, *"The benefits are enormous; they make us what we are. If we didn't have volunteers with disabilities I think it would make the organisation far less effective and less knowledgeable and less empathetic no matter how hard you tried as you just would not have that experience."*⁴⁵ Volunteers at DIAL-Solihull answer public queries via the telephone and face-to-face. Often, people come to DIAL who require assistance filling in forms and the questions can be extremely personal in nature. Clients tend to feel less awkward discussing their disability with a volunteer who has also had to respond to such questions and who will be able to provide advice on how best to complete the form.

Evidence from respondents showed that having diversity of volunteers in the workplace enriches it. Staff have a chance to share their knowledge and learn about people they may not normally have contact with in their personal or professional lives. Medway NHS Trust recruits a large number of volunteers to work in and around the hospital, where being with people who have come from other countries can help in broadening understanding, tolerance and appreciation of racial or cultural differences. Volunteers with disabilities can be motivational for patients who may be feeling low about their situation, seeing that others with disabilities working in the hospital can aid in rehabilitation. In an example given during an interview, patients who have recently had an amputation and see volunteers who are amputees themselves helps boost morale a great deal, as it shows that they too can go on with their everyday lives.

Community cohesion

Involving volunteers from under-represented groups is one way for organisations to reach out to marginalised sections of the community that otherwise may be difficult to access. For the police service, this might be considered to be an important priority. In a case study with the Greater Manchester Police Oldham Division, building community confidence and trust was cited as one of the principle benefits of including volunteers from under-represented groups. By having volunteers from those groups in the police service they report that they hope to make it easier for the police to engage with the community it serves, with the aim of providing better services to local residents. Involvement of these groups in volunteering can also help to build confidence between the public and the police when for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, for example, there is likely to be a level of mistrust; asylum seekers may fear deportation and even volunteers with refugee status may be concerned about being treated differently. Greater Manchester Police Oldham Division does not currently have anyone from this group volunteering and has not received applications from any refugees or migrants.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See Appendix 9: DIAL-Solihull Case Study

⁴⁶ See Appendix 8: Greater Manchester Police, Oldham Division Case Study



Main benefits to volunteers

Volunteering is well documented as being an effective way for people to boost confidence and improve skills and can act as a great motivator. The volunteers from under-represented groups, throughout the case studies, echoed general positive aspects and benefits gained from their own volunteering in the same ways as all other volunteers. However, for volunteers from the investigated groups, there is evidence that their personal achievements and growth from volunteering tends to be a matter of even greater personal satisfaction than for other volunteers. For example, the women from the Envision project at Newham College did not believe they could volunteer and lacked confidence and belief in themselves. Showing them that it is in fact possible and exploring their abilities has encouraged the women, who had never volunteered before. Everyone benefits from volunteering but for many like them, the experience can hold even greater significance.

Confidence

Confidence was cited in every case study as one of the main benefits of volunteering to the individual and in each of the volunteer stories, increased self-esteem was mentioned. At CSV East Riding, a monitoring and evaluation process is completed after placements. It has been found that most people have increased their self-esteem and it is an aspect of volunteering that is highlighted the most. To note one particular example, a young person with learning difficulties and physical disabilities approached CSV East Riding to volunteer and participated in a Youth Exchange project where she travelled to France. On the trip, she was singled out as a key volunteer. Since that placement, she has been involved in the organisation of similar projects, she has travelled again within Europe, and she is currently planning a trip to Africa. Looking back, she has stated that she would never have imagined her life to take such a turn.

For supported volunteers at Inspire Nottingham, the transition from member to supported volunteer, albeit for one or two days a week, is acknowledged to be really important. All members have learning disabilities, but as supported volunteers they are responsible for various tasks and trusted with those; they are no longer members only. In an interview with one of the supported volunteers, Sue (name has been changed) talked about how she loves meeting people and taking care of customers in the shop. Whereas before she was very shy and found it difficult to talk to people, Sue is now chatty and feels quite confident in her role as volunteer.

At RAMFEL, a volunteer who did not have much English was under confident when she first approached RAMFEL looking for assistance to do an English course. As an asylum seeker with no access to state funds, Laila (name has been changed) was unable to do an English course but began volunteering as a receptionist at RAMFEL although her every day tasks stretch beyond receptionist duties. Working on a full-time basis for RAMFEL,



her English has improved a great deal and she is now confident in managing the work load and coordinating with other staff members. She says it has made a change in her life which would have been unlikely otherwise.

It is generally recognised by the case study organisations that volunteers from the under-represented groups are likely to initially present as being less confident and may have experienced feelings of serious isolation and exclusion. For example, single parents who have had some time out of employment can find it hard returning to a work environment. Volunteering can act as a stepping stone back into employment or, in other cases, can provide the opportunity to socialise, develop and learn new skills and build confidence. With single parents who had children at a young age and missed out on further education, volunteering can offer the chance to learn new skills and possibly undertake training. For example, at Home-Start Mid Suffolk, volunteers are involved in training courses and gain practical experience which for some can lead to further achievements such as accredited courses and college. For all volunteers, being part of a team and an organisation has boosted both their confidence and self-belief. For some, volunteering has also reduced their sense of social stigmas.

Development of skills

The organisations in the case studies reported how volunteering provides a good opportunity to develop skills and how in most volunteering roles there will be learning and training opportunities. At BTCV in Durham, a group of people with learning disabilities volunteered for a set number of weeks. No one from the group had ever been involved in outdoor conservation activities and the tasks had to be adapted to cater for their level of abilities. However, they were soon confident in their duties and had not only developed their capacity to work as a team, they had picked up new skills in conservation and gardening. At DIAL-Solihull, the volunteer interviewed is good at figures. Since starting his volunteering at DIAL, he has improved his computer skills and was subsequently put in charge of managing the accounts for the organisation.

Volunteers on the Envision Newham College project plan and develop their volunteering activities in English lessons, so that what they learn in class they can then apply when volunteering in the community. At RAMFEL most of the volunteers are non-native English speakers yet their duties mainly consist of dealing with the public and other staff in English. The volunteer interviewed for the case study was unable to continue her English course at college but has been able to improve her language skills through volunteering full time at RAMFEL. When she first started as a volunteer, her English was quite weak and she lacked confidence talking to clients and colleagues; now, she is very capable at managing calls and handling reception duties as well as communicating well with everyone in the office.

Employability

For under-represented groups in particular, volunteering can be a bridge into employment, education or training. It can be more difficult for people from under-represented groups to secure employment, so volunteering can provide valuable experience of a work environment and the demands of a workplace routine that can also be added to their curriculum vitae. It is especially beneficial to volunteers who have never worked in the UK or who have not been in employment for some time. The women refugees at Envision decided to work on a voluntary project with children in a local nursery, and for some who hope to work in childcare in the future, it was good and directly relevant experience which they could add to their applications for paid employment.

In the case studies, there were many examples of volunteers from under-represented groups moving on either to employment or further voluntary work. At Medway NHS Trust, a migrant worker was a qualified physiotherapist but unable to practice in the UK. She found voluntary work at Medway hospital in the physiotherapy unit. Despite not being allowed to practice as a professional, she was able to gain work experience within the NHS and has since secured a full time paid position as a care assistant while working as a physiotherapist assistant at the unit when she is not on duty in her primary post. At DIAL-Solihull there have been a number of volunteers with disabilities who have moved on to volunteer for other organisations, or into paid employment. Volunteering has opened doors for these people and helped them to realise their potential and ability.

Social inclusion and community cohesion

Inclusion and community cohesion is a benefit to the volunteer, the community and the organisation, as discussed earlier. It is rewarding for the volunteer to contribute to the community while it is good for the general public to see people they may not usually expect to be involved in volunteering contributing to their local area. It can be inspiring for others to see that volunteers of all abilities and backgrounds are volunteers. For the volunteers on the Envision Newham College project, the women refugees have learnt more about their area and through their volunteering, they feel a sense of belonging in Newham. Last year, the project focused on recycling and the environment. Volunteers took to the streets giving out information about recycling and swapping plastic bags for environmentally friendly cloth bags. Volunteers had the opportunity to interact with other Newham residents. It was a good opportunity for the volunteers to practice their English language skills, to do something useful and worthwhile and also to feel part of the community. For some, this volunteering experience prompted them to have further involvement in the area.





Recommendations

Our recommendations are mainly about improving practice and management to overcome obstacles to the involvement of under-represented volunteers. They are not for the most part about funding, because organisations that are budgeting on the basis of full cost recovery ought to be including anticipated extra costs of provision for all of their volunteers, including for those who may have additional support needs. Our research suggests that it is this absence of planning or foresight in expecting that volunteers from under-represented groups will be involved that can cause organisations to be unprepared for the true costs of supporting or hosting them on placements.

We recommend that organisations tread cautiously and do not generalise about the costs that might arise for them in each case when involving volunteers from under represented groups. There are many variables to take into account. Each organisation's situations and circumstances, and those of individual volunteers, are all different one from another. We have given some illustrations of possible extra costs that may be incurred drawn from our analysis of the research data. These are ultimately no substitute for every organisation preparing its own budgets and making its own calculations.

Improve staff training on effective volunteer involvement

If organisations are inexperienced or apprehensive about involving volunteers from particular groups, they should make arrangements to provide more training to improve understanding of and knowledge about these potential volunteers and their benefits to their organisations. Hasty judgements made about inadequate language skills, or a challenging disability, should not of themselves be sufficient grounds to in effect turn down a volunteer. Training of volunteer managers should involve, for example, providing information on the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to work or volunteer. Greater exchanges of good practice could be encouraged; some organisations clearly have good track records of involving volunteers from under represented groups and have found ways of overcoming obstacles and they could pass on their experience and learning to others.

Funding bodies to encourage equality and diversity and support the potential costs incurred of engaging volunteers from specific groups

Funding bodies should use their influence over who is volunteering by placing conditions on organisations that they fund to increase efforts to reach out to and involve volunteers from particular under-represented groups. Similarly, funding bodies should appreciate that engaging some groups in volunteering results in additional costs to an organisation, as does the expense of reaching out to build links and relationships to different communities.

Ensure volunteers are in suitable roles that will encourage their involvement

Organisations that involve volunteers should make efforts to ensure that when people approach them for the first time, their offer of help is positively welcomed and accepted. It may require more time and thought placing certain volunteers but all possible avenues should be explored. Thinking creatively about how a volunteer can contribute to the organisation is a more resourceful approach than placing a person in an unsuitable role or even not accepting the volunteer at all. In conducting our research, we found some volunteers placed into low-key tasks that did not really make full use of their talents, experience or skills. Others volunteered only with specialist groups of people like themselves. Some organisations need to develop a more inclusive approach than they do currently to involving a wider range of volunteers.

Ensure that equal opportunities and diversity policies are effectively monitored and implemented

A policy is only any good if it is implemented. In carrying out this research, we came across organisations that lacked even basic data about the makeup of their volunteer populations. This raised the question about whether diversity and inclusion policies are taken seriously. Improvements are needed from organisations in their monitoring and recording of who is and is not volunteering with them if they are to be more in touch and better informed about where action needs to be taken to redress any under representation. Board members, funders and service commissioners should also be more questioning on this point in their reporting demands.

If monitoring is not being undertaken by organisations as a matter of course, there is a serious gap in the evidence to establish whether or not these volunteers are truly under-represented or not; and, if so, whether this is commonplace and widespread. The absence or poor quality of monitoring data that we came across during this study would lead to questioning whether under-representation is based on a perception that organisations hold or whether it is the true position. Further research to determine how extensive an issue under representation is would be useful.

Develop recruitment and outreach strategies to all communities

If the problem is that people from these groups are not making applications to mainstream organisations, then there should be more active outreach, marketing and volunteer recruitment strategies in place to reach, attract and retain volunteers from these groups.





