

Towards a Volunteering Strategy for Sheffield

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List of Abbreviations

BITC	Business in the Community
BME	Black and minority ethnic (groups)
CCR	Cross Cutting Review
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRESR	Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
CSV	Community Service Volunteers
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
FTE	Full time equivalent
IVR	Institute for Volunteering Research
LAA	Local Area Agreement
MV	Millennium Volunteers
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NHS	National Health Service
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RDA	Regional Development Agency
VCS	Voluntary and community sector
VDA	Volunteer Development Agency
VSA	Volunteer Support Agency

Executive Summary

This report outlines the findings of a research study in autumn 2007 seeking to establish the issues and steps required to develop a *Volunteering Strategy* for the City of Sheffield. The study was commissioned on behalf of the Sheffield First Partnership by Voluntary Action Sheffield, guided and supported by a Steering Group (details on page 2). The work was awarded to the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research at Sheffield Hallam University.

The main objectives of the study were to highlight the current profile of volunteering within Sheffield; to assess the perceived value and contribution of volunteering in the city; to identify factors which influence the level and quality of volunteering undertaken; and to propose a framework for the evolution of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield including specific actions needed.

The study involved the following elements: (a) scoping and review of existing national and local literature on volunteering; (b) secondary analysis of volunteering related data in particular the 2006 study "Part of the Picture" by Sheffield Hallam University concerning the voluntary and community sector (VCS) across South Yorkshire; (c) face-to-face interviews with a selection of volunteer support agencies (s) in the city; and (d) a detailed consultation workshop held at Voluntary Action Sheffield in November 2007 with over 45 participants from 42 organisations.

The study reports that in the voluntary and community sector alone, the role of volunteers in Sheffield accounts for a contribution equivalent to over 5000 full-time equivalent posts: if volunteers serving in other sectors were included, the figure would be considerably higher. It makes recommendations to a wide range of stakeholders and proposes *four key themes* which emerged from the research as essential for the development of an effective Volunteering Strategy:

1. Promoting and recognising volunteering
2. Reducing the barriers to volunteering
3. Providing excellent volunteering opportunities
4. Resourcing volunteering.

Detailed areas for consideration and action by relevant partners are listed under each of these. There are, however, a number of priority actions which emerge:

- There is a need for the city to embrace volunteering as a key issue across a wide range of policy initiatives (at present it is often neglected).
- The costs and impact of volunteering need to be more widely understood - a well proven toolkit is available for this purpose.
- There is a need for co-ordinated action across key volunteer involving and supporting agencies and sectors
- Resources are needed (particularly staff time) to drive forward the strategic and implementation agendas.

1 Context of the study

1.1 Study Management and Objectives

This study was commissioned by Voluntary Action Sheffield, on behalf of the Sheffield First Partnership, with financial support from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, A4e and the Netherthorpe and Upperthorpe Community Alliance. A steering group was convened to represent volunteering interests from local government, the local voluntary and community sector (VCS), and academia.

The principle aim of the study was to examine the potential to increase the level and quality of volunteering in Sheffield as a catalyst for the development of a volunteering strategy. The main objectives of the study, as stated in the project brief, were to:

- identify the current levels and profile of volunteering within Sheffield
- assess current demand for volunteers and likely trends
- assess the perceived value and contribution of volunteering
- identify factors which influence the level and quality of volunteering undertaken
- propose a framework for the evolution of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield
- identify specific actions, as part of an action plan, which could contribute to the development of a volunteering strategy

It is important to note that this study does not seek to propose a full volunteering strategy for Sheffield, which will require further work. Rather, the project is entitled "Towards a Volunteering Strategy" and seeks to identify the issues which need to be addressed in order for a comprehensive and effective volunteering strategy to be established for the city.

1.2 Fieldwork

This study was commissioned in August 2007, and fieldwork was undertaken from the beginning of September until the end of November 2007. In summary, the key elements of the study methodology were:

- **Scoping and literature review** of national and local volunteering research and policy documentation
- **Secondary data analysis** to map the extent and profile of volunteering locally, and assess expected future trends
- **Face-to-face interviews** with a sample of local volunteering infrastructure agencies
- **A consultation event** on 19th November 2007 at which local stakeholders could share ideas and identify priorities and suggestions for

how volunteering in Sheffield can be maintained and developed in the future.

A more detailed description of the study methodology is provided in appendix 2. In particular it summarises the work carried out in each of the four phases of the project.

1.3 Definitions

Before going any further it is important to discuss definitional issues. The focus of this study was on **formal** volunteering, which can be defined as "giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment" (Low et al., 2007).

The study did not focus on informal volunteering, which is defined as "giving unpaid help as an individual (not through a group, club or organisation) and which involves a greater number of people" (Low et al., 2007). However, this is not to underestimate the importance of informal volunteering, which is equally as valid and important.

The Volunteer Centre Sheffield is the only local volunteer development agency (VDA) in Sheffield, as recognised by Volunteering England. However, a number of other local organisations have volunteer development as a significant role. In the context of this report, the terms 'volunteering infrastructure' or 'volunteer support agency' (VSA) are used to describe those organisations who provide some or all of the following core functions for people and/or organisations interested in or currently involving volunteers at a local level:

- Brokerage (matching up people interested in volunteering with opportunities and/or volunteer-involving organisations)
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development
- Developing volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development of volunteering.

1.4 Report Overview

Following this introductory chapter, the report brings together in five further chapters the main findings of the study. These chapters can be summarised as follows:

Volunteering: Why does it matter? (Chapter 2)

Community has emerged as a key policy area within several UK government departments under, for example, the guises of active citizenship, civil renewal, and the devolution agenda; most, if not all, of which have a degree of emphasis on volunteering. The UK government has probably never before directed such attention to volunteering, or invested so heavily in initiatives to promote it. This is perhaps associated with its potential to increase: **social capital** (participation in local activities,

building networks, developing friendships and a sense of trust); **human capital** (confidence, personal development, skills development, active citizenship, self esteem); and **economic capital** (reduced crime, improved health, added value to public services, increased employability).

However, the volunteering agenda is notable by its absence within local level strategies at the present time. While key city-wide strategies such as the City Strategy, Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Local Neighborhood Renewal Strategy are awash with references to community engagement, promoting stronger communities, active citizenship, social inclusion, strengthening cohesion and integration and involvement in community life, there is little explicit recognition of the contribution volunteering can make to these ambitions.

The 'Anatomy' of Volunteering (Chapter 3)

The 2005 Citizenship Survey reports that 44% of people in England had participated in formal volunteering in the last year and 29% participated at least once a month. These figures fall to 41% and 27% respectively for the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

Data collected by Sheffield City Council through the Household Survey in 2006, suggests that 75% of respondents in Sheffield have **not** participated in any formal volunteering activities. From this the research team presume 25% of respondents have participated in formal volunteering of some kind within their interpretation of the survey question. It should be noted however, that this data is not comparable with national figures, not least because of the differences in data collection instruments (see chapter 3 for further information).

Although not directly comparable, the Sheffield City Council Household Survey data displays some similarities with the national data in a number of ways. For example: women were more likely to have participated in formal voluntary activities than men; people who had a disability were less likely to participate in formal volunteering; and people under 50 were more likely to take part in formal volunteering than those over 50.

Previous Research by Sheffield Hallam University (Macmillan, 2006) suggests that the number of volunteers working in the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in South Yorkshire is estimated to be 112,500, with approximately 74,000 volunteering in Sheffield organisations. An estimated 5,459 full-time equivalent paid workers would be needed to replace volunteers in the Sheffield VCS alone.

Mapping Volunteering Infrastructure in Sheffield (Chapter 4)

The Volunteer Centre Sheffield is the only local volunteer development agency (VDA) in Sheffield, as recognised by Volunteering England. However, a number of other local organisations have volunteer development as a significant role and provide a number of functions such as brokerage (matching individual volunteers with

volunteering opportunities), marketing, good practice development, policy responses and campaigning, and the strategic development of volunteering.

Interviews with a sample of local VSAs suggest that there are a number of common issues and challenges they collectively face. These include: lack of recognition at a strategic level; funding pressures which often lead to a lack of capacity to develop and promote volunteering; a lack of co-ordination between local volunteering infrastructure; and evidencing the impact of volunteering.

Local Challenges and Priorities: Findings from a consultation event (Chapter 5)

The consultation workshop provided the participants with the opportunity to explore the challenges in supporting and developing volunteering at a local level. Key discussion points included:

- The need for organisations to invest in understanding the complex motivations of volunteers and the implications for organisations in recognising the individualism of volunteers. Ultimately, participants suggested that volunteers need: a variety of opportunities; a meaningful role; good communication; flexibility; involvement; and to know what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation.
- The challenges presented in assessing the impact (or 'softer' outcomes) of voluntary activity against a backdrop of stretched resources. To take this agenda forward at a local level, workshop participants felt that there needs to be: a locally agreed definition of volunteering; a common understanding of the 'added value' of volunteering which could lead to an agreed approach for assessing the quality and impact of volunteering.
- The under-developed potential of employer-supported volunteering within the city. Generally, participants suggested the need to develop employee volunteering within the local statutory agencies as well as with other employers, and 'sell' the business benefits of employee volunteering rather than focussing purely on the corporate social responsibility agenda.
- The psychological and practical barriers that can prevent people from volunteering and the ways in which organisations can work towards reducing barriers and providing a 'quality' volunteering experience.

In short, the outcomes of the consultation workshop suggest that the key priorities for participants are that the volunteering strategy:

- Is inclusive of and targeted at the full range of potential groups of volunteers (e.g. those with mental health issues, young people, older people etc)
- Provides targeted support for large and small organisations and specific support for different sectors
- Recognises and promotes the value of volunteering
- Is not driven solely by the Local Area Agreement indicator to increase the number of volunteers, but embraces the notion of 'quality' volunteering

- Incorporates the development and promotion of common principles and 'standards' in placing and involving volunteers
- Is developed and monitored in consultation with key stakeholders
- Brings about better publicity for and co-ordination between local VSAs.

Towards a Volunteering Strategy for Sheffield: Concluding comments and recommendations (Chapter 6)

The concluding chapter discusses some of the most important issues and concerns involved in the development of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield, and identifies specific recommendations which could contribute to its development. In brief, the issues and recommendations relate to the development of volunteering as a significant policy area at a local level and what its focus should be; evidencing the impact of volunteering and the issue of 'quality'; and assisting volunteering through adequately resourcing VSAs to support better coordination and marketing of volunteering opportunities.

By way of conclusion, a framework for the evolution of a volunteering strategy, which attempts to capture these issues and priorities, is proposed and focuses on four key themes:

1. Promoting and recognising volunteering
2. Reducing the barriers to volunteering
3. Providing excellent volunteering opportunities
4. Resourcing volunteering.

2 Volunteering: Why does it matter?

This chapter gives a brief overview of the current policy climate in relation to volunteering at a national and local level. It then considers the policy arena pertaining to the volunteering infrastructure and culminates in a discussion of the potential for growth in volunteering through addressing the barriers to voluntary activity identified by existing research.

2.1 National Policy Context

Since 1997 'community' has emerged as a key policy arena for economic and social change within several UK government departments, on the premise that community offers resources, social glue, alternative ideas and knowledge that are now seen as essential to society (Taylor, 2002). The concept of social capital has become enormously influential as an explanation for why some communities work better than others. Social capital, according to Putnam (2000), consists of the networks, norms and trust that enable individuals and groups to engage in cooperative activity. It could be argued that Putnam's approach has been used by policy makers to justify their agenda of encouraging individuals to volunteer, especially the strategy to broaden the volunteer base (Home Office, 2006), as seen in Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets (Williams, 2003). Never before has the UK government "directed such attention to volunteering, or invested so heavily in initiatives to promote it" (Low et al., 2007 p.10).

The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) has been announced for the period 2008-2011. The review provides the Government policy direction for the allocation of resources over the medium term. Actions are prioritised through 30 new PSAs, which are grouped into four themes. Under the third theme, Stronger Communities and a better Quality of Life, PSA21 perhaps carries most relevance for the voluntary or third sector. Entitled 'Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities', its indicators include a 'thriving third sector' and although the Office of the Third Sector is currently working on how to 'measure' this, it is envisaged that it will encompass participation in volunteering. The Third Sector Review was completed in July 2007 to inform the CSR and made a key announcement of £117 million of new resources for youth volunteering, building on the work of V, the charity established by the Government in 2004 to develop a new framework for youth volunteering (HM Treasury, 2007).

The government has been particularly keen to highlight the role of volunteering in addressing social exclusion (see for example speeches by David Blunkett, 2001; Gordon Brown, 2000). Individuals who belong to certain Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, have no qualifications or have a disability or limiting, long-term illness can be seen as at particular risk of social exclusion. These three groups have also been shown to volunteer less (Kitchen et al., 2006), and as such have become the

focus of government initiatives and policies to increase levels of participation. For example, in an attempt to broaden the volunteer base in England a cross-government programme, *Volunteering for All*, was announced in March 2006 to promote opportunities to potential volunteers, especially adults at risk of social exclusion (Home Office, 2006). There are also strong arguments why volunteer-involving organisations should look seriously at the links between volunteering and social exclusion. Not least because evidence suggests that staff and volunteers are more likely to become involved and stay involved in an organisation that is inclusive and manages diversity well (Mole & Harrow, 2003).

The Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) (2004) conclude that volunteering is an effective way of alleviating the symptoms of social exclusion for many people, and can help to address some of the causes. However, they conclude that the impact of (formal, organisationally based) volunteering is not realising its potential, stating that "volunteering is not yet fully inclusive, and so its contribution to combating social exclusion is being limited" (IVR, 2004 p. 66). A number of barriers prevent people from volunteering in formal, organisational settings. These barriers are both psychological and practical and affect people's willingness and ability to volunteer at different points in time: some when an individual first considers volunteering; some when they attempt to start volunteering; and others when they have become involved. The barriers to formal volunteering will be discussed further in section 2.4.

