

Making the most of volunteering in Waltham Forest



A cross-stakeholder strategy
for volunteering

2007-2009



Working together for a safer London



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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS	8
1. INTRODUCTION	10
1.1 What is Volunteering?.....	10
1.2 Why Volunteering Matters in Waltham Forest.....	10
1.3 Origin and Remit of the Strategy.....	11
1.4 Methodology and approach.....	11
2. VOLUNTEERING IN WALTHAM FOREST	12
2.1 The volunteering system.....	12
2.2 The state of volunteering in Waltham Forest.....	13
Strengths	14
Thousands of existing volunteers.....	14
Numerous and diverse VIOs	14
An accredited Volunteer Centre	14
Targeted volunteering projects.....	14
Local Area Agreement	14
Weaknesses	15
Lack of co-ordination.....	15
Capacity and resources	15
Opportunities	16
Threats	16
2.3 The future of volunteering in Waltham Forest.....	17
2.4 The funding landscape	18
3. DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL OF VOLUNTEERING IN WALTHAM FOREST	19
Introduction	19
3.1 Effective collaboration between core volunteering stakeholders.....	20
3.2 Visible and celebrated volunteering	21
3.3 High level of practical and diverse volunteering opportunities.....	23
3.4 Good practice volunteer management and development	29
3.5 Accessible volunteering.....	31

4. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW	35
4.1 Measuring the overall impact of the strategy	35
4.2 Moving forward.....	35
5. ENDNOTES AND REFERENCES	36

Executive Summary

Volunteering makes a critical contribution to personal well-being, community life and the local economy in Waltham Forest.

Volunteering in the borough has significant strengths. It is active and vibrant with a minimum of 19,000 volunteers and evidence suggests more people would volunteer if opportunities were available. Waltham Forest has an array of organisations involving volunteers, a Volunteer Centre and a Local Area Agreement with volunteering as one of its priorities.

Volunteering in the area has weaknesses too. A major issue is a lack of co-ordination between the organisations best placed to shape volunteering in the borough. This is partly due to these organisations being stretched and in competition with each other over funding. The result is a piecemeal approach to volunteering.

As a result the potential of volunteering in Waltham Forest is yet to be fully realised. This strategy provides a framework to co-ordinate action on volunteering for maximum effect. The recommendations in this strategy provide a set of actions on which core organisations can agree and work together.

The strategy is based on five building blocks or priority areas. The headline recommendations are included below.

1. A strong, collaborating core volunteering stakeholder group

The greatest priority for developing enhanced volunteering in Waltham Forest is the creation of a strong, collaborating core volunteering stakeholder group.

New Horizons Consortium recommend that:

- The cross-sector project steering board for the volunteering strategy and action plan converts to a Volunteering Action Consortium (VAC) to implement the strategy;
- The Chair of the VAC should come from the voluntary sector and be able to act in an independent manner to serve the best interests of volunteering;

2. Making volunteering visible and valued

Effective promotion and marketing of volunteering can draw in different parts of the local community.

New Horizons Consortium recommend that:

- The VAC should implement a joint volunteering marketing and promotion strategy;
- A borough-wide high profile Volunteering Recognition Event should take place annually to thank volunteers and those that enable their contribution.

3. Creating a high level of practical and diverse volunteering opportunities

A steady flow of new and varied ways to volunteer is critical to healthy volunteering.

New Horizons Consortium recommend that:

- Organisations providing advice and support to third sector organisations should refer client organisations with volunteering potential to Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest;
- The London Borough of Waltham Forest (the local council) should adopt a corporate policy on volunteering as part of its efforts to develop volunteering opportunities;
- The council should also appoint a corporate champion for volunteering and invite all service areas to prepare and follow up on a volunteer involvement plan.

4. Ensuring good volunteering practice

Volunteers should be well managed to ensure that they are not taken advantage of and to enable Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) to more effectively engage volunteers.

New Horizons Consortium recommend that:

- All VIOs adopt minimum quality standards;
- The London Borough of Waltham Forest should draw on the policy templates and approach to quality employed by the Adult and Community Services Directorate;
- Core volunteering impact measures should be agreed by the Volunteering Action Consortium to help assess the benefits of volunteering;
- A borough-wide volunteering survey should also be conducted every one or two years to establish a solid baseline of overall volunteer numbers;
- Active equalities monitoring should ensure representation in volunteering;
- Development of strong, effective volunteer referral mechanisms between the groups.

5. Accessible volunteering: pathways from volunteering to employment

Volunteering may be especially beneficial for groups at high risk of social exclusion but these groups may also need the most support to volunteer.

New Horizons Consortium recommend that:

- Support professionals such as benefits advisors are made aware of the benefit rules for volunteering for claimants;
- Programmes connecting volunteering, training and employment should undergo evaluation to establish effectiveness;
- Operational conversations between volunteering infrastructure organisations and Jobcentre Plus should take place to further develop volunteering for employability.

Implementation of the Volunteering Strategy

The Volunteering Action Consortium is to be responsible for the implementation of the volunteering strategy and its action plan. The Consortium is to be comprised of organisations on the project steering board of the Volunteering Strategy with some modifications.

Immediate priorities for the Volunteering Action Consortium include for the next six months include:

- Setting up the Volunteering Action Consortium and its remit;
- Establish referral system to enable VCWF to develop further opportunities;
- Volunteering Action Consortium to agree and provide guidance on minimum quality standards for volunteering organisations;
- Appoint a volunteering champion in LBWF and begin its corporate initiative;
- Volunteering Action Consortium to develop a joint annual marketing plan for volunteering.

New resources will help to deliver the strategy. However, funding for volunteering is competitive. New resources are coming into volunteering, and potential sources of funding include London Councils and the Big Lottery.

The implementation of the strategy requires a new level of joint working within Waltham Forest. The key stakeholders have expressed commitment to the cause and this strategy. If this momentum is maintained then Waltham Forest will benefit in a number of ways. It will become a community with greater numbers of well-managed volunteers as well as one of widespread volunteer opportunities. Most importantly, this will enable Waltham Forest to become a healthier, more prosperous and cohesive place.

Glossary of terms and acronyms

ACS	Adult and Community Services: A directorate (overarching service area that contains departments) within the local council in Waltham Forest;
ASDAN	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. An approved awarding body offering programmes and qualifications to develop key skills. ASDAN an accrediting body for the Certificate in Community Volunteering (see below);
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. BAME groups refer to those in Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese and Other ethnic groups. This term is preferred by the Greater London Authority as it recognises Asian groups with specific needs;
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic;
Capacitybuilders	Capacitybuilders is the national agency with management responsibility for the £70 million ChangeUp programme (see below);
CCV	The Certificate in Community Volunteering develops and accredits the general skills and knowledge that volunteers need to work effectively, whatever their role;
ChangeUp	ChangeUp is a programme funded by central government to strengthen the support and assistance available to voluntary and community organisations;
CVS	Council for Voluntary Service. These agencies support local voluntary and community organisations through a range of services and developmental work and providing them with a voice. In Waltham Forest, the CVS is Voluntary Action Waltham Forest;
EVM	Excellence in Volunteer Management. This is a learning programme designed to enable managers of volunteers to improve their skills through resources available on the Volunteering England website;
liV	Investing in Volunteers. This is a UK volunteer management quality standard for organisations that involve volunteers in their work;
JCP	Jobcentre Plus is a government agency supporting people of working age to move from benefits into work and helping employers to fill their vacancies;
LAA	A Local Area Agreements sets out ‘the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level’;
LBWF	The acronym for the London Borough of Waltham Forest – the local council;
LOCOG	London Olympic Committee for Organising the Games. Responsible for the show, including the workforce of staff, contractors and volunteers;

