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Volunteering England is the new national volunteer development agency for England. Formed through the merger of the National Centre for Volunteering, Volunteer Development England and the Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering, we speak with a single voice for volunteering in all its diversity.

Volunteering England promotes volunteering as a powerful force for change, both for those who volunteer and for the wider community. We understand the term volunteering to include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation.

Acknowledgements

Writing this book would have been impossible without the passion for volunteering held by many people. This piece of work has been almost three years in the gestation and is the result of collaboration. Volunteering England would not have been able to arrive at many of its conclusions without the input of all of those who attended events, responded to consultations and participated in research. Hundreds of people and organisations have been involved in the process – and to all of them we wish to extend our thanks.

We specifically acknowledge the important role that was taken by the working group convened to oversee this work. Without their inspirational thinking, practical experience and wisdom this vision and strategy would have been diminished. Our thanks to Rebecca Davison (Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering), Ann Gilbert (Northampton Volunteer Centre), Sheila Hawkins (National Centre for Volunteering), Chris Hinchley (Volunteer Development England), Steven Howlett (Institute of Volunteering Research), Christine Jones (Warrington Volunteer Bureau), Jane Smith (Burton Volunteer Bureau), Christopher Spence (National Centre for Volunteering), Jamie Wilcox (Kensington & Chelsea Volunteer Bureau), Tessa Willow (Mersey Volunteer Bureau) and Hilary Workman (Cornwall Centre for Volunteering) for volunteering their time.

Preparing the volunteering infrastructure strategy has at times taken over the lives of those involved in the process. It is at such times that the value of being in a team is really appreciated. As Volunteering England was going through the process of creation, its constituent bodies delivering on their own workplans as well as developing new areas of work, the three staff teams have worked to support their colleagues whose brains were engaged elsewhere. So to all of those who put up with us – thank you. We would particularly like to thank Mark Restall

(Senior Information Officer), Chris Hinchley (Head of Regional and Local Volunteering Development), Steven Howlett (Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Volunteering Research) and Georgina Watts (Chief Executive of Youth Action Network and a Trustee of Volunteering England) for their insight and input; and Jane Heath (Head of Information and Publications) for preparing the Executive Summary and preparing the work for publication.

Consultation should be a thought-provoking process; any process of change can be difficult; leadership can, at times, be painful to exercise - in preparing this strategy Volunteering England has had to consult, introduce change and lead. As Volunteering England has been through the process of arriving at this publication, two people have been instrumental in keeping us on track, have focussed our thinking and enabled us to dream dreams. Christopher Spence (Chief Executive of Volunteering England and formerly Chief Executive of the National Centre for Volunteering) and Mike Nussbaum (Chair of Volunteering England and formerly Chair of Volunteer Development England) have played an active role in all parts of this process. Their time and commitment have been generously given, and the authors appreciate the way in which we have been able to benefit from both of their input and support.

The development of this book has been both a thinking and a learning process for all of those involved. But ultimately it came down to two of us to pull it all together on paper. We haven't always agreed, but we have always reached agreement and in the process we have challenged each other's thinking. We have encouraged each other to push boundaries and given each other the confidence to drive this piece of work forward. Without teamwork this would never have been completed.

Chris Penberthy
Director of Capacity Building
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Foreword



Volunteers are vital to the life of our nation, in shaping and delivering local services, in building community cohesion and in driving social change. Over 20,000,000 people volunteer every year – if valued, this would contribute in excess of £40 billion annually to the life of the country.

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

Volunteer-involving organisations in the public, voluntary and community sectors are continually seeking more volunteers; and research shows that half of the people who don't volunteer would do so if appropriately asked to fulfil an appropriate role. Volunteering infrastructure is estimated to make this request to more than 500,000 people every year.

I value the work that volunteering infrastructure undertakes. It makes a difference to volunteering. 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.

The volunteering infrastructure in England is a world leader. It is more advanced, more co-ordinated and more effective than that found in most countries. However, now is not a time for us to be resting on our laurels. If we wish to maintain and build on our international reputation; if we want to continue to develop an active and involved nation of citizens; if we believe in putting individuals at the heart of our corporate and national life, then we need to be prepared to change.

All activity relating to volunteering happens because it is supported. However, we now live in a society where activity is increasingly the subject of targets and scrutiny. In an environment like this, it is essential to have a vision and a strategy to achieve it.