In practice (and perhaps because it is the easiest way to 'market' volunteering) there has been a tendency to promote the main potential of volunteering as preparing people for the paid labour market. IVR (2004) suggest that, for some people, volunteering does provide a route into employment, which government (and many others) see, in turn, as the main route out of exclusion. However, they go on to highlight that this is not the only contribution that volunteering makes to inclusion, nor is it (for many people) the main benefit to be derived from volunteering. Howlett (1999) has also argued that government's emphasis has been too strongly on the link between volunteering and employment generally. Thus, in policy terms, volunteering has become increasingly associated with training and re-retraining for the workplace (Russell, 2005). However, Hardill et al. (2007) point out that this instrumental view does not apply to individuals 'beyond' the labour market because of age, disability or care commitments.

2.2 Local Policy Context

Presently, the volunteering agenda is notable by its absence within local level strategies. While key city-wide strategies such as the City Strategy, Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Local Neighborhood Renewal Strategy are awash with references to community engagement, promoting stronger communities, active citizenship, social inclusion, strengthening cohesion and integration and involvement in community life, there is little explicit recognition of the contribution volunteering can

make to these ambitions. It is also notable that the Sheffield Compact - an agreement between Sheffield City Council and the local VCS about the relationship between the sectors - and the Sheffield National Health Service (NHS) Compact have both adopted three codes of practice covering consultation, partnership working and funding. However, unlike the national Compact and local Compacts within neighboring areas such as Rotherham, a volunteering code of practice has not been adopted locally. Moreover, and again in contrast to neighboring areas, there appears to be no locally agreed strategic actions in place to develop volunteering within the City, despite the LAA incorporating an indicator to establish and monitor the percentage of people who have worked in a voluntary capacity over the past twelve months. The 'refresh' of Sheffield's LAA provides the opportunity for this situation to be addressed. Partners may therefore wish to consider prioritising the 'participation in regular volunteering' indicator for inclusion in the Sheffield First Agreement and agree subsequent strategic actions to underpin its development.

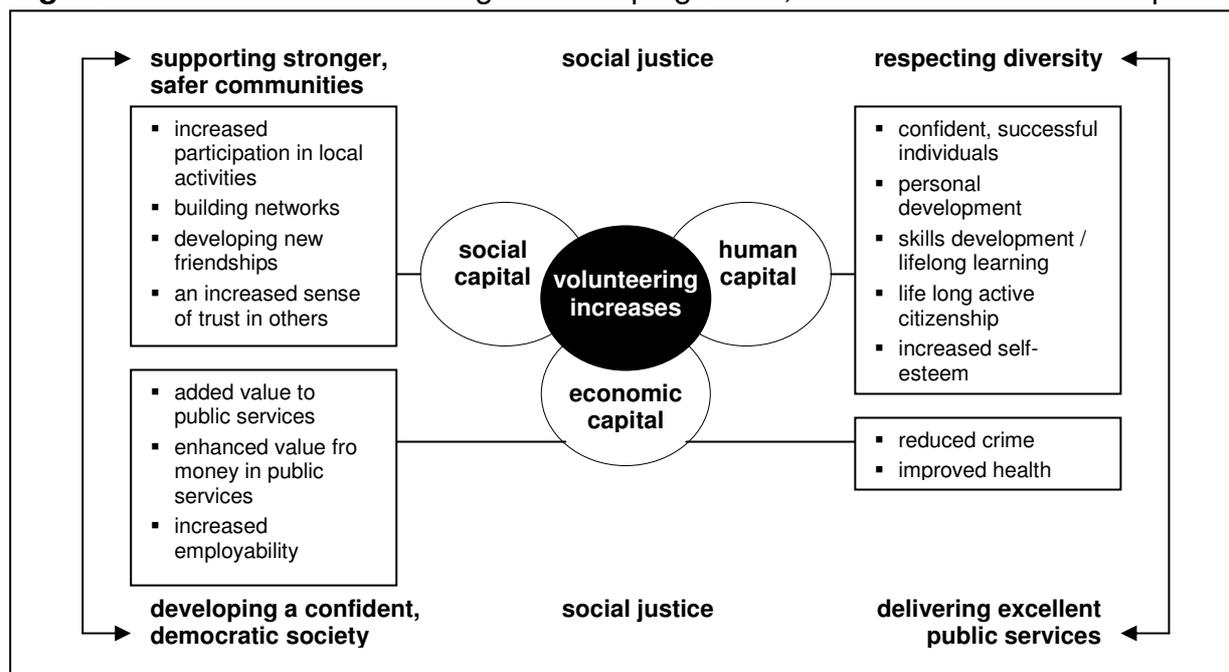
Although this study is a pre-cursor to the development of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield, if volunteering is to reach its full potential at a local level, it is imperative that volunteering is not seen solely as a VCS issue. Although large numbers of voluntary and community organisations do rely heavily on voluntary effort, Penberthy & Forster (2004 p. 10) argue that volunteering is of vital importance for the statutory sector too:

"Our education, health and criminal justice systems (to cite only three) rely on volunteers for their effective delivery. What is more, our governance systems - from the organisation of political parties through to the exercise of power by elected officials - are delivered, in the main, through volunteers"

Indeed, at a local level, Sheffield Parks and Countryside Service (Sheffield City Council), the Teaching Hospitals, and local schools, to name but three examples, all benefit from a significant number of volunteers. In recognising the full value of volunteering, local stakeholders must acknowledge its potential to increase:

- **social capital** (participation in local activities, building networks, developing friendships and a sense of trust)
- **human capital** (confidence, personal development, skills development, active citizenship, self esteem)
- **economic capital** (reduced crime, improved health, added value to public services, increased employability)

The model developed in the Edinburgh Volunteering Strategy, and presented in figure 1 (page 15), is a useful way of conceptualising the wider contribution volunteering can make.

Figure 1: The role of volunteering in developing social, human and economic capital

Source: Inspiring Volunteering - A volunteering strategy for Edinburgh (2006)

The implication for local policy-makers is that the strategic development of volunteering cannot and should not be viewed as a 'bolt-on' activity, but acknowledged and integrated within mainstream strategies. For example, for the purposes of the local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and City Strategy, the following features were used to define a successful neighbourhood:

- A place where people choose to live, and housing is of a good standard with accessible services and affordable / modern homes which people choose
- Where children and young people are supported, and there is good access to schools
- Streets are clean and well maintained and green spaces and the natural environment are well maintained and well used
- There is low crime, and communities are cohesive with active citizens and displaying community pride
- There are lifelong learning and training opportunities which those who would benefit most take advantage of
- Where employment prospects and employability are good
- Health and well being is good
- Public services provided to a good standard, including educational achievement, the proportion of looked after children, and health services all above floor target levels.

Accepting the model presented in figure 1, it can be argued that volunteering has significant potential to contribute to the development of successful neighbourhoods on a number of fronts, which warrant the attention of policy-makers. The new

performance framework for local authorities is also likely to play a role in placing volunteering in the local policy arena.

The publication of the Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (DCLG, 2006), which promised a new era of freedom for local government, has resulted in a reduction of approximately 1,200 indicators to 198 indicators for assessing performance. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), in *The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships*, set out a single set of 198 measures, developed as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Performance against each of the 198 indicators will be reported for every single tier and county council Local Strategic Partnership and will be the only measures on which central government will performance manage outcomes. In each area, targets against the set of national indicators will be negotiated through new LAAs, which will include up to 35 targets from among the national indicators, complemented by 17 statutory targets on educational attainment and early years. From April 2008, all other sets of indicators will be abolished.

Within the national indicator set, two indicators relating to the 'Stronger Communities' outcome are of particular relevance in the context of this report. These are national indicator 6 (NI 6) - participation in regular volunteering, and national indicator 7 (NI7) - environment for a thriving third sector (DCLG, 2007). Interestingly, research has shown that there is a positive relationship between participation in voluntary activities and having a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, trust in local people, a feeling that local people pull together to improve the neighbourhood and the ability to influence local decision-making (Kitchen et al., 2006), many of which form the basis of indicators in the new performance framework.

2.3 Volunteering Infrastructure

The phenomenon of people freely giving their time for the good of others does not necessarily just happen. It is often the result of work by volunteer-involving organisations and by the volunteering infrastructure:

"At a local level, volunteer development agencies fulfil a vital role in the health of local communities and in encouraging active citizenship. Volunteering infrastructure is important not for its own sake but for the value it adds to the volunteering sector; for its credibility and contact with members of the public; and for its ability to cut duplication and co-ordinate essential back-room functions."

(Spence, 2004)

Over the past few years government activity has encouraged the VCS, and its public and private sector partners, to think about the future of infrastructure. The launch of the Compact Code on Volunteering in 2001 and subsequent government publications, consultation and initiatives - not least ChangeUp - have highlighted the importance of VCS infrastructure generally. At the same time, and independent of government

activity, the consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering, the National Centre for Volunteering and Volunteer Development England were working to create a new integrated volunteer development agency for England, and Volunteering England was founded in 2004.

The ChangeUp document, *ChangeUp – Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*, was published by the Home Office in June 2004 as a response to concerns that VCS infrastructure was patchy in coverage and quality and lacked sustainable funding. These issues were raised by the HM Treasury document *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery 2002 – A Cross Cutting Review (CCR)*.

The Government believes that frontline voluntary and community organisations play a crucial role in delivering public services, particularly to people who are socially excluded. ChangeUp seeks to ensure that support and expertise are available to ensure that they deliver these services at their full potential. According to the framework, government is not only interested in the VCS as agents of public service delivery. They also believe that:

"The infrastructure has an essential role in building and contributing to civil society and a healthy democracy ... [and] recognises the role of the sector in engaging communities to be more self-determining, engaging citizens as volunteers and building bridges across communities."

(ChangeUp National Portal, www.changeup.org.uk)

The strategy for modernising the volunteering infrastructure, *Building on Success: Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England 2004–2014*, was produced by Volunteering England and developed through a process of consultation "in parallel with the development of ChangeUp" (England Volunteering Development Council, 2005 p. 2). The overall vision of Building on Success is of "a modern, dynamic, strategic, coordinated and sustainable infrastructure for volunteering at national, regional and local level" (Penberthy and Forster, 2004 p. 6). However, Building on Success highlighted a number of concerns relating to the state of the volunteering infrastructure in England. Perhaps the overriding issue was that:

"The volunteering infrastructure in England has grown over more than 50 years both locally and nationally. This growth has been evolutionary, often without a sense of cohesive strategy or a plan for long-term sustainability"

(Penberthy & Forster, 2004 p.6)

More specifically, staff time spent on fundraising to meet salary costs was significant. As a result VSAs can find it difficult to deliver the core functions and some were closing owing to a lack of funding (Coombs, 2007). Coombs further suggests that additional work must be undertaken to demonstrate the impact of volunteering infrastructure modernisation and that there is a need to identify clearly any difference

that investment has made to beneficiaries in both the short and the long term. This is important in order to:

- demonstrate the benefits of modernisation
- provide evidence to support additional investment
- identify weak points and areas for further work
- assist individual organisational development
- provide baseline data.

Unlike other infrastructure organisations, VSAs look to benefit individuals (volunteers) as well as organisations, and so the nature of their impact is potentially distinct. This is one of the reasons for the development of the Institute for Volunteering Research Volunteer Development Agency Impact Assessment Toolkit.

2.4 Potential for Growth: Addressing the Barriers to Volunteering

Policy statements highlight the rewards that can be enjoyed by volunteers themselves as much or more than the contribution that volunteering can make to the well-being of others, which contrasts with the multifaceted picture of motives highlighted by research in a number of countries (Zappala, 2000; Hughes & Black, 2002; Handy et al., 2005). Much of this research suggests that individuals volunteer for a complex mix of altruistic and self-interested reasons and that volunteers are both 'givers' and 'takers' (Merrell, 2000). The reasons to volunteer are very personalised, and the motivations will vary between individuals (see box 1).

Box 1: Motivations for volunteering

Penberthy & Forster (2004) suggests that these motivations can generally be seen to fall within the following categories (although most people will volunteer for a mixture of these reasons):

- **Altruism** - the sense of giving something back, helping others and feeling valued by society.
- **Personal and social reasons** - reacting to something that has happened to a person, their immediate family or close friends; feelings of belonging to a community (whether geographical, cultural or of interest); making new friends.
- **Developing skills and employability** - gaining experience; building a CV; a pre cursor to, or part of, formal accredited training; discovering new talents, skills and abilities; doing something different.
- **Changing the world** - seeking to make the community, country, continent and/or world in which we all live a better place through societal change; campaigning; exercising leadership.

Source: Building on Success: Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England 2004 - 2014

Research by the Institute for Volunteering Research in 2004, in which Sheffield was one of the three geographic areas, identified a range of psychological barriers to volunteering including: the public image of volunteering; fear of over-commitment; lack of confidence; other people's attitudes; and fear of losing welfare benefit. They also identified a number of practical barriers, cited as: the difficulty of finding out about volunteering opportunities; over-formal recruitment procedures; poor follow-up

of new recruits; a physically inaccessible volunteering environment; and inability to meet the costs of volunteering (IVR, 2004).