LSP	Local Strategic Partnership. These are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships covering local authority boundaries. They bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors allowing joint and more effective working;
NHC	New Horizons Consortium: Consultants developing the Waltham Forest Volunteering Strategy;
OTS	Office of the Third Sector. The government department with responsibility to bring together third sector-related work from across government and to help to support a successful third sector;
PVP	Pre-Volunteer Programme: a programme to develop the skills of young people who are workless ahead of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games;
SAP	Strategy and Action Plan. The name for the combined documents of the Waltham Forest Volunteering Strategy;
Third Sector	This is a broad term to describe independent organisations and groups that serve a social purpose that are not statutory organisations or traditional private businesses. It includes voluntary and community organisations and groups, charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and mutual organisation such as building societies. This term is favoured by government;
VAC	Volunteering Action Consortium. This is the body that this volunteering strategy recommends is created to take forward cross-sectoral work on volunteering forward in Waltham Forest;
VAWF	Voluntary Action Waltham Forest (see under CVS above);
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector. A term used to describe organisations and groups that exist for social purpose but are not statutory organisations or businesses. This is a narrower definition than 'third sector' (see above) because it includes voluntary and community organisations and groups and charities, but not organisations operating primarily through business means e.g. building societies and social enterprises. This term is favoured by government;
VCWF	Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest. An accredited organisation that promotes and support diverse volunteering locally for example by matching people that wish to volunteer with organisations and groups who involve volunteers;
VDA	Volunteer Development Agency are organisations such as Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest which provide support, training and information on volunteering;
VIO	Volunteer Involving Organisations: third sector organisations and groups, not operating primarily through business means that engage volunteers in delivering services and activities.

1. Introduction

"Volunteering is essential to creating an inclusive and mutually supportive society."

The Right Honourable Tony Blair MP, Prime Minister (1997-2007)

1.1 What is Volunteering?

Volunteering can be defined as giving unpaid help to an organisation, group (formal volunteering) or other person who is not a relative (informal volunteering)¹. Volunteering encompasses many different roles and people may not recognise what they do as volunteering.

1.2 Why Volunteering Matters in Waltham Forest

Volunteering can add real value to participating individuals, organisations and communities. It is important to Waltham Forest for a number of reasons. In particular it:

- develops opportunities and skills for local people;
- provides resources for important local causes and public services, from neighbourhood support groups to policing;
- contributes to community cohesion² by bringing together people from different backgrounds;
- promotes well-being and healthy ageing;
- provides economic return – with one study calculating that £400 million of public investment in volunteering generated a notional return of £12 billion – a return of 1:30³;
- enables active citizenship and involvement in shaping local life;
- can improve understanding across different communities and age groups;
- is an essential part of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The potential of volunteering in Waltham Forest is still to be fully realised. This strategy provides a framework to co-ordinate action on volunteering for maximum effect.

1.3 Origin and Remit of the Strategy

The forthcoming 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games places a spotlight on Waltham Forest and volunteering specifically as the Games will require an estimated 70,000 volunteers. Waltham Forest's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has funded the development of its first cross-sector Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) for volunteering.

The SAP acts as a map for key influencers and stakeholders in volunteering within the borough and sets out a direction for volunteering in Waltham Forest over the next three years.

Implementation of the SAP is designed to deliver a number of results which include:

- Improving coordination and development of volunteering activity such as recruitment, placement and management;
- Increasing the number and variety of volunteer opportunities;
- Elevating the profile of volunteering in the borough;
- Supporting trained volunteers and quality volunteering experiences;
- Recognising the contribution of volunteering to the borough.

1.4 Methodology and approach

Advancing the volunteering agenda in Waltham Forest requires broad involvement of potential and existing Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) and support from funders.

This strategy has involved key stakeholders within the third and public sectors and volunteers themselves (see Appendix A and B). The strategy has been developed over the course of nine months based on a review of literature; a volunteer focus group; stakeholder interviews; workshops with the local council: London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) departments and third sector groups; and online surveys.

The resources available for this study mean that it was possible to speak to a relative handful of the thousands of volunteers and hundreds of VIOs active in the borough. This is not a statistically representative sample and care needs to be taken in extrapolating findings. However, the research team has engaged with many of the key shapers of volunteering.

A set of core principles have informed the development of the SAP:

1. Volunteering makes a unique and essential contribution to community life;
2. The contribution volunteers make is distinctive to that of paid staff and volunteers enhance core services. Volunteers are not substitutes for paid workers;
3. Volunteering is a mutually beneficial experience;
4. Volunteering is freely entered into, but not cost-free and VIOs need to be clear that volunteering requires resources.

2. Volunteering in Waltham Forest

2.1 The volunteering system

At its most basic, formal volunteering is the product of willing individuals offering their time to charitable or community organisations and groups that want to involve them.

A number of core volunteering stakeholders within Waltham Forest have been identified for the development of the SAP. These stakeholders are local organisations that can influence the experience of volunteering beyond the boundaries of their own organisations. For example, they may be able to:

- Positively influence other VIOs as part of their support function;
- Share volunteering expertise;
- Fund VIOs or their support organisations;
- Involve large numbers of volunteers in their organisation.

Core volunteering stakeholders include:

- Age Concern Waltham Forest;
- Jobcentre Plus (JCP);
- LBWF (particularly Policy and Partnerships, Olympics and Paralympics Team and Adult and Community Services)
- Metropolitan Police Volunteers;
- Voluntary Action Waltham Forest (VAWF);
- Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest (VCWF);
- Whipps Cross Hospital.

2.2 The state of volunteering in Waltham Forest

The major strength of volunteering in Waltham Forest is the active level of volunteer-related initiatives and commitment to volunteering. Its fundamental weakness is that this activity lacks co-ordination. As a result volunteering in Waltham Forest is like a jigsaw puzzle with the pieces not yet in the right order.

A summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are laid out below.

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <p>A minimum of 19,000 formal and informal volunteers</p> <p>Home to the only accredited Volunteer Centre in North London</p> <p>Large pool of potential and actual VIOs and some large and VIOs including Age Concern and the Met Police</p> <p>Targeted volunteering projects to reduce social exclusion, e.g. WorkNet's project on employment and volunteering</p> <p>Local Area Agreement volunteering targets.</p>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <p>Weak strategic cross-organisational/sectoral collaboration</p> <p>Volunteer involvement in organisations constrained by lack of office space, funding and volunteer management capacity</p> <p>Waltham Forest volunteer numbers are well below the national average – this may be explained in part by data inconsistency.</p>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <p>Establish a co-ordinated corporate approach to volunteering within LBWF</p> <p>Positive climate and potential funding for volunteering, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'v' and young volunteers; - ChangeUp review; - The Olympics. 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <p>Organisational changes, e.g. a changing leadership at VCWF could be de-stabilising</p> <p>Loss of volunteering funding, e.g. to Forest YMCA</p> <p>Trades union objections to volunteers in the Public Sector.</p>

Strengths

Thousands of existing volunteers

According to BMG research, 11 percent (19,000 people) in Waltham Forest informally volunteered in the last 12 months and seven percent (12,000 people) had volunteered formally⁴. This is much lower than national figures that show 68 percent of the population in England volunteering informally and 44 percent volunteering formally^{5 6}. The discrepancy may be caused by different definitions of volunteering in the local and national surveys.

The Active People Survey 2006 also shows that volunteering to support sport in the borough is 3.3 percent – ranking second amongst the five Olympic host boroughs⁷.

Numerous and diverse VIOs

There are an estimated 1,000 local third sector organisations in Waltham Forest⁸ but there is no comprehensive mapping of them or their involvement of volunteers. Many organisations are small and run by volunteer-activists. This group represents an important part of volunteering. They create their own volunteering opportunities and contribute to local causes and communities.

The borough also has large VIOs including Whipps Cross Hospital, the YMCA and Age Concern that directly involve over 300 volunteers between them and systems and expertise to benefit other VIOs.