Acknowledgements

Throughout the entire research process, many people have helped by providing contacts, passing information on, help in circulating the survey, attending the workshop, providing quantitative data and being involved in detailed case studies and telephone interviews. Without their contribution, this research would not have been possible and we would not have been able to gather such useful data. Our thanks go to everyone who participated in the fieldwork and helped in moving it forward. As some people have wished to remain anonymous, the following list includes the organisations who took part in the research and not names of the staff who were involved:

Case studies:

RAMFEL (Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Migrant Forum for East London)

RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People)

BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)

CSV East Riding (Community Service Volunteers)

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Medway NHS Foundation Trust

Envision

Newham College

Inspire-Nottingham

Greater Manchester Police, Oldham Division

DIAL-Solihull

Home-Start Mid Suffolk

Telephone Interviews:

Barnardo's

Addaction (Manchester branch)

Age Concern Islington

Barking and Dagenham Citizen's Advice Bureau

CSV Media Clubhouse, Ipswich

Henshaw Society for the Blind

Beamish Museum, Durham

Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid
VSU Youth in Action, Kent
MIND Solihull
National History Museum
Refugee Action Nottingham
Stonewall
Terrence Higgins Trust
The Stroke Association
Volunteer Centre Chester-le-Street & District
Nottinghamshire YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association)

Workshop:

Women's Resource Centre (WRC)
WRVS (Women's Royal Voluntary Service)
Catch 22
Youth Action Network
Age Concern England
Refugee Council
National Trust
CSV RSVP
National Trust
Government Office West Midlands
Association of Volunteer Managers
MIND

We would also like to thank everyone who helped circulate the survey including Councils for Voluntary Service and similar intermediary bodies and Local Authority Council departments.





Appendices

Appendix 1 **RAMFEL Barking and Dagenham Case Study**

The organisation: RAMFEL

RAMFEL (Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Migrant Forum of East London) was set up in 1992, originally as the Redbridge Refugee Forum. Its principal frontline service is legal advice and representation. With in-house solicitors and legal representatives, the organisation offers clients high level legal advice ranging from the initial claim for asylum up to actual representation at tribunals. In addition to this work RAMFEL provides support services, help in integration, English classes and housing support services. RAMFEL also operates as a second tier umbrella body as a campaigning and representative arm for smaller refugee and community organisations across East London. On average, RAMFEL supports 200 clients weekly across Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

Barking and Dagenham volunteering programme

The Barking and Dagenham project is relatively new and was set up in response to a visible need for refugee services in an area of London where there is far right extremism coupled with growing presence and visibility of asylum seekers and refugees. At present there are three volunteers working at the Barking and Dagenham office, all either refugees, asylum seekers or migrants from the borough. Fourteen volunteers are currently working for RAMFEL across East London more widely. Some of the volunteers were originally service users. For example, one volunteer came to RAMFEL as she had wanted to do an NVQ in Health and Social Care but was unable to do it through the public education system due to having no recourse to public funds (NRPF).⁴⁷ The team at RAMFEL conducted some research and there was nowhere to do the course at that time. Instead, RAMFEL offered the client a volunteering opportunity with RAMFEL, which she accepted and she has been volunteering full-time ever since.

⁴⁷ 'No recourse to public funds (NRPF) refers to destitute people from abroad who are subject to immigration control and have no entitlement to welfare benefits, Home Office support for asylum seekers or public housing.' Islington Council NRPF Network (2009): http://www.islington.gov.uk/Health/ServicesForAdults/nrpf_network/default.asp

Barriers

A barrier unrelated to the volunteers actual involvement, but which is nevertheless an issue, is the difficulty of reaching asylum seekers and refugees in the area. The programme in Barking and Dagenham is still being developed and is moving tentatively so as to assess the local reaction and response to it. Since the opening of the office in the area it has been easier for clients to access services. Before then refugees and asylum seekers from Barking and Dagenham had to travel to Ilford which is where the head office is based. According to RAMFEL, the volunteering infrastructure in Barking and Dagenham is quite weak and it lacks the capacity to support volunteering generically, so in its view getting under-represented groups engaged is particularly challenging.

- **Move on opportunities.** One of the main issues for asylum seekers cited by RAMFEL is that they have nowhere to move the volunteers on to after their placement. RAMFEL has no problems recruiting and volunteers often stay with the organisation for at least a year, with the longest serving volunteer having worked there for eight years so far. RAMFEL has created a space where service users can use the centre as a drop-in but are also active as volunteers, RAMFEL's concern is what will happen once they no longer need the centre and want to investigate other opportunities.
- **Information about immigration status.** One of the barriers for refugees and asylum seekers volunteering in non-refugee specific organisations is when organisations are not fully informed of what they are entitled to reclaim as volunteers. For instance, volunteers who are asylum seekers may incur some problems if they receive money for travel and it is not recorded properly. Asylum seekers are allowed to volunteer, but they are not permitted to earn a wage. They are entitled to have travel and subsistence expenses reimbursed like any other volunteer. However, if the organisation does not correctly document this transaction it could be misinterpreted by officials and potentially jeopardise the volunteer's immigration status.
- **Accessing mainstream opportunities.** Poor English language skills are often perceived as a problem: *'We have had cases where people have been rejected by mainstream organisation because they have said their service users would not understand them where actually it is incumbent on the organisation to make the effort to make that person be understood but I don't think many organisations are prepared to resource it in the same way unless they have got specific funding for it and it is a tick box exercise.'* (Director, RAMFEL)
- **Staff capacity.** Despite a growing number of volunteers, the organisation does not have the resources to pay a Volunteer Coordinator. The post would directly support the volunteers, especially those asylum seekers who are new to the country and are not familiar with the concept of volunteering. RAMFEL thinks that these volunteers require a proper induction and a support leader of the project.



All volunteers are trained before they begin the volunteering programme. This prepares them on what it is to volunteer, working for a charity in the UK, and working at RAMFEL. The training is geared towards refugees and asylum seekers to try and make them feel comfortable and clear about their role as volunteer as opposed to service user.

Benefits

- **Language.** Whereas with non refugee-specific organisations language is flagged as a barrier to involving volunteers, at RAMFEL it is a positive aspect of involving volunteers from this under-represented group and is a benefit to the service. The organisation has cut down on their interpretation costs dramatically through having volunteers with multiple languages.
- **Vitality and enthusiasm.** It benefits the organisation to have volunteers who bring energy to a service that can be particularly difficult and disheartening at times. Their understanding of the UK entry system and the process involved from their perspective as an asylum seeker, refugee or migrant is particularly useful and important: *'They are a permanent reminder of what we are about and it is useful to keep pricking our conscience with that.'* (Director, RAMFEL)
- **Development of skills.** Volunteers develop skills through the tasks set and responsibilities they take on at RAMFEL and this, in turn, increases personal confidence and their ability to progress. English language skills are improved and volunteers from this particular group learn other skills such as administration and IT.

Volunteer Experience - Tina's Story

Tina (name has been changed) is a volunteer at RAMFEL and has been volunteering there for over three years. Tina is originally from Afghanistan and came to the UK in 2001 to seek asylum due to fear of persecution and fear for her life following a series of incidents. She found out about RAMFEL through a friend and originally approached the organisation for some advice and support. After eight years in the UK, Tina is still waiting for a decision regarding her status. She has no recourse to public funding and lives with a friend while she waits to hear from the Home Office. Despite the stress and instability of not having status in the UK and unsure of what the future holds, Tina continues every day life as normal and is determined to be positive and her volunteering helps her achieve this.

In an interview with Tina, we discuss her voluntary role at RAMFEL. When she first started Tina was assigned to filing and other non-client facing duties. When Tina first arrived in the UK she had attended college and taken English lessons in which she was top of the class. However when her support was cut, she was no longer able to study English at the college. When she started volunteering for RAMFEL her English was not very good but through practicing with colleagues and clients at RAMFEL, she has improved her English communication skills and is much more confident. Tina's duties now include managing the reception area, taking calls, photocopying and other administrative roles.

When I speak to Tina, she has a busy day ahead organising food bags for asylum seekers who have no access to funds and sorting out the clothes that are donated to the charity and distributing them to people who need them. In addition to these general tasks, she is going to translate a letter for a client. Tina is the only worker who speaks Dari, one of the principal languages spoken in Afghanistan. There is one particular client who comes in and does not speak any English and so Tina often spends time with him. Tina also speaks Farsi, Urdu and Hindi and acts as an interpreter and translator at RAMFEL. This is a beneficial and cost-saving resource for RAMFEL and is useful on occasions when a professional interpreter is not available.

She comes in every day and works on reception at the office. She enjoys meeting people and likes the reception duties the most and her dream job would be as a receptionist. When clients come in, she is often able to talk to them in their own language. In terms of development and new skills, Tina could not speak much English initially and lacked confidence. Her voluntary work has helped in improving her English language, she is more confident and has built a number of transferable skills such as IT proficiency. The only obstacle she had during her volunteering was communicating in English, but this is no longer an issue for her. However she is keen to further improve her English and would ideally like to return to college to study the language properly.

For Tina, being a volunteer is really important in her life. Having experienced tragedy, loss and being constantly in a state of uncertainty, her volunteering keeps her busy and focused. She has built social networks at RAMFEL and made many friends. She is happy to volunteer at RAMFEL, as they are to have Tina help out. Tina carries out a multitude of duties, helping staff to concentrate on supporting the clients. Her interpretation and translation work is an asset to the organisation and on speaking with staff at RAMFEL, she is most definitely an appreciated and valued member of the team.



Appendix 2 (RNID Cornwall Case Study)

The Organisation: RNID

The RNID (Royal National Institute of Deaf People) works for the benefit of people who are deaf or hard of hearing and aims to change the world for those with hearing problems. Their vision is 'a world where deafness or hearing loss does not limit or determine opportunity, and where people value their hearing.'⁴⁸ The organisation works in areas from education and training to campaigning. It has a very active membership and is a volunteering provider with a large number of volunteers operating across the country. RNID has the majority of its volunteers coming from deaf or hard of hearing groups and tend to be older members; this is not surprising as 70 per cent of over 70 year olds have hearing loss and 90 per cent of people over the age of 80 years.⁴⁹ RNID appreciates the work done by their volunteers which includes the provision of information services, awareness and promotion of communication services and resources.

*'Volunteers help RNID reach out to more deaf and hard of hearing people, and move more swiftly towards its vision of a world where deafness and hearing loss are not barriers to opportunity and fulfilment'*⁵⁰

RNID reports that having volunteers who are deaf or hard of hearing is valuable to the organisation as it represents the communities RNID is approaching and they also bring invaluable personal experience to the service.

RNID Cornwall

RNID Cornwall is part of the RNID South West region volunteering programme covering Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. There are currently five volunteers for Cornwall of which three are hard of hearing and one volunteer who is able to hear but does not have speech and communicates through the use of British Sign Language (BSL). For the last year, volunteers in Cornwall have been participating in health fairs run by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Primary Health Care Trust (PCT) in addition to working on information stalls in other public areas such as libraries and village halls. Volunteers manage these information stalls and occasionally work alongside RNID staff.

Although the number of volunteers for the Cornwall area is relatively small, they are proactive and have contributed to not just the programme in Cornwall but also projects and events across the region. One volunteer in particular has travelled to Devon a number of times over the past six months to assist in events run by West Devon Connect; a programme which aims to provide an advisory service to people living in isolated areas. Held in village halls and focusing on people who may otherwise find it difficult to access services, representatives from various services attend, including RNID, and provide information to residents. RNID volunteers are tasked with setting up and managing information stalls and acting as representatives for the organisation by providing advice and information to the public.