Notably, IVR report that while organisations tended to focus more on the practical barriers, individuals felt that the psychological barriers were more damaging. Organisations have worked towards overcoming these barriers in a number of different ways, including:

- Promoting volunteering in ways that individuals from excluded groups could identify with and by running targeted recruitment campaigns.
- Building relationships with community groups and specialist organisations in order to access and involve people from under-represented groups.
- Building individual capacity amongst people who lacked the confidence or skills to volunteer - often facilitated by partnerships between volunteer-involving organisations and support agencies.
- Ensuring that recruitment processes were user-friendly - minimising form filling and asking new recruits in for a chat rather than an interview.
- Creating an inclusive environment including running diversity, disability and cultural awareness training.
- Recognising individuals' capabilities not disabilities and turning the traditional approach of fitting the volunteer to the role on its head by matching the role to the volunteer (IVR, 2004).

Ultimately, volunteers wanted: an enjoyable experience; training; the opportunity to use and develop skills; a route to employment; recognition and incentives; support from staff and peers; a variety of opportunities; team spirit and ownership; and good communication. When organisations had put these in place, some of the barriers to involvement had been overturned (IVR, 2004). Gaskin (2003), in *A Choice Blend: What volunteers want from organisations and management*, reported that volunteers identified requirements including: flexibility; creativity; informality; involvement; and something different from the day job.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has highlighted that the volunteering agenda is gaining pace politically and has now emerged as a key policy area within central government. Although there have recently been a number of national policy initiatives to increase and broaden the volunteer base, underpinned by PSA and LAA indicators and targets, volunteering holds a relatively low profile amongst policy-makers within Sheffield.

While government has been particularly keen to promote the role of volunteering in addressing social exclusion and, in turn, a route into the labour market, there are some concerns that this instrumental view does not apply to individuals beyond the labour market. The chapter has also highlighted some significant barriers which can prevent people from volunteering. The implication for policy-makers and practitioners

is that they cannot go on asking increasingly more people to volunteer. Instead, there needs to be a significant effort to address the wider barriers that prevent people from volunteering (IVR, 2004). Chapter 3 will now provide an overview of the prevalence of and issues with formal volunteering at a national and local level.

3 The 'Anatomy' of Volunteering

In *The UK Voluntary Sector Almanac 2006*, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) report that an estimated 1.1 million paid workers would be needed to replace formal volunteers (Wainwright et al., 2006). This is well over twice the number of current full-time equivalent paid employees in the voluntary sector, and would cost an approximate £25.4 billion (based on the national average wage). Recent research undertaken by the Centre for Regional and Economic Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University estimates that there may be four times more volunteers (including trustees/ management committee members) than paid staff involved with the VCS in South Yorkshire (Macmillan, 2006).

This chapter gives an overview of formal volunteering at a national level through presenting the headline findings from *Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving* (Low et al., 2007) and the *2005 Citizenship Survey* (Kitchen et al., 2006). It then considers formal volunteering at a local level through Sheffield City Council's Household Survey and secondary analysis of data from CRESR's *Part of the Picture* research, which mapped the VCS in South Yorkshire.

3.1 National Picture

3.1.1 The extent of formal volunteering

Helping Out suggests that overall, 59% of survey respondents had given formal volunteering help through an organisation in the last year, while 39% had done so on a regular basis (at least once a month). On average, respondents had volunteered for 11 hours over the last four weeks.

The prevalence estimates from Helping Out tend to be higher than those from the 2005 Citizenship Survey, and the authors of Helping Out state that their estimate "is not an indicator of recent trends in formal volunteering" (p.7). The 2005 Citizenship Survey reports that overall, 44% of people in England had participated in formal volunteering activities in the last year and 29% participated at least once a month¹. These figures fall to 41% and 27% respectively for the Yorkshire and Humber Region. Similarly to Helping Out, the Citizenship Survey reports that people in England had volunteered for an average of 11.9 hours in the last four weeks.

¹ The technical report for the 2005 Citizenship Survey (Michaelson et al., 2006) highlights that these estimates are based on derived variables to establish whether: respondents had given any formal voluntary help in the last 12 months; respondents had given regular (monthly) formal voluntary help in the last 12 months; and the frequency of formal help given in the last 12 months. A full list of the volunteering related questions included in the 2005 Citizenship Survey and pertaining to the data reported here is presented in appendix 3. The authors of this report were unable to obtain a copy of the separate technical report for Helping Out, but note that Low et al. (2007) state, in the main report, that the starting point for questionnaire design included the 2005 Citizenship Survey, although some changes were made to these questions to reflect developments in the topic areas of interest and policy needs of the study.

3.1.2 Who volunteers?

Helping Out reports that levels of formal volunteering vary across socio-demographic groups. The proportion of volunteers tended to be higher among those in the 34-44 and 55-64 age brackets, women, those in paid employment, those actively practising a religion and those not in a group at risk of social exclusion.

The 2005 Citizenship Survey yielded similar results:

- 32% of 16-19 year olds participated in formal volunteering at least once a month but this fell to 26% among 20-24 year olds and 25% among 25-34 year olds. Participation levels then rose again to 32% among 35-49 year olds and remained stable before falling to 21% among those aged 75 or over.
- Women were more likely to have participated in formal voluntary activities at least once a month (31% compared with 27%).
- Regular participation in formal volunteering was similar among White people, Black people and mixed race people. Asian people and Chinese people were less likely to have participated in formal volunteering at least once a month. However, differences in participation by ethnic group were largely due to lower rates of participation among people born outside the UK.
- People who actively practiced a religion were more likely to participate in formal volunteering than those who did not.
- People who had a long term limiting illness or disability were less likely to participate regularly in formal volunteering (23% compared with 30%).
- People in 'routine occupations' or who had never worked or were long-term unemployed and those who did not have any formal qualifications were less likely to undertake formal volunteering on a regular basis.

3.1.3 What do volunteers do?

Helping Out reports that the majority of volunteers (59%) help more than one organisation. Looking at the main organisation helped, this was most often in the voluntary and community sector (65% of volunteers) or public sector (23%). Similar findings were reported in the 2005 Citizenship Survey.

Helping Out states that the most common organisational fields of interest were education (31% of volunteers), religion (24%), sports and exercise (22%) and health and disability (22%). Both Helping Out and the 2005 Citizenship Survey suggest the most common types of volunteering activity were raising and handling money and organising and helping to run events.

3.1.4 Routes into volunteering

The Helping Out report identifies word of mouth as the most common way that people had found out about volunteering, with previous use of the services being the second most common way. The 2005 Citizenship Survey found that personal contact with someone already involved in the group was by far the most common

way people found out about formal volunteering opportunities. Again, other commonly mentioned sources were friends who were not involved in the group, educational institutions, having previously used services provided by the group and places of worship.

3.1.5 Employer-supported volunteering

Helping Out found that 30% of respondents worked for an employer with both a volunteering and giving scheme. Where an employer-supported volunteering scheme was available, 29% of employees had participated in the last year. Take-up of employer-supported giving schemes was higher, with 42% of employees making use of a giving scheme available to them.

Where they don't currently exist, over half of employees would like to see a volunteering or giving scheme established by their employer. The key factors which would encourage people to take part in these schemes were identified as paid time off; being able to choose the activity; and gaining skills from taking part (Low et al., 2007).

The prevalence estimates regarding the take up of employer-supported volunteering schemes from Helping Out tend to be lower than those from the 2005 Citizenship Survey, which reports that 40% of employees had participated in an employer-supported volunteering scheme in the last year.

3.2 Local Picture

3.2.1 The extent of formal volunteering

In 2006, Sheffield City Council included a question to establish the prevalence of volunteering in Sheffield within the Household Survey for the first time. Before outlining the results of this survey it is important to note that, although central government has made participation in volunteering a mandatory indicator which local authorities must report on, there is currently no standard nationally agreed method to 'measure' it. This has resulted in local authorities each developing their own 'proxy' indicator, often in the form of a questionnaire item within Household Surveys. The data presented here is therefore not comparable with the national data presented above or with data from Rotherham, Barnsley or Doncaster.

The data available to the research team from the 2006 Household Survey suggests that 75% of respondents in Sheffield have **not** participated in any formal volunteering. From this the research team presume 25% of respondents have participated in formal volunteering of some kind within their interpretation of the survey question².

² How much formal volunteering have you engaged in over the past year? (Response options included: none at all; occasional, not regular; at least one hour per week on average; two or more hours per week on average; don't know).

In addition to government's desire to 'measure' the level and trends of volunteering nationally and locally, there has also been an increasing research interest in mapping the VCS, which has often included attempts to establish the level/profile of volunteering. The latest, and most extensive, attempt involving Sheffield was the 'Part of the Picture' research undertaken by CRESR at Sheffield Hallam University in 2006. Again, before proceeding with the presentation of this data, there are a number of salient points to note. Firstly, any attempt to map the VCS should be undertaken with some caution, as Craig et al. (2005 p. 5) warn:

"Mapping the sector, its size and financial capacity is difficult because of a lack of adequate and accessible data bases; neither the VCS itself, nor its funders, can provide more than rough estimates. This is a fact of life: the continual process of change and renewal makes the search for a comprehensive database or greater statistical precision pointless."

Secondly, it is important to note that the volunteering related figures presented here do not represent the total sum of volunteers in Sheffield. They do not include, for example, the considerable number of volunteers working in and alongside statutory services or corporate businesses. The estimates and descriptions outlined in this section provide only broad parameters on the nature of formal voluntary activity in the voluntary and community sector in 2006.

The total number of volunteers (including trustees and management committee members) working in the VCS in South Yorkshire as a whole is estimated to be 112,500 (CRESR, 2006), with approximately 74,000 volunteering in Sheffield³. It is estimated that these 74,000 volunteers collectively dedicate 202,000 hours each week to formal voluntary activity; an estimated 5,459 (full time equivalent) paid workers would be needed to replace formal volunteers in Sheffield alone.

3.2.2 Who volunteers?

Although not directly comparable, the Sheffield City Council Household Survey data displays some similarities with the national data in a number of ways. For example in the Sheffield data:

- Women were more likely to have participated in formal voluntary activities than men (24% compared with 21%);
- People who had a disability were less likely to participate in formal volunteering (18% compared with 25%);
- People under 50 are more likely to take part in formal volunteering than those over 50 (25% compared with 21%).

³ As suggested above, there are methodological 'problems' with attempting to map the VCS generally and estimate the number of volunteers specifically. Not least because this approach tends to involve surveying organisations – meaning, for example, individuals who volunteer for multiple organisations would potentially be 'counted' a number of times.

There is however, a notable difference in the data relating to participation in volunteering by ethnic group at a local level when compared to the national data, with a greater proportion of members of BME communities taking part in formal volunteering than White people locally (31% compared to 22%).

Secondary analysis of the Part of the Picture dataset concurs that more women than men participate in formal volunteering, with female volunteers making up approximately 59% of the total and male volunteers comprising 41% of the total. In terms of age, 20% of volunteers were 24 years old or younger but this falls to just 8% for 25-34 year olds and then remains stable through to those aged 65 or over. Although not directly comparable, this demonstrates similar trends to those reported in the 2005 Citizenship Survey.

3.2.3 Anticipated issues and changes

The Part of the Picture research sought to identify the extent to which a range of issues were regarded as a problem by respondent organisations in terms of meeting their objectives. At a South Yorkshire level, some issues were clearly more problematic than others and seven issues were reported by more than two thirds of respondents in each case, two of which related to finding and recruiting new volunteers (84%) and keeping and developing volunteers (71%).

Overall, a higher percentage of Sheffield organisations reported that finding and recruiting new volunteers was a problem when compared with South Yorkshire as a whole (87% compared to 84%). However, the percentage reporting it as a significant or major problem was the same as that across South Yorkshire (48%). In relation to keeping and developing volunteers, slightly more organisations in Sheffield reported this as a problem than across South Yorkshire as a whole (72% compared to 71%). It was also more likely to be perceived as a significant or major problem (30% in Sheffield compared to 28% across South Yorkshire (see table 1).

Table 1: Issues with finding/recruiting and keeping/developing volunteers

Issue	South Yorkshire		Sheffield	
	Is this a problem? (%)	Is this a significant or major problem? (%)	Is this a problem? (%)	Is this a significant or major problem? (%)
Finding and recruiting new volunteers	84	48	87	48
Keeping and developing volunteers	71	28	72	30

% figures indicate the percentage of organisations reporting that issues were a problem/significant or major problem

The survey also asked respondents to consider how a range of factors (covering general issues, staff and volunteers, finances and external links) might change for them over the next three years. Overall, 45% of respondents across South Yorkshire felt that the number of volunteers working for them would change and 42% felt the

ease of recruiting volunteers would change. Higher proportions of respondents foresee some turbulence ahead regarding finances, core work or the expectations around services provided. Issues regarding volunteers, staffing and trustees appeared to be regarded as least likely change in the next three years.

Overall, a slightly higher percentage of Sheffield organisations felt that the number of volunteers working for them would change when compared with South Yorkshire as a whole (46% compared to 45%). More notably, 45% of Sheffield organisations felt that the ease of recruiting volunteers would change compared to 42% across South Yorkshire (see table 2).

Table 2: Expectations of change regarding volunteers

Issue	South Yorkshire		Sheffield	
	Will change slightly (%)	Will change significantly (%)	Will change slightly (%)	Will change significantly (%)
The number of volunteers working for us	38	7	40	6
Ease of recruiting volunteers	33	9	35	10

% figures indicate the percentage of organisations reporting an expectation that issues would change slightly/significantly for their organisation over the next three years.

So far we have discussed only in general terms the extent to which respondent organisations anticipate that things will change or stay the same in the near future. We have not considered the *direction* of change, to which we will now turn. Overall 30% of South Yorkshire respondents expect the number of volunteers working for them to increase and 20% anticipate that recruiting volunteers will become harder.