Volunteering in Whipps Cross Hospital includes ‘meeters and greeters’, patient visitors and a library service. Over 180 volunteers are active at the hospital. The Metropolitan Police have a leading public service volunteer’s programme and 53 volunteers in Waltham Forest.

There is also volunteer activity connected to LBWF such as Street Watchers who report environmental/ health and safety hazards including potholes and litter, Olympic Ambassadors and within LBWF’s Adult and Community Services (ACS) Directorate (see section 3.3 for further details).

An accredited Volunteer Centre

Waltham Forest has an accredited Volunteer Centre with approximately 200 member VIOs. VCWF carries out six core volunteering functions (see Appendix C for details) including matching individuals and groups interested in volunteering and promoting standards in volunteering.

Targeted volunteering projects

Waltham Forest is home to a number of volunteering initiatives aimed at reducing social exclusion amongst specific groups. These include Capital Volunteering which provides supported volunteering for mental health service users. This is delivered by VCWF as part of a Pan London initiative. LBWF’s WorkNet programme – a new approach to address worklessness in deprived areas – also contains a volunteering component to help people. Adviser is based at VCWF. Jobcentre Plus (JCP) also offers volunteering as an option to New Deal participants.

Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) sets out ‘the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level’⁹. Waltham Forest’s LAA sets targets for volunteer placements made by VCWF. These targets will see a total 778 placements by the year 2008/9, compared to 122 for 2005/6.

Weaknesses

Lack of co-ordination

Core volunteering stakeholders identified above have faced challenges in working together. As the Waltham Forest Infrastructure Development Plan notes:

'...infrastructure groups tend to compete rather than collaborate...'¹⁰.

There are two main causes of this tendency.

First, all of the core volunteering stakeholders face funding constraints. A lack of resources is a reason for collaboration – for example through joint-bids by third sector organisations. However, it can also create uncertainty and a powerful incentive to compete to survive.

Scarcity of resources has led to discontent with LBWF from some third sector organisations. This is not unusual to Waltham Forest. It is the result of a local authority's unique role as a community stakeholder and a funder. LBWF is in a difficult position because it may have constructive suggestions about volunteering or other issues but organisations may be unwilling to take these up without funding from LBWF as they may not have the resources to do so.

The second cause of competition is that volunteering crosses organisational boundaries. For example an initiative to support organisational involvement of older volunteers is of legitimate interest to Age Concern, VAWF and VCWF. Once more this could encourage collaboration – but in an already competitive situation it can add to tensions.

There are positive aspects to relationships between third sector organisations and LBWF. For example there is day to day co-operation between core volunteering stakeholders. However, some core volunteering stakeholders have felt disappointed and let down by attempts at strategic collaboration. It is telling that none of the core volunteering stakeholders is working together on any co-created projects.

Competition breeds competition and collaboration breeds further collaboration. Therefore, a priority for the SAP is to establish a climate for co-operation (see section 3.1).

Capacity and resources

There are real and binding resource constraints that limit volunteering. For example co-ordinating volunteering within an organisation draws down management time and money. This is the case whether the organisation concerned is LBWF developing a cross-organisational approach to volunteering or a small third sector organisation lacking office space for a volunteer or too swamped to manage volunteers.

The latter scenario also represents an important paradox that can affect volunteering – sometimes the organisations that could most benefit from volunteers are the least able to involve them.

These constraints – to a greater or lesser extent – exist in other boroughs. LBWF, to its credit, has adopted three-year funding settlements when commissioning services from third sector organisations. This at least creates some stability for investment in volunteering and other activities.

The SAP will help to use existing resources for volunteering more effectively and to encourage good practice and partnership to lever in new funding.

Opportunities

UK Government interest

Central government is taking considerable interest in volunteering. This means that efforts in Waltham Forest to enhance volunteering will at the least generate positive feedback and possibly access new funding.

Central government is signalling its volunteering priorities through a number of programmes:

- Excluded or disadvantaged groups: The Office for the Third Sector's (OTS) 'Volunteering for All' programme targets excluded communities as does the OTS funded Goldstar programme;
- Young people: A new charity called 'v' was launched in May 2006 to support volunteering opportunities for young people (aged 16-25). The charity has funding worth up to £50 million;
- Developing the third sector: The Government is taking steps to strengthen the capacity and voice of the local third sector, including benefits for volunteering¹¹. Initiatives include ChangeUp¹² and the report on the future role of the Third Sector¹³.

2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

The approach of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games has put considerable focus on volunteering, particularly within the five host London boroughs. The Olympic and Paralympic Games Volunteering Strategy will be available to the public in Autumn 2007. Pilot programmes such as the Pre-Volunteer Programme (PVP) to help disadvantaged groups to prepare for application to join the volunteer programme at the Games began in early 2007¹⁴ (see section 3.5).

Other opportunities include the Mayor's strategy to deliver the programme objectives of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This is expected to include activity to collect baseline information on volunteering and enhance the volunteer infrastructure in London. London Councils are also piloting projects to contribute to volunteering objectives for 2012. Waltham Forest is already receiving some benefit from this activity. The core volunteering stakeholders may also be able to secure new resources for volunteering in the borough by keeping a close watch on developments.

Threats

Vulnerability in Organisations and Programmes

The core volunteer stakeholder organisations are instrumental to progressing volunteering in Waltham Forest. Changes within these organisations – such as the change in leadership at VCWF – can create possibility as well as vulnerability for volunteering in Waltham Forest. VCWF will need the support of other core volunteering stakeholders to make their transition process as smooth as possible.

Neither is there a lasting funding settlement for Volunteer Centres. A formula developed for Volunteering England states that VCWF requires funding of £135,775 to effectively deliver its six core functions¹⁵. This adds a level of instability to VCWF and its services to VIOs. Elsewhere, the end of the Millennium Volunteers programme resulted in Forest YMCA losing two volunteer co-ordinators.

Trades Unions

Trades unions may have concerns that the involvement of volunteers in the public sector is a form of job substitution or means to add people after job losses. Met Volunteers has run into problems with an office workers' union. As a consequence public sector volunteer initiatives need to take particular care over and involve unions in developing plans.

2.3 The future of volunteering in Waltham Forest

There is forward momentum in volunteering in Waltham Forest. If momentum can be built on and opportunities taken then by 2009 the landscape for volunteering in Waltham Forest will mean that:

- Organisations best placed to shape volunteering in the borough work together in a cohesive manner;
- There is broad understanding and interest in volunteering amongst the local population and potential volunteers know where to go to find out more;
- Volunteers actively seeking opportunities are effectively paired with VIOs who need them;
- The barriers to volunteering are low and a range of groups at risk of exclusion are provided with opportunities and support;
- The third sector and public sector is creative in developing opportunities for volunteers;
- There are general high standards in volunteer management;
- Volunteer numbers in the borough are high and compare favourably with the national average;
- There is a growing body of local intelligence that volunteering is leading to positive individual and community outcomes;
- Waltham Forest is recognised as a borough with a strong volunteering culture.

2.4 The funding landscape

Currently there is no new funding set aside for the actions required by the SAP or to measure its impacts. Initially, core volunteering stakeholders will need to work to deliver the SAP within existing resources. Funding for volunteering is competitive and it can be difficult to predict funding priorities. There are, however, at least three specific sources of funding that could be used to support the SAP:

1. A new funding programme from London Councils to support volunteering across London in the run up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games;
2. Upcoming money through ChangeUp to support Consortium bids to develop the local third sector;
3. The Big Lottery Fund is currently consulting on its second phase of BASIS (infrastructure) funding, and is likely to have significant element for volunteering.

There is clear interest in support for volunteering from central government. Likely priorities include¹⁶:

- youth crime;
- sporting activity;
- educational attainment;
- boosting employment;
- and intergenerational volunteering.