⁴⁸ See RNID site: <http://www.rnid.org.uk>

⁴⁹ From an interview with RNID Outreach Information Officer

⁵⁰ RNID Volunteering Policy. Cannot be found online, request only.

With regards to the volunteering programme in Cornwall, RNID is keen to have more local people involved. This has proved to be a challenge. The region is largely rural and many of the villages are isolated, which makes RNID's job of reaching out to deaf and hard of hearing people quite difficult. With more volunteers operating in Cornwall, RNID thinks it would be able to extend their services to a wider area.

Barriers

The barriers cited by RNID concerning the involvement of volunteers from under-represented groups, in particular volunteers who are deaf or hard of hearing, apply to all volunteering programmes within the organisation and not just the RNID Cornwall programme. For example, in an interview with RNID, the Volunteer Coordinator for the South West mentioned as a possible barrier that it inevitably takes longer to communicate with a person who is profoundly deaf and this can make involving that volunteer more difficult. However, it is an obstacle that can be overcome through the investment of time, but with limited resources this may not always be possible. In interviews with RNID, the following challenges were highlighted:

- **Time.** Time taken to communicate with a profoundly deaf volunteer.
- **The cost of communications.** Volunteers who are hard of hearing require hearing loops for their work with RNID and volunteers with severe hearing issues may need a text phone which costs around £400.
- **Difficulty in providing information to an uninformed audience.** If the public do not realise that volunteers are hard of hearing or deaf, it can be harder for them to provide information and communicate with other people.
- **Booking and the cost of interpreters.** Interpreters require significant notice (minimum 48 hours) and therefore arranging for them to work with a profoundly deaf volunteer can never be spontaneous. It always requires time allocation and forward planning. In Cornwall, there are few interpreters and if there was an occasion where an interpreter was needed for an imminent event this would most likely pose a problem. Interpreters are also expensive and cost approximately £400 on average for one day.

The RNID Outreach Information Manager referred to a couple of instances when there were insufficient funds to cover the cost of an interpreter for a profoundly deaf person wishing to volunteer. RNID tries to involve anyone who wants to volunteer and the issue was resolved positively by ensuring that the volunteer had an interpreter. However, the volunteer is only able to volunteer once a month and cannot volunteer more frequently. RNID's concern is that although they managed to create a support arrangement for the volunteer this time, in the future they may be unable to acquire funding for this.



Benefits

For RNID, involving volunteers who are deaf or hard of hearing is particularly important. It believes that members of the public feel more comfortable talking to volunteers who have similar experiences to them and can understand their situation.

Engaging volunteers who are deaf or hard of hearing is beneficial to the volunteer, the service and the organisation. RNID highlighted the benefits below:

- **Shared experiences.** Members of the public affected by a hearing issue are more likely to have an affinity with a volunteer who has shares similar experiences.
- **Role models.** Volunteers provide the project with positive role models for other deaf and hard of hearing people.
- **Knowledge and experience.** Volunteers bring knowledge and experience of being deaf or having a hearing impairment to the service and can apply it in their role as volunteer.
- **Local volunteers.** Having local volunteers who know the local area and local needs gives RNID a wider reach and a better understanding of hearing issues in the local areas where they operate.
- **Skills.** Volunteers bring skills, expertise and experience to the service. For example, a volunteer based in Devon but who volunteers across Cornwall and Devon is a retired GP and he visits GP surgeries to give talks and run workshops for staff about deafness and hearing impairments.
- **Reduced isolation.** Feelings of isolation and lack of confidence can be lessened through volunteering and meeting others with similar problems and experiences. As with volunteers who do not have a hearing issue, the experience can increase employability, develop skills and improve confidence.

Volunteer Experience

'I feel comfortable talking to people that know I have a hearing problem and people that come to me have a hearing problem so they feel comfortable.'
(Volunteer, RNID)

Alice (name has been changed) has been an RNID member for a number of years. She suffers from an acute hearing impairment and has to wear a hearing aid without which she would not be able to hear much at all. She lives in a small village in rural Cornwall and has been volunteering for RNID for six months. As a long standing member she was contacted by RNID and asked if she would be interested in getting involved as a volunteer for the Cornwall programme. In the past, Alice had been involved in informal volunteering within her community, such as village matters and rubbish picks which she enjoyed and was therefore keen to volunteer with RNID.

In her role as an RNID volunteer, Alice is tasked with setting up information stands promoting deaf and hearing awareness. Information stands are set up in public places and at events and it gives people the opportunity to learn a bit more about hearing-related issues, seek advice and find out about what RNID does as an organisation. Alice sets up a stall in the library in a town nearby although she has also volunteered at events in Devon in conjunction with a local authority initiative. Alice is confident at running these stalls for RNID and has not required any additional training. However, she would like to master lip reading to help her in volunteering and every day life and hopes this may be something she will be able to do one day through her work at RNID.

From speaking to Alice it is clear she thoroughly enjoys volunteering. She particularly likes meeting new people and being able to discuss and advise on issues she can relate to: 'From my experience I can help other people and they can tell me their experiences and I learn something too.' (Alice, volunteer) The public's benefit from having someone with a hearing issue providing information at the stall is great, but Alice also gains from the experience. As a lady in her seventies living in a remote village in the depths of Cornwall, volunteering gets Alice out of the house. She enjoys being involved and finds it extremely rewarding and worthwhile. Alice would encourage others in Cornwall to get on board. Alice has a car and is able to drive. For others in Cornwall, not having a vehicle and with limited public transport, access to volunteering could be a major obstacle. With regards to any challenges Alice has faced, she has found her voluntary role relatively easy to pick up. The only difficulty she has is when there is a lot of background noise. This means that Alice prefers to set up the stalls in quieter settings so that she can hear clearly and communicate easily with people. Alice hopes to continue volunteering for RNID and looks forward to more stalls ahead!



Appendix 3 Durham Case Study

The organisation: BTCV

BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) is a leading practical conservation charity. It was founded in the 1950s with the vision to create a 'better environment where people are valued, included and involved' and a mission 'to create a more sustainable future by inspiring people and improving places.'⁵¹ Working with and supporting around 140,000 volunteers across the UK, BTCV help improve both urban and rural environments and undertake practical conservation tasks on a variety of sites and working in partnership with organisations such as the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts and local authority councils. Activities include footpath management, woodland management, pool management, planting, litter picks and a variety of other outdoor activity.

BTCV Durham: Easington Green Futures Project

In the North East of England, BTCV operates in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and County Durham where BTCV Volunteer Coordinators work with groups across these areas. The Senior Field Project Officer for the North East often works with volunteers from disadvantaged groups in County Durham and manages the Easington Project. Once a haven for industry, Easington suffers from high unemployment and is a deprived area in this region. The Easington Project is a volunteering initiative focused on bringing local people together on practical and training activities in the Easington area to enrich the lives of the residents as well as improving the local green spaces.

Based on a previous project in Durham, Green Gym Durham,⁵² the Easington programme came about by BTCV working with groups from Peterlee, a deprived area in the district of Easington with a high unemployment rate. BTCV identified that there was a need to conduct further work in this area and it raised funds from a charitable trust which is supporting the programme for three years. The project aims to encourage people from the community to get involved in environmental activities, offering personal and skill development which will hopefully result in increased employability and general wellbeing of the individual. In addition to providing voluntary work in conservation, the project provides a number of accredited courses and volunteers are encouraged to design and develop a learning plan so that they can map out what they hope to gain from the experience and the courses they are interested in.

Over the three years, the project aims to engage with up to 250 volunteers and will concentrate on working with under-represented groups from the local area: 'The value of using a people-centred environmental action approach is that it provides a way to build individuals' identity, confidence, and self-esteem as well as improve the environment and community.' (BTCV, *Easington Green Futures Project*) The Easington Project is presently in its first stage and it is working mostly with volunteers who have a low socio-economic status, who live in a deprived area, and who are unemployed and finding it difficult to get

⁵¹ See BTCV site, <http://www2.btcv.org.uk>

⁵² The BTCV Green Gym programme is 'a scheme which inspires you to improve both your health and the environment at the same time. Trained organisers take volunteers outdoors to participate in manual and physical activities. See <http://www2.btcv.org.uk/display/greengym> for more information.

back into work. In terms of the under-represented groups this research is investigating, BTCV are still in the process of promoting the project and so have not yet begun working with volunteers from any of these groups. BTCV hopes to recruit some of these volunteers during the year as the organisation successfully did while working on the Green Gym Durham project, which involved volunteers with various disabilities and single parents. Involving refugees, asylum seekers and migrants as volunteers may be more difficult due to the extremely low number of residents locally who fall into this category, although BTCV does engage with this group in its other locations.

Overcoming the barriers

In an interview, the Senior Field Project Officer who runs the Easington Project and who was also involved in Green Gym Durham, reflected on past challenges when working with volunteers from under-represented groups and on possible barriers in the future. Having done quite a lot of work with volunteers with learning difficulties, the Project Officer considers that the principle challenge is the time and thought required to involve such volunteers successfully. It is important to be well prepared, as regular tasks require some revision and different groups may need tasks to be adapted to suit their needs and capabilities. This challenge can be overcome through gaining direct experience of working with these groups. The Senior Field Project Officer recounts her experience working with one particular group:

'I had a group once and was told that they had autism but I was not aware of the extent of the autism. I had prepared a task with tools and as soon as they arrived I realised the task was too much for them and had to adapt the task. Instead we did a simple pruning activity and a litter pick. I had them out for seven weeks every Friday and by the end they were much more confident and could get on with tasks. They had a support worker so I didn't need to support them apart from helping them with the activity. I didn't spend much more time with them; I just had to be clearer with my instructions.' (Senior Field Project Officer, BTCV)

This is an example of a barrier that has been overcome by the staff member spending a bit more time in understanding and getting to know the volunteers and being flexible about revising the volunteering activity. It reflects a positive 'can do' attitude and imaginative approach.

As for other challenges, as BTCV operate outdoors and has a minibus the volunteering programme does not incur any extra transport costs. For volunteers with mobility disabilities, BTCV would have to hire a special minibus but other than that there would be no extra costs. When working with wheelchair users, BTCV can find allotment sites with raised beds so that volunteers can move around the bed easily and get involved in the activity. BTCV are careful at tailoring tasks for the volunteers who are sent out, *'It is like with any task, you find a task suitable for that person within that activity day.'* (Senior Field Project Officer, BTCV)



During the Green Gym programme, BTCV worked in conjunction with a project run by another organisation in County Durham and involved a number of single parents. BTCV linked in to the local community centre where there was already a crèche whose staff agreed to look after the children while the parents worked in an allotment close to the centre. The single parents were also involved in running the crèche and took it in turns to rotate childcare and volunteering. The project would not have been successful had it not been for the crèche facilities.

One of the biggest barriers for BTCV is finding organisations which will pay it to take volunteers out. BTCV charges as standard £300 plus VAT per day for their projects; this includes the cost for providing the minibus, a trained member of staff, Personal Protective Equipment, tools, First Aid, Health and Safety and insurance. Either land owners pay for work to be done, or BTCV approaches organisations themselves or vice versa. BTCV organises volunteering services for organisations' members or for related groups. For example, V-Tasty sent volunteers to BTCV to take out a group of young people (16-25 years).

BTCV in the North East would like to engage a wide range of volunteers, but they hit the problem of organisations being financially constrained to pay their charges and so sometimes they take volunteers out without costs being fully covered. BTCV hopes the Easington Project will succeed in reaching out to volunteers from under-represented groups as part of its remit and it is keen to work with these groups.