Organisations in Sheffield appear to be more optimistic than those across South Yorkshire overall about the number of volunteers expected to be working with them over the next three years, with 33% expecting an increase and 13% expected a decrease (compared to 30% and 15% respectively for South Yorkshire). However, 22% of Sheffield organisations expect recruiting volunteers to become harder, compared to 20% across South Yorkshire (see table 3).

Table 3: Expectations regarding direction of change

Issue	South Yorkshire		Sheffield	
	Will decrease (%)	Will increase (%)	Will decrease (%)	Will increase (%)
The number of volunteers working for us	15	30	13	33
Ease of recruiting volunteers	20	22	22	23

% figures indicate the percentage of organisations reporting the particular direction of change they expect over the next three years.

3.3 Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of the 'anatomy' of volunteering at a national and local level. It has served to highlight the methodological issues associated with estimating the prevalence of volunteering and, in particular, the lack of comparability between the national and local data presented. Despite these issues, it is evident from the research undertaken by CRESR (Macmillan, 2006), that volunteers make a significant contribution to Sheffield. However, there are a number of challenges facing the local VCS in Sheffield in relation to the volunteering landscape. The research team would concur with CRESR in their conclusion that the 'perennial problem' of getting volunteers remains central amongst the issues faced by the voluntary sector:

"The most pressing problems facing the sector appear to be fundamental to its health: raising funds, **finding and recruiting new volunteers**, and the time to get involved in networks and partnerships" [emphasis added].

(Macmillan, 2006 p.66)

It is likely that the problems with finding and recruiting volunteers will inevitably extend beyond the voluntary sector, which generally occupies a favourable position with existing and prospective volunteers. Chapter 4 will now focus on the local volunteering infrastructure and the challenges it faces.

4 Mapping Volunteering Infrastructure in Sheffield

The Volunteer Centre Sheffield is the only local volunteer development agency (VDA) in Sheffield, as recognised by Volunteering England. However, a number of other Sheffield based organisations that have volunteer development as a significant role have been identified. These organisations (including Volunteer Centre Sheffield) are collectively referred to as Volunteer Support Agencies (VSAs) within this report. This chapter briefly summarises examples of what currently exists in Sheffield with regard to volunteering infrastructure and, in particular, explores the common issues and challenges it faces. For more detailed information about the VSAs in section 4.1, please refer to appendix 4.

4.1 Examples of volunteering infrastructure organisations in Sheffield

4.1.1 Business in the Community

BITC delivers benefits to companies, employees and communities by providing access to expertise on employee involvement; campaigning to increase the amount of employee volunteering nationally, and; actively brokering volunteering opportunities. BITC provides a variety of employee volunteering opportunities including: **team challenges** to provide staff development in leadership and team-building skills; **mentoring**; **development assignments** designed to address individual skill development needs by undertaking a task in the community; **right to read / number partners**, supporting primary schoolchildren once a week to improve their reading and literacy skills.

It is worth noting that BITC also provide a national network of over 1,000 professional firms which provide professional advice and strategic support free of charge to community groups and voluntary organisations in their local area through 'ProHelp'. ProHelp member firms include surveyors, architects, consulting engineers, accountants, solicitors, consultants, public relations, marketing and design agencies.

4.1.2 Community Service Volunteers (CSV) Action Desk

CSV Action Desks are the result of a partnership between CSV and the BBC. This partnership aims to raise awareness of local issues and opportunities for civic participation. Within Sheffield, the Action Desk producer and a team of volunteers broadcast appeals, bulletins and features on BBC Radio Sheffield in order to:

- raise awareness of key issues, local campaigns or appeals;
- galvanise audiences to be part of the solution;
- recruit volunteers, learners and encourage giving.

4.1.3 Hallam Volunteering

Hallam Volunteering exists to enable students and staff at Sheffield Hallam University to take part in volunteer led projects which contribute to the community in and around Sheffield. There are over 30 projects to choose from offering opportunities to volunteer for a series of sessions or a one-off event. The 30 Hallam Volunteering projects are student-led, so the direction any given project takes is decided by the student volunteer team working on the project. Each team of volunteers is supported by one of the staff team of volunteer co-ordinators, and the student Committee and its Working Groups, which provide further volunteering opportunities.

4.1.4 Sheffield Volunteering

Sheffield Volunteering offers flexible volunteering opportunities to staff and students of Sheffield University, ranging from regular 1 hour per week (minimum) opportunities in local voluntary and community organisations through to one-off volunteering experiences. It also offers time-limited opportunities, such as six week placements in primary, secondary or 'special' schools for two to three hours per week and provides support and advice to student volunteers or university departments in developing projects of benefit to the local community.

Sheffield Volunteering also brokers volunteering opportunities between student volunteers and local voluntary and community organisations via its database of over 100 opportunities in areas such as advocacy, mediation, befriending and mentoring with diverse interest groups including children, older people and refugees and asylum seekers.

4.1.5 SOVA - Millennium Volunteers

Millennium Volunteers (MV) is a national scheme funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Sheffield Millennium Volunteers is based within SOVA and aims to increase and improve volunteering opportunities for all young people (16-24 year olds).

There are two main types of volunteering opportunities available for young people through MV:

- **Volunteer placement opportunities** where young people are matched with an organisation where they are interested in volunteering.
- **Youth-led initiatives** where the MV Project will assist and help support youth led initiatives. These could be anything that a young person is interested in setting up, as long as it involves or benefits other people or the community in general.

4.1.6 Volunteer Centre Sheffield

Volunteer Centre Sheffield, which is based within Voluntary Action Sheffield, provides advice and information to people who would like to volunteer or find out more about volunteering. Volunteer Centre Sheffield thus holds information on a wide range of

local organisations which need volunteers and provides information about volunteering opportunities. They also provide information and advice to groups on: recruiting, supporting and training volunteers; volunteer agreements and policies; criminal records checks; equal opportunities issues and volunteering.

Volunteer Centre Sheffield produces Good Practice Guidelines on a variety of subjects relating to working with volunteers and also offer support to groups working with volunteers through delivery of an ongoing programme of accredited training on good practice in managing volunteers. The Volunteer Centre also supports Sheffield Volunteer Managers Forum, an information and networking forum for people managing and working with volunteers in a paid or unpaid capacity to meet and share information, good practice, and discussion on managing volunteers. The Volunteer Centre Refugee & Asylum Seeker Project, 'New beginnings', gives extra support to assist refugees & asylum seekers in accessing volunteering opportunities.

4.1.7 Other support for volunteer development

In addition to the volunteering infrastructure outlined above, there are various other organisations and services that have a more localised volunteer development role, which is not their raison d'être, but nevertheless forms a significant area of their work. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Neighbourhood Level Infrastructure Organisations** such as Netherthorpe and Upperthorpe Community Alliance and Sahrrow Community Forum which provide a local focus for voluntary action through the provision of information about volunteering opportunities.
- **Sheffield Futures**, which works with other (primarily youth) organisations to provide one-off and long-term volunteering opportunities (particularly for young people), in addition to providing opportunities within Sheffield Futures itself.
- **Sheffield Parks & Countryside Service, Sheffield City Council**, has a Community Partnerships Team which signposts individual volunteers and businesses to the Parks and Countryside Service, to Friend of parks groups, community groups associated with and giving support to the Parks and Countryside Service and provides a guide to working with volunteers.

4.2 Challenges for local volunteering infrastructure organisations

Section 4.2 will now turn to the issues and challenges faced by local volunteering infrastructure organisations, which have emerged from analysis of interview data gathered by the research team in face-to-face interviews with a sample of local VSAs. The data is grouped around four themes relating to: recognition and targeting at a strategic level; funding; collaboration and networking; and measuring volume and impact.

4.2.1 Recognition and targeting at a strategic level

Although interviewees within the local VSAs clearly and extensively articulated the contribution volunteering can make, in its broadest sense, relating it to economic, social and human capital in various ways, there was less confidence that its value was widely understood amongst partner agencies:

"The wider value of volunteering and the links to various strategic agendas, for example worklessness, is not always recognised at a local level... except by a select few who are basically supporting it anyway. It's not necessarily on other people's radars and that's a problem."

(VSA interviewee)

While this was a commonly reported view, some interviewees emphasised that the voluntary and community sector itself has a responsibility to fulfil a role in developing the understanding of partner agencies and decision makers:

"At the highest level, the nature of their backgrounds means that they will concentrate on high level economic outputs. They don't necessarily recognise that volunteering could contribute to the worklessness agenda for example, or the city's economy. I don't think people are resistant to it, but it needs to be properly explained and clearly demonstrated to them. We [the VCS] need a strong evidence base and we're not good at that... we're good at saying we should do this 'cause it's morally right."

(VSA interviewee)

In terms of employee volunteering, scepticism about whether or not central government's commitment to corporate social responsibility, evident in various policy initiatives including employer-supported volunteering, was filtering through to the local level within the public sector was expressed time and again, and is captured in the following quotes:

"Look at the biggest employers in the City - the local authority, the universities, the police, the health authority – they're not particularly good at volunteering as an employer. They're good at encouraging others and using volunteers, but there's a big issue about the public sector buying into the volunteering agenda. It's an untapped area"

(VSA interviewee)

"I think the council itself needs to look at volunteering opportunities, we need to look at the big statutory organisations and encourage employer supported volunteering so they release their staff like HSBC and Cadburys do."

(VSA interviewee)

There was also a feeling that corporate social responsibility should “put the community into the business as well as the company going into the community to undertake voluntary activity.” In this sense, it was felt that there could be opportunities for companies to offer meaningful volunteering placements within the business, with a view to developing volunteers’ skills and future employment prospects.

At a strategic level, interviewees felt that the city needs to develop a shared vision for volunteering, clear agreement on how it should be achieved, and adequate resources for implementation:

"We need a shared vision and clarity about why we're engaging communities, a higher profile for volunteering and sustainable funding arrangements for volunteer development agencies."

(VSA interviewee)

"We need to make a commitment to volunteering as a city and ensure the infrastructure is in place in terms of support."

(VSA interviewee)

"There needs to be an adequately funded city-wide service... it can't be done 'on the cheap'. If this is important to the government, which it supposedly is, if it's important to the LAA, then it has to be properly resourced and actively marketed. There has to be a clear city-wide structure that all the agencies buy into... it has to be sustainable and it has to have high level commitment."

(VSA interviewee)

There was also some suggestion that resources and the activities of volunteering infrastructure should be 'targeted' within the city in order to achieve the highest impact in the most deprived communities:

"I think strategically, if you look at the city, if we identified the projects and communities that really need support and we put the resources and support in there, we could have a major impact, whether its social or economic regeneration of the city."

(VSA interviewee)

It was evident that some infrastructure organisations had begun to take such an approach to their work:

"I think traditionally, our approach to volunteering has been a bit ad hoc. If someone came to us and said "we want to do some volunteering in a educational setting in Dore" we would have supported that. What we're increasingly doing now, is to look strategically at what's going to have the greatest impact on regeneration. So now we'd say "that's great, we'd love you to do that, but if you look at the statistics and did it over here in a school in Burngreave, it could have a far greater impact." We can't tell them to do that, but we would certainly encourage it."

(VSA interviewee)

4.2.2 Funding

Almost every interviewee reported that the organisation's work to develop volunteering took place against a backdrop of insecure, short-term funding arrangements:

"All the funding for our current volunteering related work ends March 2008. We have bid for funding for next year, but although initial feedback has been

positive, none of the funding is formally secured as yet and the length of the potential funding is also unknown."

(VSA interviewee)

"If we took away all the public funding tomorrow, it is not sustainable at our current level of provision. The RDA [Regional Development Agency] funding ends in March 2008 and there is no obvious replacement. It's likely that we'll be back to dipping into little pots here and there to try and sustain what we do."

(VSA interviewee)

"Opportunities for funding are thin on the ground. We currently have one 4 year funding agreement but that's for one very specific area of our work, the rest of it is funded by a statutory agency and a charity and both are subject to an annual decision on whether or not we get the money."

(VSA interviewee)

Volunteer infrastructure organisations often reported 'over-achieving' in relation to their project outputs (number of volunteers placed/supported for example) and felt that there was further potential to stimulate increased levels of volunteering. However, many were unable to do so due to financial and staffing constraints:

"Demand could be much higher if we stimulated it. But for the size of the team we've got, the balance is about right. If we didn't have to worry about the funding side of things, the level of volunteering activity we could do in Sheffield would create 10 times more impact than we are able to do now."

(VSA interviewee)

"We can't necessarily be as pro-active as we'd like with people, because we can't handle the volume. So, to some extent, we haven't tested the market... but we couldn't cope with expanding that market, we haven't got the capacity to be able to cope with it."

(VSA interviewee)

"Demand is increasing and our network of placement providers is widening.... we are running to full capacity already but we could probably generate enough demand to justify two more workers."

(VSA interviewee)

4.2.3 Collaboration and Networking

Interviewees felt that an important aspect of any future volunteering strategy would be to provide a coherent framework for co-ordinating the work of the local volunteering infrastructure:

"I think we're all beavering away doing some great stuff in our own little pockets, but I don't think we are talking to each other very much about how we fit together. There used to be no cross-referrals and so individuals just disappear back into the ether; we're missing loads of opportunities by not having a more joined up approach."

(VSA interviewee)

"I'm not sure that how the different VSAs fit together has ever really been discussed. I certainly haven't been part of any thoughts around that in Sheffield. It's probably an area of weakness."

(VSA interviewee)

Where networking and collaboration was currently taking place, interviewees reported that this was due more to "luck than good management":

"I don't know why we started to come together, I think it's probably down to the individuals and personalities involved and a recognition of the value of each others work, but currently none of the bits of the jigsaw are put together."