The funding to be provided on these issues is unclear. However, new volunteering initiatives in Waltham Forest that are in line with these priorities could be well placed to secure funding.

The programme of work outlined in this SAP and carried through by core volunteering stakeholders would make a solid base for bids to London Councils, BASIS and ChangeUp. Any bids would be strengthened by a target to increase volunteer numbers. However, there are question marks over reliability of borough-wide volunteer data. Secondly, the core volunteering stakeholders have influence on only a proportion of total volunteering in the borough so could not be held responsible for a borough-wide target. The position should be revisited once new borough-wider volunteering numbers are available (see section 3.4).

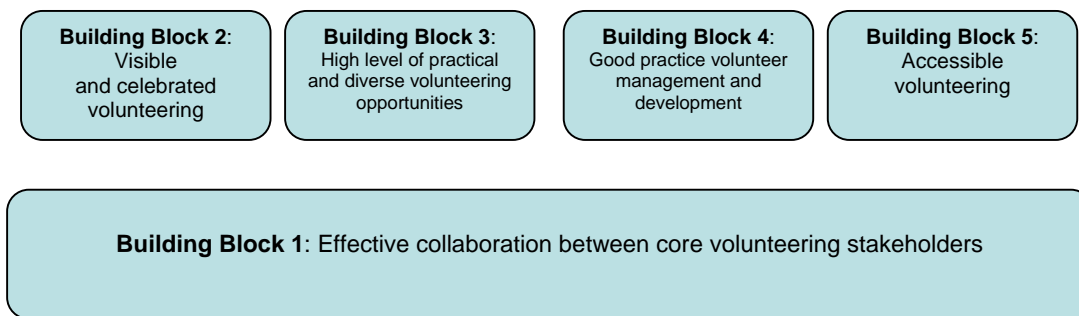
3. Developing the potential of volunteering in Waltham Forest

Introduction

This section looks at the specific areas of action based on the current state of volunteering in Waltham Forest and a desire to create a more effective future.

The research for the SAP has identified numerous issues affecting volunteering. To enable the development of a series of actions they have been organised into five major building blocks.

Figure 1: The building blocks of volunteering in Waltham Forest



Some aspects of each of the building blocks are already in place. However all require strengthening to enable volunteer numbers to increase and opportunities to be characterised by variety, quality and accessibility.

Building block 1: a strong, collaborating volunteering infrastructure with clearly defined roles is represented differently in figure 1 in the form of a wider block. This is because it is the foundation for the other blocks. Without it none of the other building blocks can be significantly improved because no single organisation within Waltham Forest has the combination of resources and expertise to improve the whole volunteering system. In addition without a solid first block there will be duplication of activity, failure to share good practice and less chance to access new funding.

The following sections take each building block in turn.

3.1 Effective collaboration between core volunteering stakeholders

The core volunteering stakeholder group was identified in section 2. This section of the strategy also stresses the past difficulties for some of these organisations to work effectively together. There is, however, a general desire amongst stakeholders to work more co-operatively and this is a positive sign.

Improving collaboration

There have been useful recent efforts to enhance cross-sector working within Waltham Forest^{17 18}. These seemed to have improved the climate for joint -working within the borough and have helped stakeholders to better understand each others constraints and issues. This type of empathy-building is an essential part of co-operation.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the project steering board for the volunteering SAP be converted to a Volunteering Action Consortium (VAC) to implement the Strategy. The current project board consists of Age Concern, Alert, JCP, LBWF, Met Volunteers, VAWF and VCWF.

It is further recommended that **the policy, development and practice of the VAC reflect good practice through working across the equalities strands**, i.e. age (the young end of the spectrum); disability; gender; religion or belief; sexual orientation; and transgender identity.

Finally, the **VAC should be chaired by a person capable of taking an independent rather than organisational viewpoint**. At times the chair may need to play the role of 'honest broker' and facilitate agreement between members where necessary. VAC members should decide on an appropriate appointment.

Recommendation

VAC should agree its terms of reference. It should also create a position statement on volunteering to which the Consortium members can sign up. This can include principles cited in section 1 including a commitment to volunteering enhancing services and not leading to job substitution and the need for quality management of volunteers.

One unsettling factor that is undermining collective working on volunteering is a local debate about the best volunteer development agency model. Three models exist:

1. Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) led – incorporating Volunteer Centres (just over 50 percent of cases in London);
2. Independent Volunteer Centres (just under 50 percent of cases in London);
3. Local Authority led provision. Rare, but the London Borough of Newham's, Newham Volunteers Programme, focusing on events volunteering.

Backing the Volunteer Centre model reduces one source of uncertainty within the core volunteering stakeholder group and is consistent with the majority opinion amongst this group who are content to make the current structure of volunteering work.

Recommendations

The role of VCWF should be confirmed by VAC while recognising the important part that other organisations play in this respect.

3.2 Visible and celebrated volunteering

The promotion and marketing of volunteering is essential to broadening the appeal of volunteering to potential volunteers and VIOs. Obstacles that currently reduce involvement in volunteering include potential volunteers not being clear where to go for further information and a lack of understanding of how volunteering can fit with individual lifestyles and responsibilities.

There is no consolidated data on marketing and promotional activities for volunteering in Waltham Forest but some national data is available. This shows that nearly half of volunteers (48 percent) come to hear about formal volunteering opportunities from somebody else involved with the group. Friends or neighbours account for 37 percent and school or college for 21 percent of this figure. In just six percent of cases do people find out about formal volunteering opportunities through promotional events and volunteers' fairs¹⁹.

Although promotion through natural networks is powerful and cost-effective it can limit equal access to volunteering to the part of the population that already know volunteers. Therefore it is important for promotional volunteering events to continue to draw in new, potentially excluded, people into volunteering.

Motivating potential volunteers

Marketing messages need to tie into motivations for volunteering. These include²⁰:

- Personal development: volunteering to learn and improve skills;
- Work goals: volunteering to gain experiences to enhance job prospects;
- Expression of values: e.g. acting to help those less fortunate;
- Social contact: develop connections with other people and combat isolation;
- Self-expression: asserting and developing identity, e.g. contributing to a community, cause or campaign;
- Well-being: volunteering as a vocation, e.g. to make constructive use of spare time.

An estimate from VCWF is that 70 percent of their service users volunteer to find a job or a better job. For some older people, and those not seeking to become involved in the labour market, volunteering can be a vocation in itself. All motivations for volunteering are and should be treated as equal. (See Appendix E for further details about types of volunteering and volunteer motivations).

Recommendations

VAC should implement a joint annual marketing plan for volunteering based on the existing proposal in the Waltham Forest ChangeUp plan²¹.

This should include an annual communications plan promoted co-ordinated messages that tie in to volunteer motivations and a set of outreach activities. This should ensure a volunteering presence at major community events, e.g. the Mela, the Green Fair and the Caribbean Carnival and avoid duplicated effort.

The VAC should also **support new initiatives to reach under-represented groups and support their understanding of volunteering opportunities**. This includes the consortium developing volunteering links with organisations providing services to groups at risk of exclusion from volunteering, including workless people (e.g. O-Regen) and Refugees (e.g. Refugee Advice Centre).

There is also the option of running a more formal themed campaign around volunteering. The approach is more costly than the outreach strategies above, but there are existing models, e.g. those employed by Timebank²² and by Media Trust²³. The call to action must be clear, specific and attract serious enquirers. VCWF and/or others must be geared to up to provide volunteering opportunities.

This latter route is not recommended at this stage as the number of volunteering opportunities will have to be significantly increased to match likely demand. (See section 3.3).

Valuing volunteers

Volunteering is often inherently rewarding as it is a way to meet other people, contribute to the local community or develop job prospects. Specific volunteer recognition may also help volunteers to feel valued and to retain volunteers. It can also mean that volunteers speak more favourably about volunteering to non-volunteers so strengthening an important marketing channel.