I am pleased that so early in its life Volunteering England is able to publish this strategy. It is the result of a major consultation and research process engaging many stakeholders over many months. It is a strategy for the entire volunteering sector, not only for Volunteering England and the network of local infrastructure agencies we support. It is a strategy for radical change. It is a strategy to increase the quantity and quality of volunteering in our communities. Volunteering England is committed to making it work.

I encourage you to read this book and to consider its implications for your work. We greatly look forward to working together to implement the strategy.

Christopher Spence MBE
Chief Executive
Volunteering England

Introduction

The infrastructure to support volunteering in England has evolved over the past 50 years as a response to the demands of volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations. This evolution has encouraged creativity and helped to maintain and develop a vibrant volunteering sector.

There are times when the fates conspire to bring a number of factors together – and at such times substantial change is often the result. The volunteering infrastructure in England is currently experiencing such a time.

Over the past few years government activity has encouraged us all to think about the future of infrastructure. The launch of the Compact Code on Volunteering in 2001 and subsequent government publications and consultations have highlighted the importance of volunteering infrastructure.

At the same time, and independent of government activity, the Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering, the National Centre for Volunteering and Volunteer Development England have been working to create a new integrated volunteer development agency for England – Volunteering England is now a reality with the completion of the integration of the three founding agencies on 1st April 2004.

So this book has not been written in a void. It has been informed by research, discussion, consultation, thinking and experience. It is not just a national perspective, nor one solely of infrastructure organisations, nor for that matter a top-down government approach; this work has all been undertaken with the volunteer and the local at its heart. It has been written in order to pull together current thinking; and at the same time seeks to capitalise on current interest in volunteering and infrastructure to set an agenda for the development of volunteering infrastructure in England over the next ten years. This publication has been prepared as a detailed companion piece to the work being undertaken by government to prepare a capacity building and infrastructure framework for the voluntary and community sector.

The first section of this book introduces volunteering – what volunteering is, why people volunteer, and the scope of volunteering in England today. The space available, and the context of this book only allows for this to be a brief overview; Volunteering England will be publishing a more substantive series of articles exploring volunteering early next year.

Volunteering infrastructure exists to encourage people to volunteer, to make the process of engaging in voluntarism as easy as possible and to ensure that the quality of the volunteering experience is as good as it can be. The next section of the book examines the need for volunteering infrastructure and describes what currently exists. Volunteering is primarily a local activity, and the important role of local volunteer development agencies is particularly examined in this section, where there can also be found headline statistical and mapping information about the activity of local volunteer development agencies.

The rest of the book has been written through consolidating the results of consultation processes and research that Volunteering England - and previously the National Centre for Volunteering and Volunteer Development England - have undertaken over the past three years. Information about this process can be found in Appendix 1.

The next section is the value statement that underpins the volunteering infrastructure in England. These values provide the fundamental basis for the delivery of core functions provided by volunteering infrastructure, and these functions are described in detail.

Our consultations have shown that the volunteering infrastructure does not lack vision – in fact we found a very strong sense of vision for the volunteering infrastructure in England, and this vision is detailed in the next section.

Introduction

All of this work leads to the contents of the final section, where we present a ten-year strategy for the volunteering infrastructure in England. The strategy encompasses local, regional and national volunteering infrastructure provision; is divided into ten themes, each of which have milestones at one, two, five and ten years; and contains a methodology for monitoring, review and development.

We have proposed a strategy for change. This has been carefully considered to not be a strategy of change for change's sake – but rather of a strategy to increase the quantity and improve the quality of volunteering.

The strategy is published by Volunteering England, but is not a strategy only for Volunteering England. It is a strategy for all volunteering infrastructure providers, volunteer-involving organisations and for those who fund both of these areas of work. It is a strategy for modernisation in order to support volunteering effectively now and in the future in order that we can meet our shared aim (however expressed) of increasing the quantity and improving the quality of volunteering in England.

Executive summary

Volunteering England, in consultation with the voluntary and community sector, has developed a ten-year vision and strategy for the volunteering infrastructure in England, as a sector-led companion to the government's soon-to-be-published *Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector*.

This publication sets out that vision and strategy, together with Volunteering England's proposals for the new core functions that the infrastructure should perform locally, regionally and nationally in order to provide effective and cohesive support for volunteering in England.

Vision

The volunteering infrastructure in England has evolved over the past fifty years largely without a sense of cohesive strategy or a plan for long-term sustainability. Volunteering England's vision is of a modern, dynamic, strategic, co-ordinated and sustainable infrastructure for volunteering at national, regional and local level.