(VSA interviewee)

"We've worked with a number of the other volunteering infrastructure organisations. But in terms of sharing information, I'm sure there are hundreds of voluntary and community organisations that I don't know about 'cause I've not stumbled across them. We've got a few projects that have started from me meeting somebody on a training event."

(VSA interviewee)

Some interviewees felt that the lack of or ad hoc nature of co-working between infrastructure organisations was, at least in part, perpetuated by competition for funding and volunteers:

"There is a network focused on volunteering for young people, but it's missing at a wider level. It happens in pockets around the city but it's not networked. The competition driven by wanting to be the provider of services, and ultimately secure the funding for these, can lead to a lack of collaboration on how better co-ordinated services could be provided. I think there can be a culture of fear around sharing information which might mean loss of volunteers or funding to other competitors... in the young people sphere, this fear has to an extent been overcome by the need to submit a consortia bid for 'V' funding."

(VSA interviewee)

A number of interviewees felt that Voluntary Action Sheffield could play a key role in facilitating collaboration at a city-wide level between the volunteering infrastructure and volunteer involving organisations.

Linked to the issue of limited resources to stimulate further voluntary activity, it was felt that a collaborative, joined-up approach to volunteer services could itself improve the promotion of formal volunteering opportunities:

"How you get referrals into a [volunteer development] service is an issue, 'cause not everyone will just come through the door. Even a city-wide service needs other people out there... the infrastructure has to be there in the communities to refer people. Putting an advert in the Star or whatever won't work. Any city-wide service has to work with local infrastructure organisations... it's not going to do it on its own."

(VSA interviewee)

4.2.4 Measuring Volume and Impact

Interviewees from VSAs consistently reported the requirement to collect 'monitoring' data for their funders. However, it was evident that officers within these organisations were attempting to make use of the data in order to improve service provision:

"We monitor for two reasons. One, for the funders... we are required to provide equal opportunities data and outputs around numbers and that sort of thing. Two, we do it so that we can improve the service, understand where we need to develop and identify gaps in our provision to inform future funding bids."

(VSA interviewee)

Despite interviewees expressing the desire to look beyond quantitative output based data towards the outcomes and impact of volunteering for individual volunteers, organisations and communities, it was clear that, for many VSAs, it remains the requirements of funders which are driving the scale and scope of the data collected:

"We report statistics in terms of numbers of volunteers. In the first six months of this year through one programme alone, we did about 2500 hours of volunteering. What we don't measure, and we'd like to measure, is the long term impact or outcome of that on the individual volunteer or community for example."

(VSA interviewee)

"People say we're moving towards outcomes, but we're not, people still want... if it's a high unit cost, people don't like it and this type of work is likely to be high unit cost. It's not just about driving up the number of people volunteering, it's about quality too."

(VSA interviewee)

"We monitor in terms of numbers of opportunities provided, profile of volunteers, number of hours volunteered and number of beneficiaries... we have very specific targets that were agreed with the funders."

(VSA interviewee)

Where VSAs had been proactive in trying to establish the outcomes of volunteering, including one who had made some use of the Institute for Volunteering Research Volunteering Impact Assessment Tool, this was often not systematic and presented a challenge for already stretched resources:

"In addition to collecting monitoring information in relation to outputs... number of volunteers, equality data etc... as required by funders, we made the decision to try to measure impact and outcomes in terms of the quality of the placement, experience of the volunteer etc. Funders have valued this type of data and collecting it has now moved from being an internally motivated activity to a requirement by funders [laughter], which can create extra time pressures for staff in terms of balancing extensive monitoring with project delivery within the same resources."

(VSA interviewee)

4.3 Summary

This chapter has highlighted some of support available to volunteers and volunteer involving organisations through a wide-range of volunteer support agencies which collectively constitute the volunteering infrastructure in Sheffield. Such organisations provide a number of volunteer development functions, including brokerage (matching individual volunteers with volunteering opportunities), marketing, good practice development, policy responses and campaigning, and the strategic development of volunteering.

The chapter then suggested that there are a number of common issues and challenges the local volunteering infrastructure face. These include: lack of recognition at a strategic level; funding pressures which often lead to a lack of capacity to develop and promote volunteering; a lack of co-ordination between local volunteering infrastructure; and evidencing the impact of volunteering. Chapter 5 will now move on to consider these and other volunteering issues as explored by the participants of a consultation event.

5 Local Challenges and Priorities: Findings from a consultation event

Invitations to a workshop event were distributed via the Volunteer Centre Sheffield to over five hundred local organisations. Over 45 participants from 42 organisations, including paid officers and volunteers from commercial businesses, statutory agencies and voluntary and community organisations participated in the event (please refer to appendix 1 for the list of participant organisations). This chapter summarises the key points from the discussion sessions which took place at the event, the first set of which were structured around four themes:

- Motivations for volunteering
- Measuring the impact of volunteering
- Employer-supported volunteering
- Barriers to volunteering.

These themes were chosen due to their prominence within the policy and research information reviewed by the research team and/or because of the importance attached to them by VSA interviewees. Section 5.1 is therefore structured around the above four themes. Section 5.2 then reports on participants' priorities for a future volunteering strategy, and is structured around the three questions debated by workshop participants in the second set of discussion sessions. Namely:

- What should be the focus or priorities of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield?
- Who are the local stakeholders and what can they contribute to a volunteering strategy?
- What are we getting wrong in relation to volunteering and how can we improve?

Please refer to appendix 5 for a full outline of the event programme.

5.1 Challenges in supporting and developing volunteering

5.1.1 Understanding motivations for volunteering and the implications for organisations in supporting volunteers

Participants noted that individuals volunteer for a mixture of complex reasons. Generally, participants grouped people's motivations into three of the four categories suggested in section 2.4 of this report:

- **Altruism** – wanting the sense of giving something back and helping others.
- **Personal and social reasons** - reacting to something that has happened to them or their immediate family, such as an illness; wanting to make new friends and develop a social network.

- **Developing skills and employability** - gaining experience, skills and a route into employment.

Participants felt it was important for organisations which place and involve volunteers to invest in understanding what volunteers are hoping to achieve from their experience and what kind of activities best suit them in order to achieve that aim. Care is also needed in recognising the contribution of volunteers – some may like and benefit from certificates, awards etc, particularly those seeking employment, but others can find it patronising or meaningless. The implication for organisations is that they must recognise the individuality of volunteers and their motivations in order to maintain, develop and manage their role in an appropriate way and provide a quality experience.

In order to maintain volunteers' motivation on a long-term basis, participants felt that a good match between volunteer and organisation was absolutely critical. Ultimately, volunteers need: a variety of opportunities; a meaningful role; good communication; flexibility; involvement; and to know what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation. It was felt that small voluntary organisations, in particular, may struggle to provide effective volunteer management and that VSAs could provide support in this regard.

5.1.2 Measuring the impact of volunteering: how and why?

Participants noted that there is currently no agreed definition of volunteering across the city, which needs to be rectified in order to establish what partners are attempting to measure/capture. Linked to this issue was the desire for a common understanding of what is meant by the 'added value' of volunteering and subsequently how the quality and impact of volunteering is assessed.

There was a strong feeling that the value of volunteering should not wholly be measured in monetary terms and that the strategic objective within the Local Area Agreement, and any future volunteering strategy, should focus on developing quality volunteering opportunities, not just "driving up numbers". Despite the desire to establish the 'impact' or outcomes of volunteering for individual volunteers, host organisations and communities, the complexities and difficulties associated with such an endeavour were noted. Participants displayed some awareness of approaches to measuring the more 'intangible' benefits of volunteering and some organisations were attempting to collect 'softer' data through feedback from service users and volunteers, but this approach is often not systematic. There was a general feeling that a common approach within Sheffield needed to be agreed and adopted.

It was reported that individual voluntary and community organisations and the local authority collectively hold a large volume of volunteering information, but this is not necessarily used beyond basic monitoring activity - to raise awareness and support the development of volunteering within the city for example. However, participants

were keen to retain a sense or realism about the scale and scope of data which organisations can collect within existing resources: it was felt that if funders' monitoring requirements are set up to focus purely on outputs, organisations will struggle to undertake additional work to establish outcomes/impact. Participants discussed the potential of resourcing an organisation to collect the information and having a central database which individual organisations could access to feed in information.

5.1.3 Employer supported volunteering

Participants felt that the link between employer supported charitable giving and employer supported volunteering should be recognised and maximised at a local level. Employers could be encouraged to provide employer supported giving schemes where providing employer-supported volunteering schemes is not possible. It was felt that giving money is often perceived, by employers, as an 'easier' option than employee volunteering. However, there was representation from the corporate sector at the event, who felt that the business benefits of volunteering were far greater than charitable giving. It was also felt that the volunteering agenda needed to be 'sold' to businesses, not just in terms of corporate social responsibility, but as providing business benefits, including improvements in the company's local profile and savings in staff training and development costs. In addition, the wider benefits of employer-supported volunteering must be promoted and marketed. An employee going into a school to help children develop literacy or numeracy skills, for example, doesn't simply help those individual children, but introduces the future generation of employees to particular industries.

Organisations currently offering employer-supported volunteering schemes need to continue to raise their profile internally to ensure maximum take-up among employees and build it into personal development programmes. Businesses with existing schemes could also play a key role in championing or raising the profile of employee volunteering externally on the premise that it may encourage the adoption of such schemes amongst other businesses and suppliers.

Again, participants felt that the provision of employer-supported volunteering schemes within the local statutory agencies could have a significant impact. This applies not only to the level of volunteering within the city, but also to facilitating awareness and understanding within and between the sectors.

5.1.4 Barriers to volunteering: what makes a 'quality' volunteering experience?

Workshop participants identified a number of psychological and physical barriers which can prevent people from volunteering. The psychological barriers were seen as:

- **Lack of confidence** "to get out and do it"
- **Fear of over-commitment**

- **Uncertainties surrounding responsibilities** of the volunteer (including trustees) and host organisation
- **Fear of paid jobs being replaced by volunteers**, which can lead to hostility towards volunteers within the organisation
- **Apathy** – people who see voluntary work as a “waste of time because it won’t make any difference”.

Participants felt that the major practical barriers preventing people from volunteering were:

- **CRB Checks** which can be difficult for people from other countries and can generally result in increased costs for organisations and delays in commencing volunteering
- **Organisations’ inability to accommodate volunteers with different needs** - specific groups of volunteers need additional support, asylum seekers, people with physical disabilities or mental health issues
- **Inability to meet the costs of volunteering** – participants felt that even if (childcare, travel, subsistence) expenses are reimbursed, volunteers may not have the money initially
- **Insufficient resources** to support volunteers adequately within some organisations (this may include training, management and/or expenses)
- **Lack of follow-up** - “In 70% of referrals, the volunteer never hears from the organisation”. Equally, organisations reported not hearing from many of the prospective volunteers who claimed to be interested
- **Lack of employer-support** - organisations can, for example, struggle to recruit trustees due to day-time meetings; participants expressed the view that employers need to support people and release them for day-time meetings.

Participants felt that volunteer involving organisations could work towards reducing the barriers and providing a ‘quality’ volunteering experience by:

- Being clear about what the volunteering role involves
- Offering a choice of different levels of commitment / providing flexible opportunities
- Creating an accessible physical environment
- Recognise the complexity and individuality of volunteer motivations – don’t place undue emphasis on “getting into work” as this is only one of many reasons for volunteering
- Ensuring the organisation as a whole is well-managed, before involving volunteers
- Making sure volunteers are not a means of “saving money for the public sector”
- Investing in volunteers; no volunteer should be “out of pocket or providing services to clients without adequate training and support”.

5.2 Priorities for a future volunteering strategy

Building on the issues outlined above, participants were given the opportunity to discuss their ideas and suggestions for: the focus and priorities of a future volunteering strategy; who the local stakeholders are and what they can contribute to a strategy; and what the city is currently getting wrong in relation to volunteering and how it can improve. The remainder of section 5.2 outlines the key points from these discussions.

5.2.1 Focus and priorities of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield

There was a clear desire for any future volunteering strategy to be inclusive of and targeted at the full range of potential groups of volunteers, including (but not exclusive to) those with mental health issues, young people, older people, refugees and asylum seekers, people with a physical disability etc. In this regard, it was felt that the local VSAs have a role to play in supporting volunteer-involving organisations to work with volunteers with additional needs. Continuing with this theme, participants expressed the view that any local volunteering strategy must be relevant to and provide for large and small organisations and include specific support for different sectors, with targeted actions.

There also needs to be recognition within all sectors that volunteering isn't free. It is crucial that volunteers are not out of pocket because of their voluntary activity and that there is infrastructure to support volunteers in their role by way of effective volunteer management. In this regard, volunteering can't be done "on the cheap"; recruiting, training and supporting volunteers is often "tagged on to other jobs rather than seen as important in its own right." It was felt that developing good practice in the management and development of volunteers in order to maintain 'sustainable' volunteer placements was vital and that the strategy should not be driven solely by the LAA indicator to drive up the number of volunteers. The 'quality' of volunteering opportunities is thus viewed as imperative as volunteering can "make people lose confidence if they feel inadequately trained or supported in their role." As such, a number of participants felt that there was a need for common standards, perhaps underpinned by 'key principles' and guidelines in the form of a Compact Volunteering Code of Practice. It was suggested that there needs to be agreement, at a strategic level regarding payment of volunteer expenses, which again, could be in the form of Compact arrangements.

Participants reported that the development of a volunteering strategy was only "the start of the process" and were keen to be involved in reviewing its implementation. It was felt that implementation needs to be built into the strategic work-plans of the various departments of the statutory agencies and that there were risks associated with seeing the strategic development of volunteering as a 'bolt-on' activity. For most participants, the key priority of any future volunteering strategy was to realise benefits for the city's volunteers.