Valuing volunteers can take different forms. At a specially commissioned focus group for the SAP, volunteers expressed how important it is to not feel taken for granted or like “cheap labour”. They appreciated being given the opportunity to prove that they were trustworthy to organisations that they participate in.

The group were also in favour of volunteering celebration events – not for the fanfare of an award but to have an opportunity to meet with other volunteers and to tell the story of their experience.

In Waltham Forest there are numerous awards for volunteers. Age Concern Waltham Forest and VCWF both have awards. Volunteering Lives, run by TimeBank to help people registered with a learning disability in Waltham Forest to volunteer, held an award and induction ceremony in January 2007.

Recommendations

It is proposed that **VIOs keep their specific in-house volunteer recognition awards and also participate in a central celebration award event.** This leads to the second recommendation.

A borough-wide high profile Volunteering Recognition Event should take place annually to recognise individuals and organisations involved with volunteering and to encourage potential volunteers and VIOs to become involved. Relevant funding streams should be researched in order to source funding for this event.

Further research on other methods of recognising and rewarding volunteers is proposed for the mid to long-term. Appendix F details some other innovative methods of recognising voluntary activity pioneered by Time Banks.

3.3 High level of practical and diverse volunteering opportunities

Marketing can increase interest in volunteering but it cannot boost volunteering numbers unless volunteers can find relevant opportunities or new volunteering opportunities are created in organisations.

The findings of the SAP research suggest that there is considerable public interest in volunteering. The main constraint on volunteer numbers appears to be the ability of VIOs to develop sufficient opportunities due to lack of time, office space and uncertainty in funding. Opportunity development is therefore a priority.

Developing opportunities

Organisations that are stretched because of lack of resources and/or overwork are not easily able to create new opportunities. This was described previously as a paradox as it is these organisations that can most benefit from volunteer input. However, opportunity development requires time and creative thinking. In highly pressured situations both resources are at a premium. In such cases external input and expertise can be helpful.

VCWF has been funded through the Big Lottery Fund and Local Area Agreement to provide this type of support. In the first year of operation this led to 67 new VIO registrations and 218 new opportunities developed and entered on the V-Base opportunities database.

VCWF offers may not always have leads on organisations with potential to develop opportunities. Referrals from other third sector organisations help to target VCWF efforts.

VAWF has a central 'second tier' remit to advise and support Waltham Forest third sector organisations on a variety of matters such as funding, governance and partnerships. A number of other organisations provide 'second tier' advice and support, including:

- Age Concern;
- BME Alliance;
- Business Forum;
- Mencap;
- Waltham Forest Arts Council;
- Waltham Forest Carers Association;
- Waltham Forest Disability Action;
- Waltham Forest Environmental Consortium;
- Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum.

Recommendations

Advice and support organisations should refer recipients of their services with volunteering potential or problems to VCWF. VCWF should offer reciprocal signposting to organisations that it works with where they have broader organisational development needs. Currently this referral process happens informally between organisations but should be systematised through a series of memoranda of understanding (MoU) between second tier organisations and VCWF. These short documents should outline the purpose of the MoU and what each signatory will undertake to use its 'best endeavours' to do.

Further funding should be sought as a priority to provide opportunity development support for organisations. Such funding could be used to resource the referral process described above and be shared between VCWF and advice and support organisations.

Developing volunteering opportunities in LBWF

The public sector is attempting to open up to greater volunteer involvement. The latest health White Paper²⁴ for instance supports a greater role for volunteers within the NHS, e.g. as volunteer health counsellors. This interest is also present at the local level. There is already some volunteering in Waltham Forest public services such as police cadets; lay magistrates; and prison visitors.

LBWF employs six thousand staff and provides a range of services for community benefit. As a result it represents the borough's greatest potential for new good quality volunteering opportunities. Volunteer Involving activity varies widely across service areas and there is no centrally coordinated point of information for the total numbers of volunteers and volunteering opportunities at present. However, the council has demonstrated a commitment to join the volunteering agenda and is committed to the strategy and action plan it has commissioned.

Volunteer involvement in LBWF

Key existing areas of volunteer involvement in LBWF services include:

- Friends of the Park groups (Green Space Services);
- Youth leaders (Youth Services);
- Befriending and escorting (Adult and Community Services);
- 800 school governors (Education Services);
- Peer mentoring in schools (Education Services).

Developing volunteer involvement in LBWF

A number of further opportunities connected to LBWF have also been identified through a workshop with the Top 130 managers at LBWF in March 2007 (see Appendix D) and from research undertaken by LBWF:

- Increasing adult volunteers participation on Referral Order Panels (Youth Justice Team);
- Expanding youth wardens volunteering schemes beyond Leyton (Street Wardens Team);
- Developing a young people's volunteering plan (Children's and Families Services);
- Increasing opportunities for volunteers and supporting volunteering through Sports Centres, libraries and museums (Adult and Community Services);
- Increasing or developing the activities of Citizens Panels, Focus Groups (Democratic Services).

A service-based approach

Service areas are an important focus for volunteering in LBWF because as yet there is no single approach from LBWF as a corporate body. Volunteer involvement across LBWF varies.

The approach of Adult and Community Services (ACS) is very systematic and supportive. ACS has a volunteer co-ordinator. In the first nine months of operation ten volunteers have been placed and the target is for 25 after another 12 months of the initiative. The numbers are not high but they are realistic given that a proportion of the volunteers have special needs and because volunteers work to a different timescale than job seekers.

Other directorates find it more difficult to involve volunteers. An example is Central Support Services whose responsibilities include place planning, assets and capital, which are internal complex and highly-skilled paid roles with no direct community benefit from engaging volunteers. However, the service would like to develop external volunteering

activity for its employees.

NHC interviewed key personnel in three service areas within LBWF: Children and Family Services; Central Support Services; and Green Space Services.

Three service areas

Each of the three LBWF service area interviews addressed current volunteering activity, future priorities and support and resource issues.

The situation of the three areas differs, but in each there is a general understanding of the value of volunteering and the need for LBWF to engage with volunteers where this is practical. There is already some volunteer involvement activity in two of the three service areas interviewed. However, as with most other VIOs, data on the numbers involved and the impacts of volunteering are not readily available.

A major priority in Green Space Services is to increase the number and diversity of involvement in Friends groups. These are community-led volunteer groups that focus on outdoor spaces such as parks. Groundwork East London has been commissioned to support these groups. If this model of volunteer support is successful it could be extended to tube stations, bicycle paths and other public resources liable to fall into disrepair.

Children and Family Services has a number of important strands of volunteering including its own volunteering programme that provide graduates from a 12 week youth leadership course with youth work volunteering.

Other strands of volunteering under the service include programmes to support education services managed by EduAction, including the 800-strong school governor's programme, the volunteer reader's scheme and a peer mentoring project.

Meanwhile, Central Support Services – the 'engine-room' of LBWF as a corporate body – has no volunteer involvement. Further work needs to be carried out within the department in order to develop volunteer potential in the future.

Box 1: Central Support Services

Central Support Services responsibilities include: resources; place planning; performance and improvement; contracts and commissioning; and policy.

Current Activity

There is no current volunteer involvement in this directorate. The nature of their work makes volunteering difficult. They have no 'soft services' which can be opened to volunteers to enhance services or activities. The technical services require considerable training and it would be a risk to train volunteers at a cost of thousands of pounds for them to be free to leave at any time. To do so would also blur the lines between worker and volunteer roles.

Future opportunities

Two areas other than volunteer involvement seem more relevant to the service area. First is for their employees to volunteer out in the local community, e.g. building the capacity of the local third sector. Second is to provide time-limited work experience opportunities, rather than volunteering, given the nature of the available work.