Often, organisations approach BTCV offering training courses on working with people with disabilities. Its staff attending these courses will hopefully gain better awareness and understanding of issues and the provision of a better service to volunteers from these groups. BTCV does work with the Environmental Trainers Network (ETN), which provides courses on working with community groups and vulnerable people, through to management of groups; the BTCV team for the North East try and attend those but attendance is dependent on available time and funding.

Benefits

BTCV believes that taking an active part in outdoor activity, working as a team and contributing to the improvement of the environment brings many benefits to volunteers and volunteers from under-represented groups. The most beneficial aspect of the work to the volunteers, according to staff on the BTCV Easington Project, is that the volunteers are out of the house and engaged as part of a group. BTCV have found that with volunteers with disabilities, their confidence improves dramatically and they build up skills. *'It has nothing to do with what we have done for them. They have done it themselves which is always really rewarding.'* (Senior Field Project Officer, BTCV) Referring to the example earlier, the Project Officer when first working with the group of volunteers with learning disabilities was the outsider, as the group members already knew each other. After working together on tasks, by the end they were comfortable and confident working with her and their support workers did not have to be so involved because the volunteers were working almost independently. The group was very enthusiastic and after finishing tasks, were asking for more activities to do. Their progression in carrying out the tasks was quite evident.

BTCV Green Gym

BTCV Green Gym is a scheme focused on improving health and environment simultaneously through a range of practical outdoor projects. Craig (name has been changed), a volunteer on the BTCV Green Gym project in County Durham, has severe learning difficulties and is registered as permanently disabled. He was referred to the pilot Green Gym project at Tindale Crescents Allotments in Durham by a local Primary Care Trust in September 2007. By participating as a volunteer for BTCV, the main objective was to develop and build his skill set as well as provide an activity to do in his spare time.

When Craig started as a volunteer he was shy, quiet and lacked confidence. He preferred to sit back and observe instead of getting involved in practical work. Craig gradually became more self-assured. He was involved in the development of the allotment site and played an active role looking after the growing of fruit and vegetables. Volunteering has helped him build his confidence and he communicates with the other volunteers effectively. All of the tasks have required good hand and eye coordination which Craig has developed over time and is continuing to improve. He has also broadened his skill base and is able to take part in a number of activities he was unable to do prior to volunteering for BTCV.

Craig has achieved a number of NCFE (Northern Council for Further Education) certificates for some of the tasks he has completed. Craig particularly enjoyed and excelled at the Dry Stone Walling training at Wolsingham. On Craig's return he helped the rest of the group build a Dry Stone wall raised bed at the Green Gym allotment site.

Not only has Craig picked up a range of transferable skills and grown in confidence, his physical health has also improved remarkable. Craig has a weight issue and since volunteering he has managed to lose weight and his fitness has dramatically improved.

The Tindale Crescent Allotment Green Gym continues to be a success. Craig is still an active volunteer on the project and helps with tasks and the cultivation of fruit and vegetables for the local community. Craig volunteers on a regular basis and thoroughly enjoys it!



Appendix 4 **CSV East Riding Case Study**

The organisation: CSV (Community Service Volunteers)

CSV (Community Service Volunteers) is the UK's largest volunteering and training organisation. Its mission is to 'create opportunities for people to play an active role in the life of their community.'⁵³ The organisation was founded in 1962 and is the UK's leading volunteering and training charity. Every year CSV involves over 200,000 volunteers of all ages in high quality opportunities that tackle real need and each year, CSV volunteers help transform the lives of over 1 million people across the UK. CSV has a unique non-rejection policy that aims to work with, and support those that need it, who want to volunteer to make a difference in their community.

CSV's work is delivered through its UK, national, regional and local offices by its project staff and volunteers, who ensure responsiveness to local needs and day to day links with its 15,000 partner organisations in the voluntary, public and corporate sectors. At the same time, grass roots work gains from being supported by the UK organisation's established policies and procedures.

CSV's vision is of a society where everyone can participate to build healthy, enterprising and inclusive communities. Key themes include Active Citizens and Civil Renewal, Lifelong Learning, Improving Health, Reducing Crime and Opportunities for Communities and Individuals.⁵⁴

The volunteering programme: CSV East Riding

CSV East Riding covers all of the East Riding of Yorkshire which is just over 1000 square miles and a predominantly rural area of ten main towns and the rest villages and hamlets. CSV East Riding is based in Beverley and provides volunteering opportunities to people aged 16-25 years. At CSV East Riding, the Youth Volunteer Development Manager and Youth Volunteer Adviser, place young people into suitable roles with various organisations and also adapt existing volunteering opportunities so that they are accessible and interesting to young people. It is important that the volunteering opportunities are fun for the young people as well as that organisations have policies and procedures in place to ensure volunteers are safe and properly supported. CSV East Riding removes the barriers of volunteering for young people before they are placed. It works with schools, colleges, and other places where young people frequent to promote volunteering, to recruit and to encourage young people to get involved in community projects. In addition to this the team supports the work of a Youth Action Team (YAT), part of the national youth volunteering programme funded by **v**.⁵⁵

There are presently some 140 volunteers registered with CSV East Riding who include disabled and single parent volunteers. CSV East Riding regularly involves volunteers with a range of disabilities including learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health

⁵³ CSV (2009): <http://www.csv.org.uk/?display=volunteering>

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ **v** is an independent charity aiming to inspire a new generation of volunteers (aged 16-25) in England. See <http://www.vinspired.com/v> for information on **v**, and CSV East Riding: <http://www.csveastriding.org.uk/> for information on YAT at CSV East Riding

conditions, autism or Asperger's Syndrome, and volunteers who are visually impaired. Volunteers who require additional help have their own support volunteers who assist them in their placements.

Barriers

CSV East Riding involves every young person who would like to volunteer, so the staff team has to overcome any barriers encountered in setting up a volunteering activity before a young person can start. Particularly with volunteers with disabilities, this requires time and thought which equates to staff time and money. In interviews with both members of staff, the following challenges to volunteering for under-represented groups were discussed:

- **Finding suitable opportunities with providers.** Occasionally placement providers will have a preconceived idea of volunteering and volunteers; it can be hard to get organisations to realise that a lot of people are going to be from diverse backgrounds and can bring different skills and are not the stereotypical middle-class volunteer they expect. This barrier is overcome by talking to organisations and illustrating to them the value of having all different types of volunteers in their organisation.
- **Travel expenses.** As a lot of young people live in rural areas but are unable to drive, especially volunteers with disabilities, taxis are used to transport the volunteers to and from their placements. Travel expenses are also incurred by the members of staff who visit the volunteer about four times before their placement takes place as well as an initial visit to the organisation and follow ups. This is a significant cost to the programme. Should a volunteer need a carer or a support volunteer, this adds to the expense. MV (Millennium Volunteers) used to cover travel expenses for volunteers but this stopped when that programme ended. There is a budget for YAT related expenses but this does not cover the other volunteers. Considering the rural nature of the region, the expense of travel for volunteers and supporting staff is a critical issue.
- **Transport.** Generally public transport is very poor yet often volunteers have to travel because the right opportunity for the volunteer is not in their vicinity.
- **Childcare.** CSV East Riding cannot cover the expense of childcare for single parents who have young children and want to volunteer. Although this is not usually a problem, there have been a couple of occasions where single parents have been unable to attend a course at the weekend due to lack of childcare.

Staff at CSV East Riding try to find the best placement for every volunteer but this can take time. In an interview, staff were asked whether they had ever been unable to place a volunteer due to a particular barrier or issue. Their response was that they have always found a solution and have sometimes created a volunteering opportunity themselves



rather than place volunteers with another agency. For example, a person with learning disabilities approached CSV East Riding but there were transport issues. They decided to place the volunteer at the CSV office where the volunteer carried out administrative duties. This had positive results as the office needed someone to take care of administration, they did not have to cover travel costs and the volunteer was able to pick up new skills and be supported in the right environment.

Benefits

This case study showed that the benefits for volunteers from under-represented groups are the same as for 'regular' volunteers except that they are magnified and the results are more significant. Those benefits include:

- **Confidence.** CSV East Riding asks volunteers to do a self assessment survey before and after their volunteering placement. Through conducting this process, they have found that most people have increased self-esteem and it is one of the points people flag the most.
- **Building up skills.** Through gaining experience of being in a work setting, the volunteers pick up new skills and build on existing qualities. For many, this is their first taste of the world of work and it serves as a helpful stepping stone into paid employment.
- **Community cohesion.** Involving a range of volunteers helps to break down social barriers and the community benefits from the interaction which often changes public perception of what it is to be disabled or a single parent.

The benefits of volunteering for people from under-represented groups are reflected in their stories. For example, Jennifer (name has been changed) came to volunteer for CSV East Riding a while ago. She has learning difficulties and physical disabilities as well as being from an under-privileged background. She lacked confidence and did not have a big network of friends. She wanted to participate in the Youth Exchange CSV organise with other organisations abroad. She was one of five young people to go to France as part of an exchange programme with other European countries. After one week in France she returned to the UK a changed person and had been singled out by the leader of the group as the best volunteer who took part and who mucked in the most. Jennifer came back with such enthusiasm that when CSV East Riding hosted the next exchange she was one of the key people on the board for organising it. Following this success, she went abroad on her own as a volunteer through a youth programme and worked in France for four weeks in the summer. Jennifer is currently planning her next voluntary role in Africa where she will be working with yet another organisation. She has also been appointed Chair of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council of the Youth Assembly. For a person with her socio-economic background and the difficulties she faces due to her disabilities, to achieve what she has is a tremendous feat and illustrates the massive benefits volunteering can bring.

Michael's Story

Michael (name has been changed) joined CSV East Riding as a volunteer in 2008 and is part of the Youth Action Team (YAT). No stranger to volunteering, Michael began as a volunteer for the St. John Ambulance and since then he has been involved in a string of voluntary activities. In addition to the work he does with YAT, Michael, 16 years old, is a member of the Youth Parliament for East Riding of Yorkshire and does other volunteering while studying for his A-levels at a sixth-form college. In his role in the YAT he promotes volunteering and encourages people from the community to join in. He and his team have taken on the V-Challenge and have been working on getting their YAT into the media. Michael has a lot of contacts in the media which has helped with the V initiative however he believes that everyone brings with them different experiences which can be shared in the team. Together, they have been on visits to London as well as publicising the team and their work across East Riding of Yorkshire.

Michael reckons that he probably has some sort of volunteering activity on every day which keeps him quite busy but he really enjoys it. When asked what he enjoys most about volunteering, Michael replied that it was *'the fact that you can just help the community and feel good for it.'* He has picked up a number of transferable skills through his voluntary work such as communication skills and campaigning experience. So far Michael has had training in subjects including media, photography, health and hygiene, and public speaking. He particularly enjoyed a sign language course he did, so he can now speak to deaf people; and he has also liked learning more about politics with the UK Youth Parliament.

'You can learn anything and everything through volunteering if you select the right thing' (Michael, Volunteer)

It has not been easy for Michael whose disabilities include Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), a mental illness which means he finds any work that involves getting dirty quite hard and which he tends to avoid. Referring to his own disabilities, he reports that many people do not know what they are and sometimes people he tells can react negatively. However volunteering makes him feel better about himself. Volunteering has made a significant impact on Michael's confidence: *'I think it has taught me to be who I am instead of trying to be something else and be proud of myself.'* (Volunteer, CSV East Riding)

Michael is an advocate for volunteering and believes that engaging in anything that is physical is beneficial, especially for people with depression. Michael is keen to promote volunteering and would encourage more people to get involved and for more organisations to be young-people friendly.