5.2.2 Local stakeholders and what they can contribute to a volunteering strategy

There was a clear indication from participants that the future volunteering strategy must be jointly 'owned' by volunteers, the voluntary and community sector and the partners which collectively form Sheffield First Partnership. It was felt that the Sheffield First partnership should play a key role in championing the volunteering agenda and facilitating a joined-up approach between local partners. The potential for recognising volunteering and raising its profile within mainstream structures through branding and concepts like "Sheffield First for Volunteering" was discussed.

The method of developing any future strategy will clearly be an important factor in achieving ownership within key groupings, and there was a strong desire for an inclusive, consultative process driven by a steering group, and possibly wider reference group. A number of participants felt Voluntary Action Sheffield would be well placed to ensure effective involvement of voluntary and community organisations and volunteers. The idea of an annual event on volunteering (drawing on the workshop model used in this research), which could play a major role in involving a wide-range of stakeholders in assessing and monitoring progress and implementation of the volunteering strategy, was put forward by a number of participants.

5.2.3 Current limitations and suggestions for improvement

Participants felt that reducing some of the negative, historical perceptions of volunteering presented a challenge and identified the need to publicise the achievements of voluntary effort and celebrate volunteerism to counter "the embarrassment surrounding altruism". There was a suggestion that a Sheffield Volunteering Campaign would be a useful tool in recognising the contribution of volunteers to the city and helping raise awareness of the types of opportunities available, what difference volunteering makes, and how to get involved.

In addition to increasing the visibility of volunteering through higher levels of media representation, volunteers themselves could play a central role in encouraging and mobilising new recruits, as word of mouth one of the most common methods of recruitment for many organisations. It was noted on a number of occasions that the Volunteer Centre Sheffield is perhaps not as well known as it could be. Participants expressed ideas around developing mentoring and buddying schemes for volunteers, pairing experienced volunteers with new recruits.

Building a robust evidence base about the impact of volunteering (on individual volunteers, organisations and beneficiaries) in Sheffield was also seen as crucial to securing the support and recognition of statutory agencies and the public. It was suggested that the Household Survey could play a key role in this endeavour if the nature and scope of the current question was re-developed in consultation with key stakeholders.

Practically, it was felt that organisations needed to achieve a balance between selecting volunteers with appropriate skills (particularly in a trustee role) and flexible, inclusive opportunities. Taster sessions were felt to be a useful activity prior to asking prospective volunteers for a firm commitment, which could prevent organisations from utilising resources on training volunteers who then leave. Care also needs to be taken in placing and managing volunteers and achieving a match between the motivations of the volunteer and the opportunities available at the organisation.

Referrals from agencies seeking to “get people back to work” were reported as being problematic on occasions. Participants felt that “enforced volunteering” is not really volunteering in its true sense, and that it can be a disservice to send people on a volunteering placement if they actually need a work placement. It was felt, in particular, that there were some inconsistencies between the different Job Centres in Sheffield. It was seen as vital to build local relationships and arrangements with Job Centres and New Deal etc, if they are referring people for volunteering.

5.3 Summary

This chapter has explored the key discussion points from a consultation event with local stakeholders. Discussions centred on: the importance of understanding the motivations of volunteers and the implications for volunteer-involving organisations and VSAs; the challenges in evidencing the impact of voluntary activity against a backdrop of stretched resources; the underdeveloped potential of employer-supported volunteering, particularly within statutory agencies; and the barriers that may prevent people from volunteering, as experienced by Sheffield-based organisations.

The chapter has then highlighted workshop participant's priorities in relation to the process of developing and monitoring the implementation of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield, the targeting and focus of the strategy and its role in recognising and promoting volunteering. Chapter 6 will now conclude with a summary of the key issues arising from the study as a whole and put forward a number of recommendations towards the development of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield.

6 Towards a Volunteering Strategy for Sheffield: Concluding comments and recommendations

This study has attempted to examine the potential to increase the level and quality of volunteering in Sheffield through:

- identifying the current levels and profile of volunteering within Sheffield
- assessing current demand for volunteers and likely trends
- assessing the perceived value and contribution of volunteering
- identifying factors which influence the level and quality of volunteering undertaken

Here, the research team discuss some of the most important issues and concerns involved in the development of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield and identify specific recommendations which could contribute to its development. By way of conclusion, a framework for the evolution of a volunteering strategy, which attempts to capture these issues and priorities, is proposed.

6.1 Summary of the most significant volunteering issues in Sheffield

Despite the emergence of volunteering as a key policy area within central government, it would appear that it holds a relatively low profile within Sheffield. Although a number of city-wide strategies have a prolific number of references to community engagement, promoting stronger communities, active citizenship and social inclusion to name but a few, there is little explicit recognition of the contribution volunteering can make to these ambitions. Moreover, there appears to be no locally agreed strategic actions in place to develop volunteering.

While this project is a positive step towards the development of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield, if volunteering is to reach its full potential, it is imperative that it is not seen solely as a VCS issue. It should also be borne in mind that there are risks associated with developing a stand-alone strategy without explicit acknowledgement and integration within mainstream strategies. The view that local VSAs and Voluntary Action Sheffield should play a key role in championing volunteering issues within the local decision-making arenas was expressed a number of times throughout the research process.

Research participants also felt there was a danger in tying the volunteering agenda too closely to providing routes into the labour market. Although it was acknowledged that volunteering does have potential in this regard, this is not its only contribution, nor is it (for many people) the main benefit to be derived from volunteering. A common finding throughout this study was people's commitment to developing a volunteering strategy with the potential to realise benefits for a diverse range of volunteers. Any strategy will thus need to consider a range of possible levers for

individuals rather than a 'one size fits all' emphasis on volunteering for personal gain for the workplace.

The method of developing any future strategy will clearly be an important factor in achieving ownership within key groupings, and there was a strong desire for an inclusive, consultative process. Research participants were also keen to play a role in monitoring and assessing the ongoing implementation of a volunteering strategy.

Recommendations:

- **In addition to the involvement of Voluntary Action Sheffield, VSAs should be included as intrinsic and valuable actors in the development and delivery of local government objectives; for example, through inclusion in the Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreements.**
- **Undertake strategic level work to increase understanding and acknowledgement in key strategies about the full value of volunteering and its potential to increase social, human and economic capital.**
- **Develop a multi-stakeholder steering group, and possibly a wider reference group to drive the development and implementation of the volunteering strategy.**
- **Provide an annual event on volunteering (drawing on the workshop model used in this research), which could play a major role in involving a wide-range of stakeholders in assessing the implementation of the volunteering strategy.**
- **Develop specific actions within the volunteering strategy which are inclusive of and targeted at:**
 - **the full range of potential groups of volunteers (e.g. those with mental health issues, young people, older people etc)**
 - **both small and large organisations within the different sectors.**

The government's focus on initiatives to promote volunteering has been accompanied by a desire to 'measure' the level and trends of volunteering both nationally and locally, as highlighted in chapter 2. In 2006, Sheffield City Council included a question to establish the prevalence of volunteering in Sheffield within the Household Survey for the first time. In addition to government's desire to evidence the level and trends in volunteering, there has also been an increasing interest in mapping the VCS, which has often included attempts to establish the level and profile of volunteering. The latest attempt involving Sheffield was undertaken in 2006 by CRESR at Sheffield Hallam University.

Chapter 3 highlighted the methodological issues associated with estimating the prevalence of volunteering and, in particular, the lack of comparability between national and local data. It is perhaps worth noting here that researchers within CRESR are embarking on an Economic and Social Research Council project entitled

'Finding the right questions: Overcoming methodological difficulties associated with measuring participation at a local level'. Their interest is primarily with the Citizenship Survey questions relating to volunteering and their design, which clearly raises issues for local survey work within local authorities. They also have a secondary focus on exploring the links with social capital (or motivating factors for participation). This study is due to complete in 2009.

Moving beyond the 'measurement' problems, there is perhaps a more fundamental issue: there is more to volunteering (and indeed a volunteering strategy) than increasing the numbers of volunteers - the 'hard' statistics which tend to be the focus of PSA and LAA indicators and targets. Research participants were keen to see any future strategy focus on improving the quality of the volunteering experience as well as increasing the levels of volunteering.

Building an evidence base about the impact of volunteering (on individual volunteers, organisations and beneficiaries/communities) in Sheffield was seen as crucial to securing support and recognition for volunteering. Indeed, there was a clear recognition amongst VSA interviewees and workshop participants that practitioners and agencies need to do more to measure and promote the wider benefits of volunteering. Appendix 6 provides three case studies of organisations which have made use of the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit developed by the Institute for Volunteering Research. This toolkit provides clear and accessible guidance on how to carry out an impact assessment on volunteer involving and civic service organisations.

Recommendations:

- **Agree a common definition of volunteering locally to aid clarity about what partners are trying to measure/capture.**
- **Consider re-developing the volunteering related question in the Sheffield City Council Household Survey to align with national surveys. This could be done in collaboration with other South Yorkshire districts in order to aid comparability at a sub-regional level.**
- **Consider including questions in the Household Survey regarding:**
 - **who (which sector) volunteers help out**
 - **routes into volunteering (how people find out about opportunities)**
 - **'informal' volunteering**
 - **employee volunteering**
- **Assess the potential and viability of incorporating volunteering data into the Sheffield Neighbourhood Information System.**
- **Ensure the future volunteering strategy provides a framework for the development and adoption of "key principles" for placing and involving**

volunteers - perhaps through a Volunteering Code of Practice linked to Compact arrangements.

- **VSA's could assess the viability of piloting the materials within the IVR Impact Assessment Toolkit with a view to adopting them for monitoring purposes (replacing some of the existing 'output' requirements, in negotiation with existing and future funding bodies).**

In order to meet the challenges highlighted in this report, volunteering needs assistance and an appropriately and adequately resourced infrastructure to support the development and marketing of volunteers would be a significant step. National strategies have set out a vision of a "modern, dynamic, strategic, coordinated and sustainable infrastructure for volunteering" (Penberthy and Forster, 2004 p.6). However, the reality for local volunteering infrastructure in Sheffield is an environment without a sense of cohesive strategy or long-term sustainability. Almost every local VSA reported that their core functions were undertaken against a backdrop of insecure, short-term funding. This had often led to a lack of networking and collaboration perpetuated by competition for funding and volunteers. Research participants felt that an important aspect of any future volunteering strategy would be to provide a coherent framework for co-ordinating the work of VSAs.

Recommendations:

- **Development of a VSA forum (co-ordinated by Volunteer Centre Sheffield) to link up local volunteering infrastructure in order to share information and learning and become involved in relevant projects and strategic initiatives. It may also be fruitful to encourage the participation of neighbourhood level infrastructure organisations to formalise and promote referral arrangements.**
- **Local partners should work with VSAs to establish a sustainable funding strategy for the local volunteering infrastructure.**
- **The VSA network could set up their own forums for sharing learning and good practice with volunteer involving organisations on a wider scale than at present given adequate resourcing.**

6.2 Proposed Framework for the evolution of a local volunteering strategy

By way of conclusion, the research team have attempted to summarise and link the key issues from the study together in a framework for the development of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield. Box 2 recommends the key themes local partners may wish to consider in taking forward the development of a volunteering strategy. It also provides a brief outline of some of the potential areas for action within each theme.

Box 2: Proposed volunteering strategy framework

Theme 1: Actively promoting and recognising volunteering

Areas for consideration:

- Further development of employer-supported volunteering, particularly within the statutory agencies
- Identifying opportunities for volunteer involvement within statutory agencies and commercial businesses
- Further development of central database of volunteering opportunities with clear signposting from partners agencies
- Development of promotion and marketing campaigns and volunteering events
- Inclusion and acknowledgement of the role and value of volunteering within city strategies and plans
- Increased consistency in the availability of recognition/awards
- Evidencing the impact of volunteering in its widest sense.

Theme 2: Reducing the barriers to volunteering

Areas for consideration:

- Development of volunteering 'hubs' at neighbourhood level in regeneration areas through existing neighbourhood level infrastructure/community anchor organisations
- Provision of opportunities and support to involve more volunteers with additional needs
- Provision of opportunities, support and publicity to encourage volunteering amongst groups at particular risk of social exclusion
- Development and coordination of flexible opportunities and taster sessions are further developed.

Theme 3: Providing excellent volunteering experiences

Areas for consideration:

- Development of 'key principles' through a volunteering code of practice under Compact arrangements
- Extending and resourcing existing forums for learning and sharing good practice between VSAs and volunteer involving organisations
- Further development of training and support programmes to volunteers and volunteer managers across the voluntary and statutory sectors
- Improved co-ordination between local volunteering infrastructure - this strategic role would fall naturally to Volunteer Centre Sheffield.

Theme 4: Resourcing volunteering

Areas for consideration:

- Investment and support for volunteering infrastructure and management
- Recognition within the Compact funding strategy/code of practice of the cost and economic value of volunteering and provision of a framework for addressing volunteering expenses
- Wider use of Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit and acceptance amongst funders.

Finally, in moving towards a volunteering strategy for Sheffield, it is critical that partner agencies recognise and commit the resources (particularly staff time) necessary to drive forward the strategic and implementation agendas.