Issues and resources

Central Support Services suggested a council-wide approach and strategic review to look at a map of key services and to prioritise those for volunteering potential. The interviewee did not consider Central Support Services itself as a likely avenue for further volunteer involvement. However, it may be that some opportunity development work within the directorate could identify some volunteering opportunities.

Children and Family Services are much more active as a VIO and offers the prospect of new future opportunities.

Box 2: Children and Family Services

Children and Family Services have a number of sub-services within its realm. These include family support services; protection; and integrated specialist children's services. In addition, the following services are some of those that fall under Education for Communities: early years and play; youth service; and the music service.

Current Activity

Youth Services has its own volunteering programme with a volunteer coordinator who places graduates from the 12-week youth leadership course (run through the College and accredited by the Open College Network) with youth work sessions.

The leaders are drawn from members of the community with specific expertise and those wishing to move into a career in youth work. These volunteers are also well-placed for any job vacancies that arise in the service.

There are a significant number of programmes to support education services managed by EduAction. These include the 800 school governors, the volunteer readers scheme and a peer mentoring project.

Future Opportunities

A new integrated youth support structure will include a lead practitioner responsible for co-ordinating volunteering opportunities for young people. This will be in place by September 2007 and will take place in partnership with EduAction.

The youth service is developing a volunteering plan for young people aged 14-19 which includes setting up a strategic partnership group. This will provide a platform to drive forward volunteering although specific plans are not yet laid out. The work of the partnership group will align to this overarching volunteering strategy.

Issues and resources

A commissioned report to support volunteering in youth services identified a need to develop a 'tradition of volunteering.' This area of work has traditionally been led by the 'uniformed sector', e.g. Scouts. This infrastructure is missing in Waltham Forest and perhaps not culturally appropriate. Filling this gap remains a challenge.

There is also an issue with the frequently long wait for the Criminal Records Bureau check. There is a lack of suitable opportunities that can be undertaken by volunteers whilst waiting for clearance. If the relationship with other service areas were stronger, it might be possible to cross-refer volunteers who are unsuitable or whilst waiting for Youth Service opportunities.

A final identified priority, continuing the theme of LBWF co-ordination, was the sharing of knowledge about other directorates' volunteering activity, recruitment drives, and approaches to funding volunteering programmes.

To action

Children and Family Services has two upcoming actions on volunteering:

- 1) Appoint a volunteer co-ordinator for young people (by September 2007);
- 2) Establish a volunteering plan for young people (by December 2007).

Box 3: Green Space Services

Green Space Services is a department within the environmental services directorate in LBWF. Green Space Services (GSS) is responsible for parks, open spaces, outdoor sports facilities, swing parks, cemeteries and all trees owned by the council.

Current Activity

GSS have commissioned Groundwork East London to provide a professional support, development and promotion service for 'Friends groups' that work to enhance outdoor spaces such as parks.

Friends groups are most usually formed by local people responding to an opportunity to improve a service initiated by the local authority. Sometimes groups form because of a 'self-starting' interest amongst local people to improve things locally.

Groundwork East London is in the process of collecting data on the numbers and diversity of volunteers in friends groups. No figures are currently available.

The second important area of volunteer involvement is through a commission by BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) and Hornbeam Trust. This programme is designed to encourage volunteering on nature conservation sites. This includes inviting local people along to work in woodlands, meadows and wetlands.

As part of the commission targets are set and data is collected on the number of volunteers, diversity and additional skills gained. For example, as part of the BTCV/Hornbeam contract there is a target of volunteer involvement equivalent to 144 volunteer work days per year.

There are also smaller schemes that involve volunteer input, including:

- BTCV's Green Gym;
- Lea River Trust conservation work;
- London Wildlife Trusts – wildlife watch with schools and summer schools.

Future Opportunities

The work of GSS does appear to offer considerable further potential for volunteer involvement. There is a prospect that extended volunteering could be one element of the growth bid in the spending round to be submitted internally in October 2007.

There is also a lottery bid for Lloyd and Aveling Park. This includes an audience development plan – and a volunteering strategy could also be an element of this work.

A number of recommendations are implied by the analysis in this section and these are captured below.

Recommendations

LBWF should adopt a corporate initiative on volunteering. This should include a code of good practice in volunteering; a commitment to investing appropriate resources to support volunteers. It should be developed using existing good practice materials and with advice from VCWF.

This process **should be supported by a corporate Champion for volunteering and draw on the experience of Adult and Community Services and third sector organisations.**

Through the research undertaken in this strategy, and other complementary work undertaken by LBWF's Policy and Partnerships department, an initial map of volunteering activity across some LBWF service areas is forming.

The LBWF interviews carried out as part of this strategy demonstrate that there is limited access to data on numbers of volunteers involved in LBWF. It is therefore recommended that **all service areas are invited to prepare a volunteer involvement statement** that details numbers of volunteers currently involved; tasks undertaken; management arrangements; priorities over the next one to three years; and an action plan. The statement should be voluntary to encourage action in the service areas where volunteers add most valued and are likely to receive the best experiences. Enthusiastic service areas with good plans can then integrate submit proposals as part of a growth bid as part of the spending round within LBWF.

Finally, and over a longer period, **a centralised LBWF volunteering database should be developed to record volunteering activity in service areas as well as available opportunities.** This will help to systematise LBWF's understanding of its scope of volunteer involvement. Opportunities for new volunteers should also be shared through usual volunteer recruitment channels, in particular with VCWF.

3.4 Good practice volunteer management and development

As well as more volunteering opportunities it is important that the quality of volunteering is maintained and enhanced. Quality processes minimise the risk of inappropriate treatment of volunteers, secure better outputs for the VIO and increases the chances of retaining volunteers and recruiting others.

VIOs come in all shapes and sizes. A few are able to apply the gold standard of volunteer management while for others management systems will be minimal. All VIOs should, however, be able to adhere to the following quality principles:

- Volunteering must be voluntary and mutually beneficial;
- Groups should identify the legal issues/ rights of volunteers, the implications for the groups, and ensure they conform with them.
- Training should be provided if the task requires it;
- Volunteers travel expenses must be paid as must lunch expenses if they work over four hours;
- Volunteers must know their duties and who they are accountable to or supervised by;
- Volunteers must have access to some form of grievance or complaints procedure.

There are other important minimum specifications and these can be found on the VCWF website²⁵ and a detailed guide to developing a volunteer policy is available from Volunteering England²⁶.

Recommendation

All VIOs should adopt a policy of minimum quality standards for volunteer involvement. These should be widely communicated via third sector fora and networks.

Quality frameworks

There are also an increasing set of initiatives to develop the quality of volunteer management and volunteer development:

- Investing in Volunteers (liV) is a quality management system for VIOs designed to provide a supportive environment for volunteering and help with volunteer recruitment, retention and productivity;
- Volunteering England has recently launched its Excellence in Volunteer Management programme (EVM). EVM is a web-accessible to empower managers of volunteers to improve their skills and confidence;
- A Certificate in Community Volunteering (CCV)²⁷ is a qualification that recognises good practice in volunteering and the general skills that volunteers need to perform roles effectively.

VCWF is a partner for liV but sign-up by Waltham Forest VIOs has been limited because of the financial cost, time implications and competing priorities. This does not necessarily mean that volunteers are not being well managed and developed, but good practice may not be systematic.

Recommendations

Members of the VAC are encouraged to trial liV as a pilot for other local VIOs.

VIOs with little or no money and few or no members of staff may in particular be at risk of poor quality management of volunteers. Support is critical to help VIOs to achieve quality within some very real constraints. **VCWF's VIO Support Forum is an important new initiative for VIOs and it should tie in with other work that takes place to support quality volunteering in the borough**, such as Victim Support and the 'Biscuit Club' for volunteer co-ordinators.

The Adult and Community Services directorate of LBWF has put in place an impressively comprehensive quality system that includes a set of good practice documents and protocols.