This volunteering infrastructure will:

- Increase the quality and quantity of volunteering.
- Provide a comprehensive understanding of volunteering in all its expressions, and be known and recognised for this expertise.
- Be publicly recognised with a physically identifiable local presence.
- Be respected for its person-focused approach to social issues, and to this end will support volunteering in all its diversity.
- Be trusted and respected for its expertise, flexibility, campaigning, quality of service, effectiveness and efficiency.
- Set a cutting-edge agenda in opinion forming and policy development within volunteering.
- Be accessible, collaborative, empowering, professional and transparent in all its dealings with people and organisations.
- Be seen as indispensable by the general public and by the public, private and voluntary sectors.

- Work to rigorous, externally accredited and comprehensive minimum standards locally, regionally and nationally in order to ensure high-quality, innovative and progressive services that are focused on measurable outcomes.
- Have strong international links.

Strategy

In preparing a strategy to deliver this vision, ten key areas of work were identified. These key areas, the principal actions necessary to progress them and a series of one, two, five and ten year milestones to achieve these, are:

The definition of volunteering

Current definitions of volunteering need to be updated to reflect the breadth of voluntary activity.

- Volunteering England will lead on research and consultation to arrive at a new, commonly agreed definition of volunteering.
- This will be backed up by two statements, one on the importance of volunteering and one placing volunteering within the culture and ethos of society.

Volunteer management

Research clearly shows that volunteer management needs to be strengthened and given greater recognition.

- Investing in Volunteers and Excellence in Volunteer Management programmes will be developed to the point where they become recognised as essential and are both financially self-sustaining.
- Accredited training, linked to national occupational standards for volunteer managers, will be seen as essential and will be funded by volunteer-involving organisations.
- A service to advertise employment opportunities in the volunteering field will be developed to become the market leader in the recruitment of volunteering staff.

Executive summary

Awareness of volunteering

Volunteering should be seen as indispensable to the well-being of society, and everyone who wants to volunteer should be able easily to find routes to doing so.

- Promotional materials and campaigns, including the use of information technology in public places, will be developed to the point where volunteering has a high profile and there is widespread public recognition and celebration of volunteers.

Volunteering infrastructure – general

There should be a clearly identified volunteering infrastructure, with strong relationships with volunteer-involving organisations, at all levels. Collaborative working practices should be developed and a coherent national policy framework should be established, which should be reflected regionally and locally.

- Duplication and gaps in volunteering infrastructure provision will be addressed so that there is clarity and awareness about the roles of different infrastructure organisations, and memoranda of understanding between the different organisations.
- Accredited training and the funding to deliver it will be established, leading to qualifications of the staff of infrastructure organisations.

Volunteering infrastructure – national

Closer collaboration is needed to provide a workable national strategy, with more formalised partnerships and strategic alliances.

- A more strategic approach to delivery will be achieved through the England Volunteering Development Council.

Volunteering infrastructure – regional

A regional tier of infrastructure is needed to improve the quality of provision and ensure consistent coverage.

- A regional volunteering infrastructure will be established in each of the nine government regions, implementing a fully resourced strategy for each region.

Volunteering infrastructure – local

Research shows that there are currently an unsustainable number of local volunteer development agencies and declining provision in rural areas. Fewer organisations employing more staff are needed to deliver services and achieve more effective local penetration.

- A common consumer brand for the local volunteering infrastructure will be implemented.
- Resourced development plans will be implemented in all counties/unitary authorities/metropolitan areas.

Quality standards for volunteering infrastructure

Quality accreditation and impact assessment processes need to be implemented for volunteering infrastructure organisations at all levels, and should be both tough and credible.

- Quality accreditation and impact assessment will be developed to the point where they are adopted by all volunteering infrastructure organisations locally, regionally and nationally.
- Quality standards will be well known and respected, with the use of the local brand identified with excellent service by the public and by volunteer-involving organisations.

The role of volunteering initiatives

While there will always be new initiatives, volunteering is predominately a local activity, and as such the role and importance of the local volunteering infrastructure should be acknowledged.

- The sector will work with government on the appropriate involvement of the volunteering infrastructure with new initiatives on volunteering. It will progress to a position where it is leading on initiatives to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of volunteering in England, and is also influencing others in the development and delivery of these initiatives.

Funding

There needs to be a strategic funding framework to support volunteering infrastructure at all levels.