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Appendix 1: List of Organisations involved in the Study

Organisations involved in the consultation workshop on 19th November 2007 include:

AC SIS (Advice Centre Support in Sheffield)
Alzheimer's Society
Assist
Business in the Community
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
Cherry Tree Support Services
Cot Age
Emmaus
Endeavour
Football Unites Racism Divides
Foxhill Forum
Greentop Circus
Heeley Development Trust
Homestart
Irwin Mitchell Solicitors
MAGNA
National Blood Service
Netherthorpe & Upperthorpe Community Alliance (NUCA)
Northern Refugee Centre
National Trust, Peak District
Parker PR
Returned Community Service Volunteers (RCSV)
School Trends
Sharrow Citizens Advice Bureau
Sheffield Advice Link
Sheffield Alcohol Advisory Service
Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care
Sheffield City Council, Parks & Countryside
Sheffield City Council, Ranger Service
Sheffield City Council, Social Services
Sheffield Futures
Sheffield Hallam University
Sheffield Mental Health CAB
Sheffield Primary Care Trust
Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
Sheffield Young People's Workshop – NSPCC
SHINE
South West Area Sitting Service
SOVA
South Yorkshire Eating Disorders Association (SYEDA)
Victim Support
Voluntary Action Sheffield
Wisewood School & Community Sports

Appendix 2: Study Methodology

PHASE 1 - Scoping and literature review

This stage of the research reviewed existing relevant research relating to volunteering nationally and in Sheffield. In working towards a volunteering strategy for Sheffield it was also important to situate the above information in a wider strategic context, which included, for example, reviewing national and local policy documentation. The key documents reviewed included, but were not exclusive to:

National Documentation:

- Building on success: strategy for volunteering infrastructure in England, 2004-2014
- 2005 Citizenship Survey
- Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving
- Third Sector Review
- Compact and Volunteering Code of Practice
- Comprehensive Spending Review
- New Performance Management Framework for Local Authorities: Single set of national indicators

Local Documentation:

- Part of the Picture Research
- Volunteering for All? Exploring the link between volunteering and social exclusion (Sheffield was one of the three geographic areas for the research)
- Household Survey Report(s)
- Local Area Agreement
- City Strategy
- Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- Sheffield Compact / Sheffield NHS Compact

Please refer to the reference section for further sources of information used in the preparation of this report.

PHASE 2 - Secondary data analysis

This stage of the research involved secondary analysis of volunteering related data within the Part of the Picture data set - disaggregating the data to examine the Sheffield (rather than South Yorkshire) context. The Part of the Picture survey was undertaken between 8th May and 23rd June 2006. The survey was based on a stratified random sample, where the districts of South Yorkshire represent the strata. A 12 page questionnaire was administered to a random sample of 3,933 voluntary and community organisations across South Yorkshire, from a population of 6,264 organisations. The sample included 1,627 Sheffield based organisations and valid responses were received from 328 Sheffield organisations. This represents a

(Sheffield) response rate of 20% of the sample, and 10% of the Sheffield population (N = 3331).

The data was analysed using SPSS and the main forms of analysis undertaken at the Sheffield level, have been:

- Descriptive statistics: the frequency and percentages of organisations responding to each question.
- Extrapolations to estimate figures for the Sheffield VCS as a whole. The estimated totals were obtained by multiplying the Sheffield mean per organisation by the total number of Sheffield organisations (3331).

The results of the above analysis are presented in section 3.2 of the report.

PHASE 3 - Review of Current Support

This stage involved the collection of detailed information on the work undertaken to support local volunteering by Sheffield-based agencies including the Volunteer Centre Sheffield, Millennium Volunteers, Business in the Community, Sheffield Volunteering, Hallam Volunteering and CSV Action Desk. This was achieved through a combination of web-based research, document review and interviews with key agencies. Interviews were digitally recorded and subject to content analysis, which generated the key themes presented in section 4.2 of this report.

PHASE 4 - Consultation

Invitations to the workshop event, which took place on 19th November 2007 were distributed via the Volunteer Centre to over 500 local organisations. Over forty five participants, including paid officers and volunteers from commercial businesses, statutory agencies and voluntary and community organisations participated in the consultation event, which provided an opportunity for local stakeholders to share their ideas, priorities and suggestions for how volunteering in Sheffield can be maintained and developed in the future. Each workshop was serviced by a facilitator and a note-taker. The notes regarding the content of each workshop were subsequently reviewed and the key discussion points are presented in chapter 5 of the report.

Appendix 3: Citizenship Survey 2005 - Volunteering related questionnaire items

1 Formal Volunteering

1.1 Which of the following groups, clubs or organisations have you been involved with during the **last 12 months**? That's anything you've taken part in, supported, or that you've helped in any way, either on your own or with others. *Please exclude giving money and anything that was a requirement of your job.* **[Fgroup]**

- (1) Children's education/ schools
- (2) Youth/children's activities (outside school)
- (3) Education for adults
- (4) Sports/exercise (taking part, coaching or going to watch)
- (5) Religion
- (6) Politics
- (7) The elderly
- (8) Health, Disability and Social welfare
- (9) Safety, First Aid
- (10) The environment, animals
- (11) Justice and Human Rights
- (12) Local community or neighbourhood groups
- (13) Citizens' Groups
- (14) Hobbies / Recreation / Arts/ Social clubs
- (15) Trade union activity
- (16) Other
- (17) None of these

1.2 In the **last 12 months** have you given unpaid help to any groups, clubs or organisations in any of the following ways? **[Funpd]**

- (1) Raising or handling money/taking part in sponsored events
- (2) Leading the group/ member of a committee
- (3) Organising or helping to run an activity or event
- (4) Visiting people
- (5) Befriending or mentoring people
- (6) Giving advice/information/counselling
- (7) Secretarial, admin or clerical work
- (8) Providing transport/driving
- (9) Representing
- (10) Campaigning
- (11) Other practical help (e.g. helping out at school, shopping)
- (12) Any other help
- (13) *None of the above*

1.3 Overall, about how often over the **last 12 months** have you generally done something to help this/these group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)? **[Funoft]**

- (1) at least once a week,
- (2) less than once a week but at least once a month,
- (3) or less often?
- (4) Other

1.4 About how many times in the **last 12 months** have you helped this/these groups? **[FOthOFT2]**

- 1.5 Approximately how many **hours** have you spent helping this/these group(s), club(s) or organisation(s) in the **past 4 weeks**? [*Funhrs*]
- 1.6 Which of the following 3 different types of groups, clubs and organisations best describe the group(s), club(s) or organisation(s) that you help? [*Fgyptyp*]
- (1) Public sector
 - (2) Private sector
 - (3) Voluntary and community sector
 - (4) Don't know
- 1.7 How did you find out about opportunities to give unpaid help to this (these) group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)? [*Findgp*]
- (1) Through previously using services provided by the group
 - (2) From someone else already involved in the group
 - (3) From a friend not involved in the group/by word of mouth
 - (4) Place of worship
 - (5) School/college/university
 - (6) Doctor's surgery
 - (7) Community centre
 - (8) Library
 - (9) Promotional events/volunteer fair
 - (10) Local events
 - (11) Local newspaper
 - (12) National newspaper
 - (13) TV or radio (local or national)
 - (14) Internet/organisational website
 - (15) Volunteer bureau or centre
 - (16) Millennium Volunteers
 - (17) Employer's volunteering scheme
 - (18) Careers centre/careers fair
 - (19) Other way

2 Employer Volunteering

- 2.1 Does your employer have schemes for employees to help with community projects, or voluntary or charity organisations, or to give money? [*GEmpVol*]
- If so, is that a scheme for helping, for giving or both?
- (1) Both helping and giving
 - (2) Scheme for helping only
 - (3) Scheme for giving only
 - (4) Neither
 - (5) Don't know
- 2.2 Have you participated in any activities of this sort that were encouraged by your employer in the **last 12 months**? [*GDoempl*]
- If so, were you helping, or giving or both?
- (1) Yes - helping only
 - (2) Yes - giving only
 - (3) Yes - BOTH helping AND giving
 - (4) No

- 2.3 Is the helping scheme **only** for activities or projects that are relevant to your employer's business? **[Gvemp3]**
- (1) Yes
 - (2) No
 - (3) Don't know
- 2.4 Which of the following statements best describes how your employer accounts for the time employees spend taking part in community projects or helping voluntary or charity organisations? **[Gvemp4]**
- (1) Flexitime to cover the hours spent
 - (2) Paid time off, up to a certain maximum
 - (3) Paid time off, with no maximum
 - (4) Time off in lieu to match the hours spent out of working hours
 - (5) Unpaid time off
 - (6) Do it in your own time
 - (7) Something else
 - (8) Don't know
- 2.5 And about how often have you done this kind of thing over the **last 12 months**? **[Goften]**
- (1) at least once a week,
 - (2) less than once a week but at least once a month,
 - (3) or less often?
 - (4) Other
- 2.6 About how many times in the **last 12 months** have you done this? **[Gofoth]**
- 2.7 Approximately how many hours have you spent helping through an employer scheme in the **past 4 weeks**? **[Gemphr]**

Appendix 4: Examples of Local Volunteer Support Agencies

4.1.1 Business in the Community

'Cares' is BITC's national campaign to engage employees in their communities through volunteering. It is set up to deliver benefits for companies, employees and communities by providing access to expertise on employee involvement; campaigning to increase the amount of employee volunteering nationally, and; actively brokering volunteering opportunities. It is estimated that approximately 80% of the South Yorkshire Cares programme's work is focused in Sheffield. Through Cares, BITC aim to build skills in Sheffield based companies through providing a variety of employee volunteering opportunities depending on the company's 'business need', including: **team challenges** to provide staff development in leadership and team-building skills; **mentoring**; **development assignments** designed to address individual skill development needs by undertaking a task in the community; **right to read / number partners**, supporting primary schoolchildren once a week to improve their reading and literacy skills.

Case studies undertaken by BITC with companies who had evaluated the impact of their involvement in Cares, suggest that outcomes include: increased job satisfaction; improved employee retention rates; employee confidence and skills development; an increase in employees undertaking personal involvement in other community activities; improvement in the company's local profile; savings in staff training and development costs; and supporting achievement of Investor in People accreditation.

It is worth noting that BITC also provide a national network of over 1,000 professional firms which provide professional advice and strategic support free of charge to community groups and voluntary organisations in their local area through 'ProHelp'. ProHelp member firms include surveyors, architects, consulting engineers, accountants, solicitors, consultants, public relations, marketing and design agencies. In sort, this programme helps local businesses provide employees with opportunities to use their professional skills outside their day-to-day environment; link pro bono work to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes; develop understanding of key social issues in the local community; build new business contacts locally and regionally; communicate their achievements in order to build their reputation with internal and external audiences.

In terms of recognition for BITC volunteers, Volunteering Plus captures and formally accredits the full range of skills developed through volunteering. It offers a set of generic awards for employees alongside customised awards to reflect the particular learning and development priorities of individual companies. All awards are offered on two levels: Certificates of Recognition and Certificates of Accreditation. BITC works in partnership with the national examining body, City & Guilds, who issue all Volunteering Plus awards.

4.1.2 Community Service Volunteers (CSV) Action Desk

CSV Action Desks are the result of a partnership between CSV, said to be the UK's largest volunteering charity, and the BBC. This partnership aims to raise awareness of local issues and opportunities for civic participation that are often overlooked by broadcasters. A network of 37 CSV Action Desks have been operating across England for 5 years. Each CSV Action Desk is run by a CSV producer, who works with BBC colleagues to produce content for radio, television, and online in order to:

- raise awareness of key issues, local campaigns or appeals;
- galvanise audiences to be part of the solution;
- recruit volunteers, learners and encourage giving.

Within Sheffield, the Action Desk producer and a team of volunteers broadcast appeals, bulletins and features on BBC Radio Sheffield to encourage people to get more involved in their local community and collectively improve their quality of life. There are Action Desk bulletins throughout the day appealing for listeners to volunteer in their area, plus regular

week-long campaigns bringing information to listeners on issues like life-long learning, health, community and the environment.

The Action Desk at BBC Radio Sheffield thus responds to requests from individual organisations/initiatives wishing to recruit volunteers by broadcasting volunteering opportunities in addition to taking the lead on stimulating activity in response to local needs, such as the Good Neighbour appeal focussing on rebuilding South Yorkshire following the floods of June 2007. In addition, the Action Desk also provides practical support to enable local voluntary and community organisations to recruit volunteers. It has, for example, been giving free media awareness training to voluntary and community organisation over the last 5 years covering issues around print and broadcast media, interview techniques and writing press releases. The Action Desk team also ensure that the volunteering opportunities they broadcast are safe and accessible by providing and co-ordinating transport, subsistence expenses (e.g. lunch) and ensuring appropriate Health and Safety measures are in place.

4.1.3 Hallam Volunteering

Hallam Volunteering exists to enable students and staff at Sheffield Hallam University to take part in volunteer led projects which contribute to the community in and around Sheffield. There are over 30 projects to choose from offering opportunities to volunteer for a series of sessions (amounting to three hours per week or more) or a one-off event (through Hallam Challenges). Activities are generally themed around sport, befriending and mentoring, environment and science, children, and young people to name but a few examples.

The 30 Hallam Volunteering projects are student-led, so the direction any given project takes is decided by the student volunteer team working on the project. Each team of volunteers is supported by one of the staff team of volunteer co-ordinators, and the student Committee and its Working Groups, which provide further volunteering opportunities. Hallam Volunteering Committee is elected annually and meets regularly to keep student and community interests central to the work of Hallam Volunteering. The Committee Working Groups support all volunteers with a specific area of work, including:

- **Fundraising** - the fundraising team seek extra funding by organising innovative, fun events to raise money to support 30 community projects and offer advice on fundraising to other volunteers.
- **Publicity** - the publicity team keep Hallam Volunteering in the spotlight by producing the newsletter, writing press releases and articles, and being involved with radio broadcasts and websites. Hallam Volunteering are, for the first time, recruiting a graphic design team in 2007 to support projects with publicity and marketing.
- **Events** - the events technical team ensure that Hallam Volunteering events run seamlessly.
- The **Showcase** team organise an annual event in February each year to celebrate the work of Hallam Volunteering. Local partners and sponsors mingle with students and enjoy a taster of what student volunteering is all about.