Recommendation

LBWF directorates should draw on the policy templates and approach to quality of the Adult and Community Services Directorate.

Measurement of volunteering

Part of the quality agenda involves collecting key volunteering data to help to understand and improve volunteering programme of VIOs. Key quantitative indicators collected by the measurement system might cover:

- The number of volunteers involved;
- The number of first time volunteers to measure inclusive recruitment;
- The length of time people volunteer to measure volunteer retention
- Number of volunteer hours or days provided to an organisation.

There may also be some qualitative measures such as:

- What volunteers go on to do next;
- Volunteer satisfaction with the experience, e.g. by asking how many have recommended volunteering to a friend;
- Staff satisfaction with volunteers and volunteering;
- Benefits identified by volunteers, e.g. making friends, developing skills or building confidence.

Different VIOs use different measurement frameworks and some use none. The lack of common measurement frameworks means that it is not easily to compare volunteering outcomes in different VIOs and learn from one another.

Recommendation

A set of minimum volunteering impact measures should be agreed by VAC and be put up on the VCWF and other websites for easy access by VIOs. VIOs should be encouraged to share their volunteering impact data to support dialogue on learning and development.

The adoption of a common measurement system is being championed by VCWF in the form of the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit from the Institute of Volunteering Research²⁸. Take up of the toolkit in the borough has been slow because of resource issues.

Recommendations

Members of the VAC are encouraged to pilot the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit and to share the lessons with local VIOs.

Finally, to better capture overall numbers of volunteers in Waltham Forest, **a borough-wide annual or biennial statistically survey of volunteering activity should be commissioned** informed by and consistent with feasibility work currently being undertaken by the Greater London Authority and London Development Agency and the existing Home Office survey.

3.5 Accessible volunteering

Specific groups of people that can most benefit from volunteering may need the most help to get involved. Funding is increasingly orientated to support specific categories of potential volunteers. For example 'v' is supporting volunteers aged 16-25 and 'Volunteering for All' targets people with disabilities or limiting long term illness; people with no formal qualifications; and people from BAME communities.

This targeted approach creates winners and losers. For instance there is little direct funding to support older volunteers even though volunteering may help to promote healthy ageing and reduce demands on the NHS. It is also increasingly hard to fund core volunteering services within Volunteer Centres and other types of VDA.

Strengthening pathways from volunteering to employment

Waltham Forest is a low employment borough with 62.4 percent in employment compared to 69.6 percent in London²⁹. BAME communities are particularly affected with employment rates at 52.5 percent compared to 73.9 percent for white people³⁰. VCWF reports that

approximately 70 percent of those registering for volunteering opportunities are doing so to enhance employability.

In addition there are 10,000 people in the borough on health-related benefits; six thousand single parents on income support and five thousand people on Job Seekers Allowance³¹.

Workless people fall into different categories:

- Not seeking and not wanting employment, e.g. carers, students, physically unable to work, past working age;
- Not seeking but wanting a job, e.g. would take a job if offered;
- Seeking and wanting a job, e.g. people on Job Seeker's Allowance.

For those not seeking employment volunteering can be a rewarding vocation that enhances life and is an expression of active citizenship³². For those who want a job there is significant case study evidence that volunteering can offer a pathway to skills and employment³³.

What encourages and impedes volunteering by workless people?

In many ways the barriers to volunteering facing workless people are similar to those facing all volunteers. This breaks down into motive, means and opportunity.

Table 3: Addressing barriers to volunteering

Motive	Is volunteering seen by a workless person as a way to enhance their employability?
Means	Is volunteering practical and does the person have access to further information, transportation, skills and expenses to fulfil a volunteering commitment?
Opportunity	Are there suitable volunteer placements available?

The greater the extent that the answers to the questions above are yes the more likely that a workless person will wish to volunteer.

Benefit rules have historically been a barrier to volunteering but this has largely changed. Benefit recipients can volunteer full-time but those receiving Job Seeker's Allowance must remain actively seeking work and be available for an interview in 48 hours and for work in a week. Volunteers can receive reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses including their meal expenses with no effect on their benefits. These rules may not be widely known.

Recommendation

Ensure that support professionals such as benefits advisors and social workers are aware of the flexible benefit rules for volunteering and communicating this where appropriate.

Another barrier is the skills deficit in Waltham Forest which makes some people unsuitable for volunteering and work. Around 18 percent of working age people in the borough has no qualifications compared to 14 percent for London as a whole. In addition 22 percent of the working age population only have low level qualifications³⁴. This means that some volunteering opportunities may be difficult to take up because of a lack of skills even where the individual is motivated.

Supporting workless people into volunteering and volunteers into work

Specific support for volunteers that desire paid employment does already exist in Waltham Forest and some examples are:

- Capital Volunteering: Supported volunteering for mental health service users delivered by VCWF as part of a Pan London initiative;
- Pre Volunteering Programme (PVP)³⁵: Targets unemployed people to develop accredited skills, employability and chances of volunteering for the Olympics;
- Richmond Fellowship Employment and Training (RFET): Team working with people who have experienced mental health difficulties and supporting them back into employment, training or voluntary work;
- WorkNet: This is funded by LBWF to support and signpost workless people in deprived areas in the borough and has an element of volunteering. A WorkNet Adviser is based at VCWF and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) offers volunteering as an option to participants.

Some of the interventions above promote volunteering to workless person. However, care must be taken that workless people don't feel pressured into volunteering as this would violate the 'free will' principle of volunteering and is likely to lead to less motivated volunteers.

Recommendations

Co-ordination between key initiatives on volunteering and training for employment should continue and be enhanced where possible. **WorkNet should work to strengthen the pathway from volunteering to employment by: 1) providing further opportunities for job-seekers to volunteer; and 2) developing more mechanisms for volunteers to transition from volunteering to work-related experience, training and jobs.**

It is also recommended that **WorkNet, RFET, VCWF and PVP combine to develop a shared framework to measure effectiveness of volunteering for employment purposes,**

This should cover:

- Participant self perception on confidence, skills and job prospects;
- Participant situation after the programme, e.g. work, further training or study, further volunteering;
- Where possible, comparisons against outcomes for workless people not participating in the programme.

This can be used to assess specific interventions such as the co-location of WorkNet at VCWF and referral of VCWF service users to WorkNet support.

Jobcentre Plus (JCP) has an important role to play in connecting worklessness and volunteering in Waltham Forest. For instance they currently signpost service users to contracted New Deal training providers who can help with work experience and volunteer opportunities, such as retail volunteering in charity shops.

JCP in the region are open to doing more in this area, such as:

- Signposting non-New Deal recipients to volunteering opportunities;
- Further arrangements with VCWF such as reciprocal referrals for people seeking volunteer opportunities and jobs;

- Referrals to volunteer opportunities within LBWF and input to service users on how to get jobs at the council.

JCP also have to ensure that minimum quality standards are in place in any arrangements to ensure that JCP service users are not set back in their quest for employment.

Recommendation

The next step is to have more detailed **operational conversations between volunteering stakeholders, WorkNet and JCP delivery managers on connecting volunteering and employability.**

4. Implementation, monitoring and review

Responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations is to be passed on to the Volunteering Action Consortium described in 3.1. Other attempts to encourage joint working in the borough such as the Waltham Forest Compact; the Waltham Forest Infrastructure Development Plan; the third sector partnership; the ChangeUp³⁶ steering group; and Voluntary Sector Forum have all started out energetically, generated some positive results and then seemingly run out of steam as resource constraints and more pressing priorities emerge.

The Action Plan includes a series of timelines and the extent to which these are met or not will provide an early warning about implementation issues. In addition a review meeting should be held about a year after the new VAC comes together for the first time.

4.1 Measuring the overall impact of the strategy

Key performance indicators will help to measure the impact of the volunteering SAP. These should include those outlined in table 5 below. Each of the indicators is can be affected by the delivery of the SAP and is feasible to collect.