- Benchmarks and frameworks for volunteering infrastructure will be established, ultimately with funding tied to these.
- Volunteering infrastructure organisations will identify which existing services can be charged for and which potential ones can be developed.
- Funding streams will be diversified so that ultimately all volunteering infrastructure organisations will be funded from a variety of sources.

Core functions

The existing range of core functions for volunteering infrastructure clearly needs to be further developed and simplified in order to encourage strategic and cohesive delivery at local, regional and national level.

The core functions proposed by Volunteering England are:

Brokerage

- The volunteering infrastructure will have a clear understanding of the role, range and remit of voluntary activity, and will hold information on a wide range of volunteering opportunities.
- It will offer potential volunteers support and advice in matching them with appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Marketing volunteering

- The volunteering infrastructure will creatively and innovatively market and promote volunteering through local, regional and national events and campaigns, with publicity material targeted at different groups of potential volunteers. It will promote a national consumer-facing brand for local volunteering infrastructure.
- It will make full use of the latest technology to promote its work.

Good practice development

- The volunteering infrastructure will work to increase the volunteering knowledge base of its own staff and volunteers, as well as that of other individuals, organisations and groups at all levels.
- It will develop and deliver training and accreditation strategies.
- It will regularly be contacted by other agencies, groups and individuals seeking information about volunteering issues.

Developing volunteering opportunities

- The volunteering infrastructure will work in close partnership with a wide variety of other agencies to develop volunteering. It will have a clear plan to realise the potential within the local community in which it operates.
- It will ensure that its services are accessible and will promote volunteering to specific groups of people who face barriers to volunteering.
- It will work creatively to develop imaginative non-formal opportunities for potential volunteers.

Policy response and campaigning

- The volunteering infrastructure will be aware of local, regional and national government proposals and policies which may have an impact on volunteering. It will lead and/or participate in campaigns on volunteering issues.
- It will be the first port of call whenever a comment on volunteering is sought by the media.
- It will campaign for increased awareness of volunteering and for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer-friendly climate.

Strategic development of volunteering

- Volunteering England will take a strategic approach to the development of social policy at local, regional and national levels, aiming to support proposed changes which would facilitate volunteering and

challenge those which would inhibit it. It will monitor and evaluate the impact of the volunteering infrastructure.

- The volunteering infrastructure will have close links with volunteer-involving organisations at all levels and will be actively involved in relevant networks.

It is intended that this publication will act as a benchmark for future monitoring, impact assessment and reporting.

Volunteering

Over the last few years a mix of central government policy and grants programmes, special initiatives and cross-sectoral strategic planning and delivery has helped volunteering assume a higher profile than it has ever previously enjoyed. This has driven some interesting developments which have produced greater public awareness of the role of volunteering and community involvement in society, and greater understanding that volunteering and voluntary sector interests do not always necessarily or entirely coincide.

We live in a society that has been shaped by volunteers. Looking back through history, just about every area of activity that we now associate with public service provision began with voluntary action – education, health, social services, welfare, disability provision, childcare, housing, justice, the environment, conservation – the list is endless. Tony Blair has said, “If you want to know what’s good about our country, just look at the work of volunteers,” and the United Nations has described volunteers as “the glue that holds society together”.

In this context it is easy to see that volunteering is a major issue for the voluntary and community sectors (including as it does governance, user involvement, community involvement, service delivery, etc). Most parts of the voluntary and community sectors either function or rely on voluntary effort. Research undertaken by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations suggests that there are more full-time equivalent volunteers than full-time equivalent staff involved with the voluntary and community sectors. It can therefore be argued that much of the value of the voluntary and community sectors is created by volunteering.

For the statutory sector, too, volunteering is of vital importance. 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.

It is for all of these reasons that volunteering is, and needs to remain, high on the national agenda. Over the past few years volunteering

has developed a momentum and enhanced capacity on which to build, including a far more effective and comprehensive specialist local volunteering development agency infrastructure than ever before and new strategic local, regional and national initiatives to stimulate volunteering.

So what exactly is volunteering?

Volunteering can be described in many ways, and the word itself engenders many different reactions. Throughout these discussion documents “volunteering” is used to describe the act of a person giving their time for no financial reward; of their own volition for the good of others, society or the environment; and in so doing encompasses all such activity, however it is described by the individuals or organisations involved in the process.