Appendix 5 (Medway NHS Trust Case Study)

The service: Medway NHS Trust Voluntary Services

Medway NHS Trust Voluntary Services cover Eastern and Coastal PCT, North Kent PCT, Medway Foundation Trust and Medway PCT. It is based at Medway Hospital in Gillingham. The objective of the Voluntary Services Unit (VSU) is to ensure that there are suitable volunteers in suitable roles across these NHS Trusts in departments where the volunteers are interested in working. It is claimed to be the only such unit in the UK to have received the Charter Mark of excellence.⁵⁶ The VSU has seven paid members of staff and the unit is tasked with looking after the client base, making sure volunteers are being placed, and ensuring that volunteers, staff and service users are happy and pleased with the service the unit provides.⁵⁷ For those volunteers following a career path and who are volunteering to gain experience in the health care sector, the team aims that the service helps them develop skills with the goal of increased employability.

With around 1,400 volunteers across the Trusts and with 30 per cent of those falling into one of the investigated under-represented groups, the unit has a mix of volunteers. On applying, a potential new volunteer needs to be interviewed, have references and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, go through a selection process and finally be placed into an appropriate role. Throughout volunteers' placements, they are trained and reviewed regularly. The Voluntary Services Manager is in charge of the recruitment of all volunteers for Medway NHS Trust and conducts the interviews, CRB checks, reference checks, training and reviews. The VSU Manager supports the volunteers through their volunteering and deals with any issues along the way. Both the Head of Voluntary Services & Work Experience and the VSU Manager highlighted that volunteers are treated as integral members of the team and they see little difference between volunteers and paid staff in how they are treated.

Volunteers work in many of the Trust's services. In an interview, the Head of Physiotherapy at Medway recounted her experience with volunteers. Due to the vicinity of Greenwich University, the department gets many students volunteering to gain experience of physiotherapy. Volunteers work in the vascular department where ward patients visit the unit to use the gym every day. As the wards are a long way from the gym, volunteers escort the patients there. They help the patients in the gym, many of whom are amputees, and they generally help the patient out, which may involve assisting the patient in a physical activity or just keeping them company. In addition, volunteers help with some administration, but mostly they focus on making the gym experience more enjoyable for the patients. As volunteers are usually with patients for eight weeks it gives continuity and this is seen to be beneficial to both the volunteer and the patient.

⁵⁶ See Medway NHS Foundation Trust website:
http://www.medway.nhs.uk/Classes_of_Information/Public_involvement_and_consultation/public.html

⁵⁷ At Medway VSU there are six part-time posts and one full-time post which is the Head of Voluntary Services & Work Experience.

Barriers

Despite their high number of volunteers, the VSU staff reported that challenges are few and they think that the unit is equipped to tackle issues which they are usually able to resolve. Looking specifically at the investigated under-represented groups, the following barriers and benefits were discussed in interviews with three members of staff:

- **Staff responsibility for a volunteer with a disability.** Trust staff can be wary of having supervisory responsibility for a volunteer with a disability. This can be resolved by talking the volunteering project through so that staff understand the ability of the volunteer and are reassured that the disability will not be a burden but a benefit. All such discussion takes place before the volunteer starts work so that they enter a pleasant and welcome environment.
- **Language barriers with refugee and migrant volunteers.** There have been occasions when poor English language skill has been considered a barrier for volunteers communicating with the public or carrying out administrative duties. Usually this is identified at the interview stage and the potential volunteer is advised to attend an English course and return when ready. In the physiotherapy department, language does not pose a problem as the volunteers are doing practical duties: *'I would see that as a part of the reason they are coming to give their time because they can improve their English. If they are having a conversation with a patient that is their pay back.'* (Head of Physiotherapy, Medway NHS Trust).
- **Continuity.** The VSU Manager stated that asylum seekers are less likely to keep up their volunteering. She does not know the reason for this, although it could be that they are no longer in the area or their immigration status has changed.

For single parent volunteers, no particular barriers were cited. The unit has a lot of single mums apply to volunteer and many are interested in a career in midwifery. When asked whether the Trust has ever turned down a volunteer because of their disability, staff could only recall one instance when they were unable to place someone as a volunteer at all. The person had Tourettes syndrome and Medway found it difficult to place him safely in any environment where he would not be a risk.

Benefits

The involvement of under-represented groups in volunteering at Medway is considered to be very important and is encouraged by the VSU. The unit is active in approaching organisations to recruit volunteers from groups, such as community forums, mosques and Sure Start programmes. The Trust says that they think that the following are among the benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups:

- **Role models.** It is encouraging for patients with disabilities to see volunteers with disabilities working at the hospital.

'It is good for our patients to see that people with disabilities can be active and be a part of the workforce.' (Head of Physiotherapy, Medway NHS Trust)
- **Motivational.** For single parents, volunteering is valuable as it provides a space for adult time away from the child and builds up confidence.
- **Reflection of the community.** For refugee, asylum seeker and migrant, volunteers from other countries who go on to join the staff of the Trust, it is good that the workforce represents different communities.
- **Interpretation and translation.** Volunteers from other countries are often called upon to interpret for patients and this is a very useful resource to have available, especially when there are emergencies.
- **Provide extra time for staff.** The work that volunteers do means that paid staff have more time to care for patients. It is often a relief to have volunteers help out. Patients also benefit as they receive a better service and the hospital runs more smoothly.
- **Added value.** By working with volunteers and people from different backgrounds and with a range of abilities, all staff and patients benefit. It is often a learning curve, with people finding out more about issues they may not have discussed before, such as about different countries from refugees and migrants; or working with someone who has a mental health issue for example.
- **Employability.** The experience of working at Medway is good for volunteers to put on their CV and can act as a stepping stone into employment.
- **Community spirit.** As a team it is good to have a diverse workforce and nice for the patients to see that the service is engaging with the local community.

'It is a potential bridge to the community. Our workforce should look like a community...' (Head of Physiotherapy, Medway NHS Trust)

Volunteer Stories

The Head of Physiotherapy at Medway remembers a particular example of someone who started out as a volunteer and went on to paid employment in health and social care. Gabriela (name has been changed) was a migrant from Eastern Europe who had trained back home as a physiotherapist. Unfortunately, on coming to the UK she could not be employed as she did not meet the required UK standard and would have to retrain. Gabriela sought volunteering work at Medway to help her get experience of work in the UK and hopefully to be a way of moving into paid employment, to retrain and to reach her goal of practising physiotherapy in the UK.

Already having experience and knowledge of physiotherapy, Gabriela was able to use her skills and was enthusiastic in her voluntary work. Her volunteering paid off when she was able to secure a full-time position as a care assistant. She continues to work as a physiotherapist assistant on a bank basis when she is not working as a care assistant. For Gabriela, volunteering acted as a bridge into employment.

Ruth (name has been changed) has been a volunteer at Medway for three years in the Phlebotomy department, where she manages administrative duties. In addition, she works with Ryan (name has been changed) one day a week. She has been a support volunteer for 21 year old Ryan for a year as he has Down's syndrome and is not able to volunteer on his own. His work includes handling paperwork and taking it to the departments, talking to the patients and making tea and coffee. Ryan loves the work and is always keen to be involved and is particularly good at interacting with the patients, who in turn have built a rapport with him. Ruth has learnt a lot more about Down's syndrome from working with Ryan, about what he does and about what he is able to do.

Ryan also volunteers at the Voluntary Services Unit desk on Friday mornings, folding letters and stuffing envelopes, which is a great help and time saver for the staff. Ryan would like to become a builder in the future. It is beneficial for Ryan to get out of the house and do something active and volunteering has built his confidence and improved communication skills.

Appendix 6 Envision Newham Case Study

The organisation: Envision

Envision is a national education charity that works with young people in schools and colleges and supports them in the design and development of community projects in their local area. The young people are usually aged between 16-19 years old and are tasked with taking responsibility for the project and carrying it through to the end. The organisation works in 100 schools and colleges across Greater London, Birmingham and other areas of England. Each year they help 1,500 students design their own local community projects covering issues such as street crime to climate change. Envision's main objective is to motivate young people into being proactive in their communities and contributing to change and improvement in their area. Another objective is to challenge the stereotype of young people as indifferent and unwilling to help in community matters. Envision reaches out to around 1,500 young people each year and has acted as a catalyst for community projects country-wide.⁵⁸

Envision ran a Goldstar Project with Cabinet Office (OTS) funding up until March 2009. This was designed to encourage and enable voluntary organisations and projects throughout England to realise the potential of volunteers, mentors and befrienders from socially excluded groups. Goldstars were awarded to organisations that had applied good practice in recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers, mentors and befrienders from socially excluded groups.⁵⁹

Volunteering at Envision

Envision's principal objective is to get students aged 16-19 years involved in the community through project work and volunteering.⁶⁰ Projects take place at school or college where students are encouraged to develop a specific volunteering activity to carry out in their community. The students, who are essentially also service users, become the volunteers.

The project for the case study at Newham College is unique to Envision, as the class comprises students of all ages who are at college to learn English as a foreign language, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). It is a relatively new programme and instead of being run at lunch time like the regular Envision volunteering programmes in schools, the project is held during lesson time. Envision is working with Newham College to help the students, all of whom are female refugees, integrate into the community. They find it more beneficial to use part of their lesson time to talk through the project and develop ideas. For most of the women, communicating in English is a struggle and so having the session during lesson time is better than an hour at lunch time which would be too short.

⁵⁸ See Envision website: <http://www.envision.org.uk/>

⁵⁹ See the Cabinet Officer Goldstar Project website: http://www.goldstar.org.uk/goldstar_projects.php

⁶⁰ See Envision website: <http://www.envision.org.uk/>

Once a week, volunteers design and develop a project together and during these sessions, an Envision Youth Educator Volunteer acts as a support volunteer and attends and assists in the progression of the project along with the teacher. Additionally, Newham Council provided volunteering training for the students at Newham College to give them a better idea about what formal volunteering is.

One project from last year focused on recycling. Volunteers took to the streets of Newham promoting the use of environmentally friendly bags. They provided a bag swap service, whereby members of the public could exchange their plastic bags for 'green' bags. The volunteers also gave advice on recycling. The project was deemed to be a success and a good opportunity for volunteers to feel part of the community. Newham residents saw refugees who have been living in the area a relatively short time out in public working with and for the welfare of Newham. This year's project is going to concentrate on childcare and the students will hopefully be volunteering at a nearby nursery.

Barriers

All volunteers in the Newham programme are refugees, apart from the support volunteer who comes in once a week. A couple of the women are also single parents. Volunteering for most of this group is a new concept as in many of their originating countries, volunteering is not understood in the same way as in the UK.

In an interview with the Envision Coordinator for this project, she reflected that in looking back, had she realised the students' lack of knowledge of the Newham area and of volunteering, she would have focused on learning about the area and volunteering right at the beginning as it would have moved the project along quicker.

Other challenges identified during the volunteering programme are:

- **Language.** English is a second language for the students and all of them have different mother-tongue first languages. Developing the project took time. It was hard to agree on a project that everyone could understand. This barrier was overcome by working closely with the ESOL teacher and the support volunteer and coming up with ways to link practical volunteering in with the studies and a focus on something in which the volunteers are interested.
- **Commitment to the programme.** Students were always changing, with some either giving up the English course to do something else, or because of family issues. There is not a continuous team and this results in a need for substantial input and support from staff throughout the project.
- **Childcare.** As it is an all-female group and most have children, childcare poses a barrier. However, Envision has suggested that they bring their children to some of the volunteering events, such as the marathon they are planning to participate in.
- **Confidence.** Encouraging the students to believe they can actually do it and succeed in a volunteering role.