Table 4: Indicators of impact for the SAP

Indicator	Method of data collection
1. Number of volunteers (formal and informal) across the borough	Borough-wide residents' sample survey
2. Total number of volunteer hours	Borough-wide residents' sample survey
3. Number of volunteers undertaking accredited/non-accredited training	Borough-wide residents' sample survey
4. Demographic breakdown of volunteers	Borough-wide residents' sample survey
5. Number of placements through VCWF	VCWF Vbase data (already provided as part of LAA funding)
6. Registered opportunities, VIOs and individuals at VCWF	VCWF Vbase data (already provided as part of LAA funding)
7. Public awareness of volunteering	Borough-wide residents' sample survey
8. Number of volunteers across LBWF	LBWF survey
9. Satisfaction with volunteering	VAC member survey
10. Equal opportunities	VAC member survey

The data collection for the indicators will cost time and money. Therefore the number of indicators has been kept to a manageable number. By tying the borough-wide volunteering data to a more general residents' survey it may be possible to reduce and share the costs. The borough-wide data will also need to be collected over at least two points during the three year duration of the strategy to track progression. It should be possible to collect the LBWF, VCWF and VAC generated data more frequently.

4.2 Moving forward

Each of the recommended actions within the strategy is achievable on its own. As a concerted programme they represent an ambitious step forward for volunteering in Waltham Forest. The strategy will require lasting commitment and co-operation for its delivery and if the stakeholders can stay the course it will change the landscape of volunteering in Waltham Forest.

5. Endnotes and references

¹ DCLG (2006) *2005 Citizenship Survey: Cross-cutting themes*. Department of Communities and Local Government.

² For more details see DCLG (2006) *2005 Citizenship Survey: Cross-cutting themes*. Department of Communities and Local Government.

³ IVR (2000) *Public Sector Support for Volunteering: An audit*. London: Institute for Volunteering Research.

⁴ Provided by Sugra Bibi, Policy and Partnerships, London Borough of Waltham Forest.

⁵ This figure refers to those aged 16 and over and equates to 20.4 million people.

⁶ Murphy, R, Wedlock, E and King, J (2005) second edition. *Early Findings from the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey*. Home Office,[online] available from:
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/rdsolr4905.pdf>.

⁷ Qualifying volunteering is at least one hour a week. Greenwich: 4.3 percent; Tower Hamlets: 3.3 percent; Newham 3.0 percent; Hackney: 2.3 percent. Sport England, Active People Survey Headline Results, Sport England (2007), [online] available from:
[http://www.sportengland.org/061206_active_people_london_region_factsheet_embargo_7_dec\(2\).pdf](http://www.sportengland.org/061206_active_people_london_region_factsheet_embargo_7_dec(2).pdf).

⁸ Rocket Science (2006) *Risks and Opportunities for the Third Sector in the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games*. Rocket Science.

⁹ Definition taken from the website of the Department for Communities and Local Government:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1161635>

¹⁰ Voluntary Action Waltham Forest (September 2005) *Waltham Forest Infrastructure Development Plan*.

¹¹ The Third Sector is defined by the Government as non-governmental organisations which are value-driven and which principally reinvest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives. It includes voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and mutual organisations owned and run by members such as credit unions. The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is another widely used term similar to the Third Sector. In general excludes social enterprises, cooperatives and mutuals because of their commercial activity. The term 'Third Sector' is used through the document in recognition of the fact that volunteering extends beyond the boundaries of the VCS.

¹² ChangeUp is currently under review by Capacity Builders, who have taken over the governance of ChangeUp from Government Office for London.

¹³ HM Treasury/Cabinet Office (July 2007) *The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration: Final report*: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/2/7/future_of_the_third_sector_in_social_economicregeneration.pdf

¹⁴ For example, the Pre-Volunteer Programme, led by the Greater London Authority (GLA), and part-funded by the London Development Agency (LDA) and London Skills Council (LSC) seeks to 'engage with 20,000 workless individuals' through a training programme linked to volunteering and providing people with life skills and increased chances of participating in the volunteering programme for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012.

¹⁵ Northampton Volunteering Centre (2006) *A Sustainable funding framework for Volunteer Centres*, Volunteering England.

http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/FF9EEE6B-B146-4481-8735-B6B6747D6040/0/Sustainable_Funding_Framework_Final_Report.pdf

¹⁶ For example as expressed in: HM Treasury/Cabinet Office (July 2007) *The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration: Final report*: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/2/7/future_of_the_third_sector_in_social_economicregeneration.pdf

¹⁷ CVAR/IDeA (April 2006) *Partnership Improvement Action Plan for Waltham Forest*. Centre for Voluntary Action Research and Improvement and Development Agency.

¹⁸ Renaisi (2007) *Waltham Forest Local Strategic Partnership Review*, Renaisi.

¹⁹ Rochester, C. (September 2006) *Making Sense of Volunteering: A literature review*. Roehampton: Roehampton University.

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- ²⁰ Adapted from Clary, E and Snyder, M (1999) 'The Motivations to Volunteer: Theoretical and practical considerations', *Current Direction in Psychological Science* 8(5) pp156-159.
- ²¹ This is an extension of a proposal in *Waltham Forest Infrastructure Development Plan*, September 2005, Coordinating Organisation: Voluntary Action Waltham Forest.
- ²² See: <http://13days.timebank.org.uk/>.
- ²³ See: <http://www.mediatrust.org/campaigns>
- ²⁴ DH (2006) *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: A new direction for community services*. Department of Health.
- ²⁵ <http://www.volunteercentrefw.org.uk/vcwf-goodpractic.html>.
- ²⁶ <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/868C6A49-6990-4380-918A-B0428888E9A5/0/PoliciesBooklet.pdf>.
- ²⁷ Details can be found at: http://www.asdan.org.uk/national_status.php?osCsid=7aa5d744b655a07f6b6178d25ab6f6da
- ²⁸ <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/publications/volunteeringtoolkit.htm>.
- ²⁹ Technical Annex to the London Employment and Skills Taskforce for 2012 Action Plan: <http://www.lda.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.1646>.
- ³⁰ Technical Annex to the London Employment and Skills Taskforce for 2012 Action Plan: <http://www.lda.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.1646>.
- ³¹ Information provided to Katy John from LBWF WorkNet.
- ³² Volunteer Centre Southwark is the first Active Citizenship Hub, operating in the borough of Southwark. They define active citizenship as an activity to inform and develop borough-wide decisions for neighbourhoods. They break active citizenship into 6 categories: Community Activist, Citizen Governor, Consulted Citizen/View-Giver, Community Group Member, Managed Volunteer and Good Neighbour. This incorporates the informal volunteer and may support its recognition and evaluation.
- ³³ Marion Lacey (September 2006) *Pathways into employment in the voluntary and community sector: An evidence review*. Report for the UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Hub., Rock Solid Social Research.
- ³⁴ Technical Annex to the London Employment and Skills Taskforce for 2012 Action Plan: <http://www.lda.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.1646>.
- ³⁵ It is run by Waltham Forest Community Learning and Skill Service (CLASS) and a volunteering placement is a component of the programme.
- ³⁶ ChangeUp sets out a vision that by 2014 the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) will be met by support which is effective, accessible, sustainably funded, reflects and promotes diversity and is available nationwide. ChangeUp has led to the development of local, sub-regional and regional plans which shape the structure of VCS infrastructure.

Consultation responses

The final consultation for this strategy ran from the 8th October 2007 until the 7th November 2007.

Responses were received from:

Age Concern, Voluntary Action Waltham Forest, Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest, Waltham Forest Councils directorates

The appendices to this document can be found at:

<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/community/voluntary-sector-and-volunteering/volunteering/volunteering-strategy.htm>