The Hallam Award has been established as a joint venture between the University and the Students' Union to recognise the contribution made by student volunteers and is awarded to individuals who have taken part in voluntary activities within the Students Union, including Hallam Volunteering. The award encourages students to develop new skills through their chosen activities, and to reflect on the impact that their activity has had on their personal development. The award is available at three levels, reflecting the level of involvement that the individual student has had in his/her chosen activity.

4.1.4 Sheffield Volunteering

Sheffield Volunteering offers flexible volunteering opportunities to staff and students of Sheffield University, ranging from regular 1 hour per week (minimum) opportunities in local voluntary and community organisations through to one-off volunteering experiences. It also

offers time-limited opportunities, such as six week placements in primary, secondary or 'special' schools for two to three hours per week and provides support and advice to student volunteers or university departments in developing projects of benefit to the local community.

Sheffield Volunteering brokers volunteering opportunities between student volunteers and local voluntary and community organisations via its database of over 100 opportunities in areas such as advocacy, mediation, befriending and mentoring with diverse interest groups including children, older people and refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, Sheffield Volunteering produce a good practice manual to assist organisations who currently or are considering involving students in volunteering.

4.1.5 SOVA - Millennium Volunteers

Millennium Volunteers (MV) is a national scheme funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Sheffield Millennium Volunteers is based within SOVA and shares the same target group as all other MV projects (young people aged 16-24) and the same aim - to increase and improve volunteering opportunities for all young people.

There are two main types of volunteering opportunities available for young people through MV:

- **Volunteer placement opportunities** where young people are matched with an organisation where they are interested in volunteering. The MV project supports them through this matching and recruitment phase and beyond. Each prospective MV has an initial consultation during which the type and duration of volunteering is discussed and any additional requirements are identified.
- **Youth-led initiatives** where the MV Project will assist and help support youth led initiatives. These could be anything that a young person is interested in setting up, as long as it involves or benefits other people or the community in general (e.g. organising a local football game, producing a group/campaigning newsletter, setting up a website, a community forum or arts project).

Sheffield MV works with around 500 placement providers (offering over 1000 placements) across many workplace or training settings, including schools, charity shops and commercial businesses in addition to supporting young people in developing their own initiatives.

Incentives for MVs include a National MV Award after 100 hours of voluntary work has been completed. On completing 200 hours of volunteering an Award of Excellence and a Personal Profile is presented. The MV Award of Excellence is recognised by lots of places like colleges, universities, employers and other volunteering places as a huge achievement.

4.1.6 Volunteer Centre Sheffield

Volunteer Centre Sheffield, which is based within Voluntary Action Sheffield, provides advice and information to people who would like to volunteer or find out more about volunteering. As a Volunteering England accredited volunteer centre, Volunteer Centre Sheffield provides the following six core functions:

- Brokerage
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development
- Developing volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development of volunteering

Volunteer Centre Sheffield holds information on a wide range of local organisations which need volunteers and provides information about volunteering opportunities, signposting approximately 2500 potential volunteers each year. All Volunteer Centre Sheffield volunteering opportunities are available on the national Volunteering database "do-it!" (www.do-it.org.uk) and are also available in their quarterly bulletin. They also provide

information and advice to groups on: recruiting, supporting and training volunteers; volunteer agreements and policies; criminal records checks; equal opportunities issues and volunteering.

Volunteer Centre Sheffield produces Good Practice Guidelines on a variety of subjects relating to working with volunteers and also offer support to groups working with volunteers through delivery of an ongoing programme of accredited training on good practice in managing volunteers. The Volunteer Centre also supports Sheffield Volunteer Managers Forum, an information and networking forum for people managing and working with volunteers in a paid or unpaid capacity to meet and share information, good practice, and discussion on managing volunteers.

The Volunteer Centre Refugee & Asylum Seeker Project, 'New beginnings', gives extra support to assist refugees & asylum seekers in accessing volunteering opportunities. It also gives advice to organisations and agencies who work with refugee & asylum seeker volunteers and has produced translated materials in eight languages, including good practice guidelines.

Feedback from individuals who have started volunteering through the New Beginnings Refugee and Asylum Seeker project in mainstream organisations shows:

- 82% feel their personal development has increased or greatly increased
- 60% believe their skills have increased or greatly increased
- 81% report their sense of trust in others increased or greatly increased
- 75% feel their sense of integration into the UK increased or greatly increased

Appendix 5: Consultation event programme

The Future of Volunteering in Sheffield: A Consultation Workshop (19th November 2007)

2.00 - 2.10 Refreshments, welcome and brief background to project (Sam Greenstreet)

2.10 - 2.15 Explanation regarding format of event (Gareth Morgan)

2.20 - 2.30 Presentation of key issues (Tracey Coule)

2.30 - 2.40 Questions of clarification/next steps (Gareth Morgan)

2.40 - 3.25 Discussion sessions 1

The first discussion sessions will be based around the following four themes, and participants will attend the topic of most interest to them:

Session A - Motivations for volunteering and the implications for organisations in supporting volunteers (*Facilitator - Sam Greenstreet, note-taker - Liz Ginty*)

Session B - Measuring the impact of volunteering: how and why? (*Facilitator - Dean Howson, note-taker - Kerry Halsall*)

Session C - Employer supported volunteering (*Facilitator - John Barber, note-taker - Tracey Coule*)

Session D - Barriers to volunteering: what makes a 'quality' volunteering experience? (*Facilitator - Paul Harvey, note-taker - Gareth Morgan*)

3.25 - 3.40 Refreshment break

3.40 - 4.25 Discussion session 2

The second discussion sessions will comprise of four groups focusing on discussing the following questions:

- What should be the focus or priorities of a volunteering strategy for Sheffield?
- Who are the local stakeholders and what can they contribute to a volunteering strategy?
- What are we getting wrong in relation to volunteering and how can we improve?

4.25 - 4.30 Close (Gareth Morgan)

Appendix 6: Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit

The following three summarised case studies of organisations which have utilised the IVR Impact Assessment Toolkit have been provided by the Institute for Volunteering Research.

Case 1: Health and Social Care Department, Edinburgh City Council

The Health and Social Care Department of the City of Edinburgh City Council has used the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit twice in order to examine the part played by volunteering within adult services. The assessments have been driven by the Department's Volunteer Coordinator/Development Officer, Rachel Henry, whose post was created about three years ago to develop a more strategic approach to the involvement of volunteers.

Measuring and representing the contribution of volunteers has been a huge challenge and it was for this reason that Rachel 'seized upon' the toolkit when it first became available and subsequently attended the training session provided by the Institute for Volunteering Research and Volunteer Development Scotland. Speaking of the toolkit, she says: *"What I liked about it when I saw it was that it starts to give a language for understanding and representing what volunteering can and does do."*

The assessments have focused upon:

- North East Edinburgh Support Services (NEESS), where there is a long tradition of involving volunteers in supporting adults with learning disabilities.
- Moose in the Hoose, an innovative partnership project of the Health and Social Care Department, Age Concern Edinburgh information technology (Aceit) and RSVP (CSV's Retired and Seniors Volunteer Programme). The 14 'Moose' volunteers are co-ordinated by the project team and linked to four of the Council's residential care homes and two voluntary sector sheltered housing schemes. Moose in the Hoose was a pilot project at the time of the assessment and firmer information about its impact was needed to support an application for further funding.

The NEESS assessment, carried out in April 2006, was on a very small scale and undertaken with great speed. A window of just six days was available to carry out and write up the research. Despite these pressures, the study produced a surprising amount of useful information and encouraged Rachel to embark on the assessment of Moose in the Hoose the following December.

Reflecting on the process

Rachel has identified a number of learning points from the assessments.

- It is possible to use the toolkit do something really useful in a short time. Just getting on and doing it is worthwhile.
- It is fine to customise the toolkit, for example by adding selected questions from the supplementary questionnaires to the core questionnaires.
- Using the toolkit for relatively small scale evaluations has been useful preparation for larger scale use. There been a lot of learning from these initial pieces of work that will help us to use the kit with more confidence and to greater effect in the future.
- Taking part in the research may not be a priority for stakeholders, particularly staff. Expectations need to be realistic and carefully negotiated.
- Parts of the process could be shared – for example, questionnaire design and analysis – without compromising the integrity of the research.

Having completed the two project-based assessments, Rachel has plans to use the toolkit with volunteers and volunteer managers across the Health and Social Care Department.

She is convinced of the toolkit's capacity *"to bring out and quantify some of the softer measures which demonstrate that volunteering has a very significant role to play in social care and social well-being."*

Case 2: Stockport Council for Voluntary Service Volunteer Centre

Stockport CVS Volunteer Centre has used the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit to demonstrate the difference that volunteering makes to the Borough of Stockport. This has been done by carrying out an impact assessment across eight contrasting volunteer-involving organisations and amalgamating the findings into a single report which has been widely circulated within the Borough and beyond.

The research was led by Julia Hewer, Information and Development Officer at the Volunteer Centre, with technical and administrative support from her colleague Emma Clarke, Administrator for Youth Action Stockport. The inspiration for undertaking the assessment came when Julia attended a regional training course on the toolkit run by the Institute for Volunteering Research. She had frequently been asked by the local Council and other bodies for statistics on volunteering in Stockport. The toolkit offered a means of responding to such requests by revealing the scope of volunteering across the Borough. Equally important in Julia's eyes was the opportunity to demonstrate the quality and variety of the contribution that volunteers make to local life. Furthermore, it gave the Volunteer Centre a means of finding out how well local organisations were supporting their volunteers. A successful application to the Year of the Volunteer Action Fund in 2005 provided funding for the work.

Reflecting on the process

Julia's account of the research process contains many learning points:

- It is vital to recognise that different people need to be approached in different ways in order to involve them in an impact assessment. This requires flexible thinking about research methods.
- People need to be made aware of the research process well in advance and advised about how the information will be used.
- Practical incentives to encourage individuals and organisations to take part are helpful.
- When working with other organisations, it is important to give them a sense of ownership of the research by, for example, customising questionnaires and providing specific feed-back.
- An ambitious research plan can be stressful to execute and is likely to take longer than first envisaged, particularly during the analysis stage. With hindsight, Julia feels that it might have been better to work with one stakeholder group at a time and possibly fewer organisations. She also questions the benefits of including community representatives whose knowledge of the individual organisations was limited.

Julia feels that the assessment has been tremendously worthwhile for the Volunteer Centre: *"It's enabled us to have some hard statistics to back up the things we've always said but it's also opened our eyes to things we didn't know."* It has raised the organisation's profile within Stockport and strengthened links with partnership organisations. Internally, it has provided sound evidence to support funding and consultancy bids and has highlighted many good practice issues which will have an impact on training and the promotion of volunteering. There have also been clear benefits for the organisations that took part, most of whom have started using the results and implementing the recommendations.

Case 3: Butterfly Conservation Scotland

Butterfly Conservation Scotland (BCS) promotes awareness of butterflies and moths, undertakes research and monitoring, and supports conservation action and appropriate land

management. It has four paid members of staff and a network of some 500 volunteers who are involved in a wide variety of activities on behalf of the organisation, including surveying, recording, running events and giving talks. They are scattered throughout the country, co-ordinated through three volunteer-run branches covering the Highlands, East Scotland and West Scotland.

The decision to carry out a volunteering impact assessment followed an approach to BCS by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), which had commissioned Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) to facilitate a series of case studies of volunteering in the environmental sector using the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit. BCS was keen to support this initiative and also anticipated benefits from taking part. In particular, it hoped to gain a broader understanding of volunteers' experience and of the advantages gained by individuals and user groups through volunteering. Although the organisation was accustomed to gathering information about volunteering, this had been almost exclusively about the time committed by volunteers and its economic benefit to BCS.

Shona Greig, Administrative and Development Officer, took on responsibility for implementing the impact assessment across BCS. She attended a training day put on by VDS, during which the toolkit was explained and demonstrated. At first Shona found some of the language used in the toolkit – particularly the terms 'stakeholder' and 'capitals' – a little obscure, but felt that she quickly got to grips with it as the session progressed. She felt that the training session gave her a good overview of the toolkit, including a clear explanation of the traffic light system. It was also made clear that the toolkit was a flexible resource that could be adapted to fit each organisation.

Each participant in the training day was asked by VDS to fill in the toolkit matrix as a follow-up exercise on returning to their own organisations. Shona felt that the matrix was too difficult to complete at such an early stage and did not find it particularly relevant to the planning of her own project. She believes that it might have worked better for her as a tool to review the process later on.

Reflecting on the process

Looking back, Shona can identify some key learning points from the process:

- The decision to use the toolkit to carry out a quick and general review of volunteering within BCS was the right one, particularly with the time constraints that applied: *"We did deliberately try to make it as simple and as straightforward as possible. I think that worked really well. I think if we had tried to do it in any more depth or in any more complicated a way, we'd have struggled to get it all back in time."* The impact assessment has been a useful starting point for looking at the contribution of volunteers and has opened up the possibility of investigating specific issues in greater depth at a later date.
- It was also appropriate for BCS to carry out the process internally rather than engage an external assessor. This was because staff have an understanding of the nature of volunteering within the organisation that might not be readily accessible to an outsider: *"I think it was better doing it ourselves because we know how they work and the sort of work they do for us, and we know how our organisation works. It's much easier for us to adapt our own questions and carry it out ourselves."*
- The impact assessment has also been successful in demonstrating the adaptability of the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit to specialist organisations within the sector, in this case environmental organisations. The questions were easily tailored to address their specific interests while the overall structure remained robust and relevant.