Benefits

While helping in the community, whether it is spreading awareness of an issue or supporting residents, volunteers are learning and developing skills, building their confidence and forming relationships across different networks. These are common benefits that come with volunteering but with volunteers who are refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, these benefits are arguably magnified as they are beginning with less of an advantage than 'regular' volunteers who do not have to deal with hurdles such as language, cultural differences and feelings of isolation as volunteers from this group might. Through interviews with the Volunteer Coordinator at Envision, the Envision Youth Educator volunteer, and the ESOL teacher, the following benefits were identified:

- **Community awareness and cohesion.** By learning more about the area and volunteering in the community, the students relate more strongly to being part of the Newham community and will hopefully feel a sense of belonging. Last year, when the group did the plastic bags campaign, they interacted with people they would not normally talk to: *'I do think it helps them integrate into their local communities.'* (Volunteer Coordinator, Envision). For some, volunteering has prompted further involvement and they have been involved with green fairs organised by Newham Council. Similarly for residents in the area, it is beneficial to be contributing to the betterment of the community they live in. It also aids in breaking down stereotypes and negative perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers.
- **Employability.** Gaining some experience and confidence to be active in the community can serve as a stepping stone for those wishing to go into paid employment. This year's project, for example, is focusing on childcare and will involve volunteering at a local nursery. Some students would like to build on this experience so that they can apply developed skills and experience in the future in a paid position.
- **Improved language skills.** The students realise that despite not being native English speakers, they are able to communicate with the public and relay information to people they have not met before. It builds their confidence and skills in using English language and in other areas too such as working as a team and project coordination.
- **Increased self-esteem.** Gaining experience of mixing with people in the community and being active in their role as volunteers improves the students' confidence. Seeing that people appreciate their work and learning more about where they live may enable them to become engaged in other work in the future.

The volunteer coordinator who manages this unique Envision project comments that volunteering has strengthened the relationship between the students and the teacher. They go outside and do things together that form a strong bond between them beyond the classroom. As this project is entirely different to school programmes, it is interesting to see things from a different perspective such as the students' backgrounds, their stories and their thoughts on Newham and on volunteering: *'It makes us think that we may need to change our perception of volunteering. It has definitely challenged me and made me think about those kinds of things.'* (Volunteer Coordinator, Envision)

Leila's Story

Leila (name has been changed) is originally from Baghdad in Iraq and came to the UK in 1997. She has been at Newham College for over a year and was involved in last year's Envision volunteering programme. She will be part of the team again this year, but with her new peers as the others are no longer on the course. Leila has not been back to Iraq since she arrived in the UK, as she cannot afford to make the trip. She hopes that by improving her English and gaining work experience in volunteering she will be able to find paid work and maybe one day she will be able to afford to return to Iraq with her children to be reunited with her family. It has been 12 years since she last saw them.

'I live in Newham with my son and my daughter. Before I went to another college but I wasn't learning much English so I came to this college. This college is better and there are nice teachers and everything is good at this college. I am happy I moved here because I came to this college because I want to work and I have children. I look for a future for myself, I don't want to stay at home and have people pay for me. I don't like this. I am a single mum and it is difficult for me. I do it for my children, that is why I come to the college.'

I was a volunteer here last year with Envision. We did recycling. Recycling is very important for everyone. We swapped plastic bags with people and gave them good ones, environmentally friendly bags. Recycling is very good, plastic is not good. We teach children how to recycle. I tell everyone like my neighbours, "You must recycle everything and put in the orange bags." I volunteered on East Ham High Street. I stop people who have the plastic bags and we swap bags and talk to them about recycling. It was good talking to people. Sometimes it is difficult with teenagers. Some people want to talk and some people don't. You just have to be polite and talk to people.'

I learn how to help people and more English and learning how to support other people and how to advise people. Very good for everyone and experience in English. It is good to push people to speak English. You have to push. I have one friend last year she came with me and she didn't want to go and talk to people, I told her to push herself and talk to people.'

I would like to volunteer more. It is very nice because this work experience is good for me. I know before I wasn't working and now I work, I enjoy it. I feel very happy. I meet new people and everything is different, it's nice. When you work you feel young. When my children see me doing volunteering they copy me. My daughter asked me if she can come with me and help as she was on holiday. My daughter is 11, she went to a charity and asked if she can help. Volunteering is good for the future and the CV.'

On being asked what she would like to do in the future, Leila replied that she would like to be involved in caring work for either children or elderly people. In particular she would like to give advice to children on healthy eating, diet and lifestyle and spread awareness on the dangers around smoking, drinking alcohol and drug-taking, an issue Leila feels strongly about.



Appendix 7 **Inspire Nottingham Case Study**

'In general the diversity promotes more tolerance, more equality and more understanding' Manager, Inspire

The organisation: Inspire Nottingham

Set up in 1999, Inspire Nottingham is a small, locally-based organisation that works with and for people with learning disabilities; and provides a number of support services. The charity was founded in response to a need to develop and improve provisions for people with learning disabilities in Nottingham. Once the organisation got underway, it was identified that a lot of younger people accessing the service were in fact vulnerable adults. As statutory services are only obliged to support people with severe to moderate learning disabilities, those with moderate to mild learning difficulties often find themselves unable to access suitable support. Realising there was this gap in services, Inspire continued to get applications from this group and responded to the demand accordingly.

Inspire offers a number of services. They include a 'Moving On' programme that aims to encourage members to become more independent and guides them through this transition by introducing living skills, basic skills, cooking, art, drama and confidence building; '1:1 Support' offering personal support to those who have additional needs and/or are going through a difficult time; the 'Meeting Up' programme that concentrates on ensuring members have an active social life through organising day trips and activities where people can spend time together; a Basic Skills programme, assisting members in skills such as reading, writing, telling the time and other activities some people have difficulty with; and the Friday Activity Group, which focuses on making friends and coming together as a community to engage in various activities.

Volunteering at Inspire

Volunteers are integral to Inspire's work. Volunteers at Inspire range in experience and background with a number of them students keen to gain some experience in social care. Other volunteers include refugees, single parents, people with physical disabilities, long-health conditions and visual impairments. Diversity is very important to Inspire, which would like to encourage further involvement of volunteers from under-represented groups; in particular they would like more volunteers from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. They regularly visit libraries and community centres to promote volunteering for the organisation.

From the start, members of Inspire have been active in the daily functioning of the organisation with people often coming in early to set the chairs up and help prepare for the day. For example, during lunchtime there is a table with a spread of food and drink but no one person is in charge of serving the food, instead everybody is expected to make their own lunch from what is on the table. Independent living is central to Inspire's mission and this is reflected across the organisation.

'People with learning disabilities will be part of the design, delivery and management of our services.' (Manager, Inspire)⁶¹

Supported volunteers roles were created for members of Inspire who had progressed significantly to take on more responsibility in the group. So for two days of the week, a member will be a service user but on one day, he/she will be a supported volunteer. In that role they are treated as a worker and given set tasks to complete and deliver. The idea of having supported volunteers is to give members a goal and also to give them ownership of the group.

'Empowerment is really important so all the way along we do things with people'
(Manager, Inspire)

'We have always had volunteers, they have always been there but they may not have been labelled as such. Once we have labelled them, it gives them status.'
(Manager, Inspire)

Inspire's strategy is proving to be a great success. Supported volunteers are working in the charity shop as well as at headquarters. One supported volunteer moved on to work in a supermarket stacking shelves, which for this volunteer was a huge achievement due to their learning disability.

Barriers

Inspire is an organisation that involves several volunteers and supported volunteers from the three under-represented groups being investigated for this research. The staff identified key challenges and benefits of engaging with each of these groups.

Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

- **Communication.** Inspire has two refugees who volunteer for them and it had other refugees and asylum seekers in the past. On occasion, language can be a problem, for example one volunteer confused the voluntary position as a kitchen role instead of an all encompassing position working with the members as a volunteer support worker and providing the lunch. This issue has been resolved by using clear English and simple instructions and spending extra time with the volunteer to ensure that they understand the task.
- **Criminal Records Bureau checks.** Because volunteers work with vulnerable adults CRB checks are compulsory. Completing the CRB forms can be difficult for people who have not been resident in the UK for a certain amount of time. This has been a problem in the past and has been overcome by pairing the person up with another volunteer rather than them working one-to-one, but this is not the ideal scenario for the organisation.

⁶¹ See Inspire site: <http://www.inspire-nottingham.org.uk>

- **Cultural differences.** For some volunteers coming from other countries where there is a significant difference in culture and tradition, it can take a little of time to adjust to the organisational structure and processes. For instance, all the paid members of staff at Inspire are female and this can be surprising for a male volunteer unused to being managed by a woman.

Single parents

- **Hours single parents can commit to.** Volunteering as a single parent depends on the age of the child and the support network available
- **Continuity.** Inspire had some single parent volunteers who have experienced domestic violence and lack self esteem. Volunteering is good for them but transitory as Inspire found that they did not to stick with it. This could be due to fear they will be found and feel they have stayed too long in one place; or that they get allocated to housing in a different area. This can cost Inspire as an organisation, as they provide training for volunteers but then, if they leave, their costs of doing so are not recovered.

Supported volunteers with learning disabilities

- **Support time.** Some additional costs are incurred for the time taken to support and manage volunteers with learning disabilities, such as providing extra training in preparation for volunteering
- **Reminding the supported volunteers of their role.** As they are service users on other days, they have to realise that when they are a supported volunteer, they have a responsibility and role to fulfil.

For Inspire, involving volunteers from under-represented groups, in particular people with learning disabilities, does require extra time and support which, when monetised, can add up to a significant amount. Inspire have not been in a situation where they are unable to include a volunteer due to lack of funds. However, there have been cases where Inspire has not been able to keep a volunteer for as long as they would have liked, due to lack of resources for paying staff hours to support the volunteers.

Benefits

The Manager, also one of the founders of Inspire, looks back at volunteering 10 years ago when she felt volunteering was a predominantly white middle-class activity for women and retired men. Since then the Manager has seen a shift to a more diverse volunteer force which is great value to services. Inspire's example is that its members relate to volunteers from under-represented groups, *'If you are a single parent or maybe you didn't get your education, you may have a drive as you can say as a volunteer to a member 'Yes, you can do it too!'* (Manager, Inspire) Volunteers from under-represented groups and supported volunteers become role models and bring many benefits to the organisation. Their involvement at Inspire Nottingham is integral to the organisation's work.

- **Ownership.** For the supported volunteers, they lose the stereotype of being labelled as someone with a learning disability.
- **Increased self-esteem.** Most of the volunteers at Inspire come from a disadvantaged background and once they realise they can do something and can achieve, they grow.
- **Different skills and learning across the organisation.** New skills can be learnt and existing skills can be further developed through volunteering, including the supported volunteers who particularly benefit from having increased responsibility in the organisation. The involvement of a diverse mix of volunteers is beneficial to the organisation and staff who learn from working with people from different backgrounds and abilities.

Inspirational Volunteering

On setting foot in the hall at Inspire at lunch time, you are met by a vibrant energy and bustling members preparing their lunch and sitting down together to enjoy their meal in the company of friends. Everyone shares getting their lunch together and as a visitor to the organisation, I am no exception. I sit down to bite into my sandwich and strike up a conversation with Emma (name has been changed). Emma attends the Moving On group as a service user, but every Friday she is a supported volunteer. She tells me about a play the group have been working on and that they hope to perform to fundraise for the new shop that is about to open. On Fridays, Emma arrives at Inspire before the other members and prepares for the day ahead. She is in charge of getting the food ready in the kitchen, which is her second favourite volunteering activity to acting: *'I love it on a Friday. It keeps me on my feet.'* (Emma, Supported Volunteer)

Emma has made great progress within the organisation. The volunteer coordinator at Inspire recently gave Emma some marketing training as part of a project. A week or so later she was putting this training in to practice at an event where she made an impromptu speech about Inspire and encouraged participants at the event to donate - much to everyone's surprise.

Inspire has many examples of the benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups. Jean (name has been changed) is also a supported volunteer and works in the Inspire shop, helping the customers, making tea and coffee and generally contributing to the smooth running of the shop. Jean particularly enjoys talking to customers and meeting new people. Working at the shop has given her immense confidence; whereas before, Jean was introverted and under confident talking to strangers, she now enjoys it and feels comfortable communicating with people she does not know. Within the organisation, Jean helps other members with their basic skills such as reading and writing, skills she also improved on through Inspire. Jean enjoys volunteering and would like to increase her days at the shop.

'I love it. I can't wait to get out of the house in the morning.'
(Jean, Supported Volunteer)

Sayed (name has been changed) is a refugee who has been volunteering at Inspire for some time and has helped staff at Inspire understand more about the asylum process, advising on involving volunteers who are asylum seekers and refugees. Before moving to the UK, he was a teacher and also a volunteer for UNICEF. Sayed was referred through the Nottingham Volunteer Centre. The volunteer coordinator pointed out that Sayed could feel lonely in the UK and excluded from the community, so volunteering has been helpful in preventing that from happening. Sayed is going to be supporting a volunteer with a learning disability on a one-to-one basis at the shop, which helps the coordinator who does not have the capacity to be in the shop that often. The member who is a supported volunteer will now be spending more time volunteering than being a service user with the help of Sayed who will be guiding him along.

'It is going to be really empowering and I don't think I would be able to do that without the skill of Sayed. I think it is really exciting that someone coming from a different country is bringing a whole load of new skills with them. Could I have advertised for that? No. Sayed landed on my plate really and I have just been really lucky.' (Volunteer Coordinator, Inspire)

Appendix 8 Greater Manchester Police, Oldham Division Case Study

Volunteering for Greater Manchester Police (GMP), Oldham Division

There are two volunteering programme at GMP, Oldham: Special Constables and Community Volunteers. The volunteering programme investigated in the case study is the Community Volunteers programme, which focuses on providing direct support to the operational delivery at Oldham Police Division. The scheme aims to establish closer links with the community by offering opportunities to volunteers, draw on skills and goodwill that volunteers can offer, improve efficiency of GMP and improve services, provide reassurance to the public and add value to the service GMP provides to the public. The Community Volunteers are involved in various aspects of the service, ranging from helping Neighbourhood Policing Teams to develop closer relationships with their communities, to contacting the public to update them on the progress of police investigations.

The volunteering programme aims to recruit people from all backgrounds with a variety of different skills and experiences. The volunteers must have effective communication skills, the ability to work as part of a team, a community and customer focus and a respect for race and diversity. All volunteers receive a briefing on the organisational set-up of GMP, Data Protection & Freedom of Information Act, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities/Grievance Procedure and Diversity Training.

Barriers

Some costs that are identified in third sector organisations are often not so evident for volunteer programmes in public services. At the police division in Oldham, they are already fully equipped with adapted laptops and printers, special desk chairs, hearing loops and other facilities that may be required for people with disabilities. Non-public sector organisations involving volunteers with disabilities may not be fully equipped and would have to cover the set-up costs themselves for this group.

In an interview with the Human Resources (HR) department for Oldham Policing Division, the Manager cited the lengthy and detailed recruitment process as the principal barrier for becoming a volunteer for the Police Service, and this is for all volunteers not only those from under-represented groups. Due to the delicate and confidential nature of police work, they see it as fundamental that any volunteer or a paid civilian or Police Officer follows the formal stages required to work in this service. The process includes a detailed application form, references, background inquiries, a CRB check and an interview. The time it takes to complete the application process is a deterrent for some people looking to volunteer. Although the HR department make efforts to support a potential volunteer while the paperwork is being completed, it may mean that some people do not wait and go elsewhere to volunteer.



Another barrier is that for many people, the police service is not automatically the obvious choice when it comes to volunteering. The Oldham division has mostly attracted volunteers via their 'extended family' such as local Home Watch schemes or Neighbourhood Watch. They often get applications for the Community Volunteers programme from people who want to join the Special Constabulary but who need more experience before they can apply.

At present, the Oldham Policing Division has around 10 community volunteers, with one volunteer with a known disability. It is not known if any other volunteers are single parents as they do not ask this question in the application process. There are no refugees, asylum seekers or migrants volunteering for Oldham Police and they have not received any expression of interest from this group.

From speaking to HR and a Neighbourhood Inspector, a few possible challenges that volunteers from the investigated under-represented groups could face arose:

- **Time spent allocating a suitable role for the volunteer.** If, for example, there was someone who had multiple disabilities, the facilities would already be in place for them but the volunteer would have to be in a role where they can carry out their work without any assistance which would require some extra thought as to what this might be.
- **Criminal Records Bureau check.** Refugees, asylum seekers or migrants keen to volunteer need to have been resident in the UK for three years before being accepted as a member of staff or a volunteer in the police service. This does not just apply for Oldham, it is across the board. For an asylum seeker in particular, volunteering for the police service is an unlikely option.

The barriers for volunteers from under-represented groups in the Police Service tend to be organisational barriers which are the case for all volunteers, not just applicable to the investigated groups. The main organisational barrier that was cited is the need to expand roles and be more creative in what the service can offer volunteers to do. At Oldham, moves to achieve this are underway with the setting up of a focus group comprising people from across the Division such as police staff, community support officers and volunteers to look into and identify more roles.

Benefits

For the police, having a volunteer to come in and handle administrative duties helps the officers get on with policing in the communities and so it is an important and very useful programme to have. Involving volunteers from under-represented groups in particular brings other benefits to the service and in Oldham Police Division, they believe that this is the case with any volunteer, under-represented or not:

- **Employability.** For those who have been out of work for some time, such as some single parents, having the opportunity to volunteer with the police and to learn new skills can help in gaining employment again. The experience will boost their confidence and give them better opportunities in the future.
- **Community confidence and trust.** Under-represented groups are often hard for police officers to reach in the community, so having volunteers from that community in the police service makes it easier to engage with residents and results in better support for those residents.
- **Wellbeing and confidence.** As the police service prides itself on being very much a team environment, it is good for volunteers lacking confidence, which can be the case for people from under-represented groups. For those with certain disabilities such as mental health conditions, it could assist in reducing stigma as they are brought into a team environment and accepted as an integral team member.

According to the HR Manager, the benefits of involving volunteers from under-represented groups definitely outweigh the barriers in the police service. It is important to have volunteers from the community and those who have experienced barriers such as disability, being a single parent or not being a native English speaker. *'If we don't know what it is like to be a member of the community, then how do we know what the community needs.'* (HR Manager, Greater Manchester Police, Oldham Division). They see the benefits in engaging these volunteers as crucial to improved police engagement with the community.



Volunteering for the Police

'The benefit to come in here as a volunteer is that I am appreciated' (Volunteer)

Jack (name has been changed) is registered disabled and has had problems in his lower back for a number of years but with age, the problem is escalating. Despite being in pain a lot of the time, Jack likes to keep active and is a community volunteer with the Oldham Division of Greater Manchester Police. In 1983 Jack was appointed chairman of a Home Watch scheme in his local area and this position required regular contact with Oldham Police division. When the volunteering programme started Jack was asked directly by the police if he would be interested in becoming a community volunteer and Mike, then retired, agreed immediately. Four years down the line, he has never looked back.

As a community volunteer, Jack largely carries out support tasks for the police. His main responsibility is taking minutes at meetings and doing general administration in the office. Confidentiality is crucial in this position and before any volunteer can begin they need to be vetted carefully, which makes the application process quite lengthy. When Jack was asked if he would like to become a volunteer, most of the staff at the division already knew him and the work he did, and still does, for the Home Watch scheme, so they were fairly confident he would be a good candidate for the position.

Jack volunteers around four hours a week and enjoys coming in and being part of the team. His disability does not hinder his work at the division. Being in charge of administrative duties means he does not need to move about a lot, although sitting for too long can become uncomfortable. When he first joined as a volunteer, he did not inform the police service of his disability, as he did not think it was relevant and he did not want to be treated any differently to others. Jack used to work for a newspaper and he therefore brought good computer and keyboard skills with him. His colleagues are now aware that he has a disability, but this has not changed the way he works at the office or how he is treated. If he needs to get up and have a stretch, he is free to do so: *'It is just like being at home basically.'* (Jack, Volunteer)

Jack enjoys volunteering. For the police, his time is invaluable as it enables them to get on with more face to face policing and administration can keep officers deskbound when they could be out policing the area. Jack does not want to be picking up any new skills, as he is already an experienced administrator, but he does like being at the centre of police work and able to provide the opinions of a member of the public. He knows that the he is appreciated as a volunteer and he feels part of the team comfortable talking to all members of staff regardless of seniority.

Having been awarded 'Chadderton Neighbourhood of the Year' (Chadderton is an area in Oldham where the division is based) and nominated for the Pride in Oldham award last year, Jack is recognised by people in the community and his colleagues in the police as a reliable person in the area. Jack is proud to have been nominated for these awards and plans on continuing to volunteer for Oldham Division. Jack has not faced any barriers in volunteering, but he thinks that finding time is the biggest challenge to anyone who may want to volunteer.

Appendix 9 (DIAL-Solihull Case Study)

The organisation: DIAL Solihull

DIAL UK is the Disability Advice Network that works nationally across the UK and has around 120 local disability information and advice services for and run by people with disabilities. DIAL Solihull was set up in 1986 by some of the staff and clients of Solihull Council's Lowbrook Day Centre. The idea was that the clients who all had physical disabilities could be involved in providing a service to other people with disabilities and also 'find answers to some of the questions and problems that they had.'⁶² The organisation was based in one part of the Day Centre, however the centre was closed down and the Council agreed to set up and support the organisation in new premises. The organisation currently operates from an adapted shop in a local shopping centre in North Solihull but continues to serve the whole of the Borough of Solihull.

The organisation principally provides a telephone help line service, answers queries and issues on disability, and gives information on living with a disability to those affected, including carers. The service covers advice on social security benefits and form filling; holiday availability and leisure activities for people with disabilities; aids, equipment and adaptations for people living with a disability; and mobility and transport. DIAL-Solihull is also an advocacy and representative body.

Volunteering at DIAL-Solihull

It is part of DIAL's ethos to have volunteers with disabilities and it is core to the organisation's success. At Solihull, all 12 volunteers have one or more disabilities. These include people with learning difficulties, visual impairments and physical disabilities. The volunteers are fully involved in providing services at DIAL including face to face appointments, home visits and meetings in addition to staffing the telephone advice line. In interviews, the Manager and Assistant Manager at DIAL-Solihull stressed the importance in itself of involving volunteers with disabilities, in addition to the duties volunteers take on.

The majority of queries, around 60 per cent, are related to benefits and advice on completing forms which volunteers guide the clients through. Volunteers are involved in various tasks in the organisation and which these are depends on their individual capability. There are two volunteers in charge of helping clients fill out forms. All volunteers help clients either phoning or coming in with questions, which usually someone in the team can answer. Volunteers make home visits and engage in meetings, workshops and conferences as representatives of DIAL. The organisation runs very much as a team and only has two paid members of staff so the work the volunteers do is crucial to the success of the service.

⁶² DIAL Solihull, <http://dialsolihull.org.uk/>



In the interviews, it was noted that the charity is run by people with disabilities so that service users feel comfortable approaching the organisation and will feel confident that the people advising them are well-informed and experienced with an understanding of their problems. Often, benefit forms that clients need to complete ask for detailed and personal information and it is uncomfortable talking about such matters. Speaking to a volunteer who has had the same experience and who has had to answer similar questions takes the edge off and makes the process less embarrassing for the client. The Manager estimated that for about 40-50 per cent of the time, a client needs more help or information about living with a disability, such as how to get a blue badge or how to access more care, and that this need is identified by correctly completing the forms. Once additional needs are recognised, DIAL-Solihull can provide further assistance and support to a client.

Sometimes intervention with the client is initiated via the helpline, from where they are offered an appointment at DIAL-Solihull. In other cases, clients are referred by other organisations or from the local authority social services, as DIAL-Solihull provides a specialist service. There are always volunteers available to help clients when they first approach the organisation.

Barriers

As the organisation is entirely geared towards involving people with disabilities, there are few barriers to volunteers in terms of cost for disability access equipment. On moving to the shop premises, Solihull Council ensured that there were adequate facilities and that they were disability friendly, as was the Day Centre. Wheelchair users can use the facilities and there is a disabled toilet, hand rails, a computer with software for those who are visually impaired and a printer/photocopier at a height everyone can reach. However DIAL-Solihull highlighted some other barriers:

- **Accessibility working outside of the office.** Although DIAL's accommodation is fully accessible, if volunteers are doing home visits or attending meetings they may find that the property does not have disability access. Often, a staff member will visit a home before the volunteer goes to visit and this is a cost in terms of time. In the time they have taken to assess the access facilities for a volunteer, they could also have conducted the home visit themselves.
- **Support time.** For health and safety reasons, there always needs to be a paid member of staff present in the office. Due to the volunteers' disabilities, they cannot be alone in the building in case there is an accident.
- **Travel costs.** DIAL does not have funding to cover travel costs to and from the DIAL office although travel expenses to home visits or meetings are covered. This could be a barrier to a person who wants to volunteer but cannot fund it, especially if Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is the volunteer's primary income.

- **Office space.** The office space is planned so that wheelchair users can volunteer there but is not big enough for more than three wheelchair users at one time. This obstacle has been overcome by incorporating a rota for the volunteers.
- **Public perception and stigma.** In terms of barriers for volunteers with disabilities working with or making approaches to non-disability organisations, people's perception of disability and of people with a disability was cited as a barrier.

DIAL-Solihull could not think of an occasion when they have had to turn a potential volunteer away because of any particular barrier. In the past, DIAL has worked with volunteers with epilepsy which was an anticipated concern with regards to health and safety, but there have never been any actual problems to date. Depending on the person's disability, their individual volunteering role is tailored accordingly. All efforts are made to accommodate the volunteer; for example, volunteers are accompanied out of the office to their transport in the car park to ensure their safety.

Benefits

For DIAL Solihull, the fundamental benefit of involving volunteers with disabilities is the special difference they make to the service. Without the skills, knowledge and experience that volunteers with disabilities in particular bring, the organisation would be very different:

'The benefits are enormous; they make us what we are. If we didn't have volunteers with disabilities I think it would make the organisation far less effective and less knowledgeable and less empathetic no matter how hard you tried as you just would not have that experience.' (Manager, DIAL-Solihull)

Other benefits to both the service and the volunteers include:

- **Satisfaction, self-worth and experience.** Volunteers gain valuable experience by working at DIAL and they increase their confidence.
- **Employability.** DIAL had a number of volunteers who moved on to volunteer for other organisations, or into paid employment. Their experience of volunteering is beneficial for a CV and is an opportunity for someone to see if they can manage a full time job or would be better suited to working a couple of days a week, something they cannot test out in paid employment.
- **Knowledge and experience in disability.** As mentioned previously, DIAL's volunteers are so crucial to the organisation because its clients feel comfortable talking to people who have had similar experiences to themselves.



Volunteer Story

Chris (name has been changed) was first introduced to DIAL-Solihull when the organisation was operating from the Lowbrook Day Centre which he attended for support for his cerebral palsy. He has been volunteering with DIAL-Solihull for six years and comes in three days a week to help out. Chris takes on a number of duties including giving advice to clients via the advice line and keeping DIAL's records up to date. Before joining the team at DIAL, Chris did not have much to do, mostly staying at home in the company of his TV and radio. Since volunteering he is much more active and enjoys the structure of working three days a week. In particular he likes working on the computers.

In terms of challenges faced, the only barrier Chris has come across is if attending meetings the facilities are not suitably equipped for people with disabilities as Chris uses two sticks to assist him with walking. In the DIAL shop he is fine. Other than that, there have been no other obstacles during his volunteering.

The main benefit for Chris is that it gets him out of the house and interacting with other people. He enjoys coming in to the office, having banter with his colleagues and talking to clients. He has just started helping people fill out forms and is enjoying this new part of his voluntary role. As for his future plans for either paid employment or more volunteering work, Chris is happy to keep doing his volunteer hours at DIAL. Although he likes working during the week, he says that he needs to keep the other days for himself.

Appendix 10 Home-Start Mid Suffolk

The organisation: Home-Start Mid Suffolk

Home-Start UK is a voluntary organisation working nationally that provides support and assistance to families with young children who require some extra help in their every day lives. Each Home-Start scheme is an independent body which manages its own income and funding. Home-Start Mid Suffolk provides a range of services which include visiting families in their own homes and offering support, friendship and practical help. The service is personalised. Staff and volunteers develop strong relationships with families they work with while they help them with issues faced and relieve the pressures associated with bringing up a family.

Volunteers at Home-Start Mid Suffolk

Volunteers are central to the work at Home-Start Mid Suffolk and they provide direct support to families in need. All volunteers need to be parents themselves or have experience as a parent. Volunteers are carefully paired with families and stay with them until they no longer require support from Home-Start. All volunteers have to complete rigorous training before they begin their work with families and a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check is also necessary. There is a ten day training course which is spread across ten weeks which once that is over and they have passed the CRB check, they can start to volunteer. On-going training is given to all volunteers and there are compulsory individual supervision sessions with the Manager, plus regular contact via telephone and email with the manager, and group support.

Involving volunteers from under-represented groups

Barriers

There are currently 34 volunteers working for Home-Start Mid Suffolk, five of whom are single parents. Although Home-Start Mid Suffolk would accommodate a volunteer with a disability, the Scheme Manager suggested there may be some problems in matching them with a family. As the work involves visiting families in their homes and often working with young children if, for example, the volunteer had a mobility disability, the support offered to the family by the volunteer would be limited and restricted by access to and around family's homes.

With regards to single parent volunteers the scheme manager, did not differentiate between single parents who volunteer and parents who have a partner who works. If they have young children, both will require childcare or crèche facilities. Childcare is not provided and Home-Start Mid Suffolk does not have funding to cover such expenses, therefore volunteers are expected to make their own arrangements. Volunteers may wish to bring their children to sessions once they have been matched to a family and have



settled into their role supporting them but only if the family is happy with this arrangement. However bringing children to the sessions may not be advisable if the family has serious support needs. Home-Start does cover childcare for volunteer members of its management committee who attend meetings.

There are no significant barriers when involving single parent volunteers with children who are of school age by when additional childcare costs are less likely. The main barrier for those wishing to volunteer for Home-Start Mid Suffolk is having access to a vehicle and a driving license which due to the rural nature of the area is a requirement of being a volunteer. This could be a problem for a single parent on a low income who may not be able to afford a car.

The final challenge discussed is the difficulty for Home-Start Mid Suffolk in placing male single parent volunteers with a family. They gave a few reasons why this may be an issue, notably mistrust of men by women who have had a negative experience in the past; having another male figure entering the family could become a focus of tension for two-parent families; as a child usually has more female contact, the child could become attached to a male figure making it hard when the volunteer leaves. This is a barrier which rarely arises, but when there has been an issue, Home-Start Mid Suffolk has overcome it by matching the volunteer with a family group, where the role of the volunteer is to speak to parents and play with the children in a group not on a one-to-one basis.

Benefits

According to Home-Start Mid Suffolk there are more benefits to be gained than barriers for single parent volunteers:

- **Social networks.** Volunteering brings people into a group environment where there is a sense of belonging. Single parents may not have many other support structures in their home life.
- **Education and training opportunities.** For those who have been single parents from a young age and may have missed out on education, the training and experience Home-Start Mid Suffolk provides can lead to further achievements such as accredited courses and college.
- **Empowerment.** Single parents, like other volunteers, are encouraged by the issues they learn about in the preparatory course and during their work. Single parents are less likely to have had the opportunity to talk about issues addressed.
- **Common experiences.** A single parent volunteer who is matched with a single parent family will be able to make instant connections with the parent and can bring their own personal experience which will benefit the family. However, matching single parent volunteers to two-parent families does not seem to make such a difference to the service or support provided.

Volunteer experience

Claire (name has been changed), a single parent volunteer, has been with Home-Start Mid Suffolk for over a year. She supports a family with five children, some of whom have health issues and require home schooling. Claire was matched with this particular family because both of her own children suffer from health-related conditions. She also brings the experience and skills of working as a teacher's assistant. Claire found out about Home-Start via an advert and was keen to get some work experience to go alongside the Masters she studies part time. She seemed well suited to take on the responsibility of supporting this particular family who were going through a tough time.

When Claire first started with the family, they had reached an all time low with the mother of the family struggling to get out of the house and trying to juggle looking after five children as well as taking care of the health issues affecting some of the children. Claire provided adult company for Jane (name has been changed), helped one of the children with school work and attended hospital and doctor appointments with the family, dividing her time among the family members thereby relieving some of the pressure from Jane. Claire has also assisted by researching information on available services for the children which has been a great help to Jane.

Since Claire's intervention, there have been many positive changes for the family. Jane finds it much easier to manage the every day routine that before was weighing her down and causing her stress. Trips to the doctor or hospital are much easier with Claire around. Whereas before Jane would have to take all the children in to the consultation making it difficult to discuss matters with the doctor, now she can go in on her own leaving the Claire to watch over the children. With Claire providing school help, Jane is able to spend more time with her children individually. Before, she was unable to spread her time evenly and often had to focus on the child needing assistance with school work. Besides time spent with the children, Claire has built Jane's confidence up by being there as a friend and mentor. Through speaking to Claire and being able to open up, Jane now realises that she is not alone and that there are other people who struggle and need some help from time to time. *'Sometimes when you look down you think it is only you and everyone else seems to be doing well and you feel a failure but once you get involved with this you realise that there are lots of people out there who find things hard for one reason or the other... if I am pulling me hair out I know I can talk to Claire.'* (Service User) The fact that Claire herself has children with extra needs has also helped and she can relate to the problems Jane has encountered.

As a single parent volunteer with two children, Claire is particularly busy. In addition to her volunteering at Home-Start Mid Suffolk, she also volunteers for a mental health support charity, works part time as a teacher's assistant, and is studying for a Masters degree in psychology part time. Despite her commitments, Claire does not think that being a single parent makes a difference to her volunteering because both of her children are at school during the day and she does not have extra costs for childcare. During the holidays, Claire does not volunteer, but if she did only then would she have to consider arrangements for her children. Claire did point out that it is probably more difficult for single parents with children under the age of five to volunteer and she imagines that this would be a potential barrier.





This publication is available on the Compact website at:
www.thecompact.org.uk/publications

To order a hard copy of the report or for more information
please contact:

Commission for the Compact
77 Paradise Circus Queensway
Birmingham B1 2DT
Tel: 0121 237 5900
Email: info@thecompact.org.uk

Please direct any requests for translation, interpretation,
large text or audio tape versions of this document to:
publications@thecompact.org.uk or tel: **0121 237 5918**.
All requests will be dealt with on an individual basis

PRINTED ON 70% RECYCLED
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PAPER.

PAPER PRODUCED AT A MILL THAT HOLDS ISO14001
CERTIFICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT.

TOTALLY CHLORINE FREE.

NAPM APPROVED RECYCLED PRODUCT.

FULLY RECYCLABLE AND BIODEGRADABLE.