No statutory definition for volunteering exists. *The Compact on relations between the Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England*¹ provides a good starting point in *Volunteering: a Code of Good Practice*. The key elements of the Volunteering Code are the government’s and the voluntary and community sectors’ commitment to maintaining best practice in the promotion, development and celebration of volunteering. The Code highlights that volunteering is a substantial social investment that creates social capital and makes a major contribution to national life. In the Code the government undertakes to examine how this is shown in national economic accounts, and ensure that employment and economic policy is ‘active citizenship-friendly’.

¹The Compact is the agreement between the government and the voluntary and community sector made in 1998. It is designed to improve their relationship for mutual advantage. There are commitments by both sides. It includes principles such as recognising groups are independent and have the right to campaign. The national Compact’s principles have been elaborated in Codes of Practice on Funding, Consultation, Volunteering, Community Groups and Black and Minority Ethnic Community Groups.

Volunteering

As volunteers have fewer rights, ways and means or reasons for challenging discrimination and because there is no financial investment or protection arising out of a contract of employment, there needs to be consensus about the principles, range and remit of volunteering. It is in this context that the Compact offers two ‘operational’ definitions of volunteering and suggests some principles fundamental to volunteering and guidance on the scope of voluntary and community involvement.

The operational definitions given in the Code are:

- Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.
- A volunteer is a person who performs any activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travelling and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives.

The Code also offers four principles fundamental to volunteering:

- Choice
Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Any encouragement to become involved in volunteering should not result in any form of coercion or compulsion. Freedom to volunteer implies freedom not to become involved.
- Diversity
Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what the volunteer’s background, age, race, sexual orientation, faith, etc. Inclusiveness can build bridges, helping a diversity of people to feel usefully involved. Social exclusion barriers can be overcome by skills, experience, confidence and contacts gained while helping others. Policy-makers and practitioners in all sectors can learn much from working with volunteers from different ethnic

communities, age groups and other demographic sectors, who may bring considerable relevant experience from their cultural and other backgrounds. Equal opportunities principles are basic to supporting diversity.

- Reciprocity
Volunteers offer their contribution unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution to wider social objectives. Giving voluntary time and skills must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also receives. Benefits that volunteers expect to gain include a sense of worthwhile achievement, useful skills, experience and contacts, sociability and fun, and inclusion in the life of the organisation.
 - Recognition
Explicit recognition of the value that volunteers contribute to the organisation, to the community, to the social economy and to wider social objectives, is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers, organisations and government policy and practice.
- The Code describes the scope of volunteering to include:
- Helping provide a service as an unpaid volunteer within a voluntary or community organisation, international development organisation, the public sector or a private sector body.
 - Taking part in running a voluntary or community organisation as a trustee, board or committee member.
 - Serving as a non-executive member of a public body or participating in civic governance.
 - Leading a voluntary initiative, usually as part of a voluntary organisation or community group, to improve the quality of life for people in a neighbourhood or community of interest.
 - Gaining skills and experience through volunteering, which will be useful when applying for paid employment.

Volunteering

- A group activity, within a neighbourhood or community of interest, providing a community service, or campaigning for a public cause.
- Employer-supported community involvement.
- Helping develop public policy through involvement in consultation processes and campaigning.
- Volunteering overseas.
- Volunteering through involvement in a faith congregation or community.

Why do people volunteer?

According to work undertaken by the Institute for Volunteering Research, 47% of people volunteer because they were asked. Research has also suggested that of those people who do not volunteer, half would do so if asked. So obviously the process of being asked is a clear reason to volunteer.

Of itself, though, being asked is not enough to explain the millions of people who volunteer, or the billions of hours they give every year. So what makes people volunteer? The reasons to volunteer are extremely personalised, and the motivations will vary from person to person. However, 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 precursor 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.

How many people volunteer, and what do they do?

The 1997 *National Survey of Volunteering* indicated that 48% of the adult population take part in some sort of formal voluntary work (that is, volunteering organised through or for a group of some kind). This equates to some 21.8 million volunteers. The average hours given per volunteer in the survey was four hours a week, meaning that the UK benefits from 88 million hours of volunteer time each week.

Men and women were equally likely to volunteer, although this changed when examining what they did:

Women were more likely to be involved in volunteering connected with

- Schools and education.
- Social welfare.
- The elderly.
- Religion.
- Raising money and delivering direct services.

Men, on the other hand, were more likely to be involved with volunteering connected with

- Sports and exercise.
- Hobbies.
- Recreation and the arts.
- Sitting on committees.
- Providing transport.
- Representing others.

According to the 1997 survey, people aged between 45 and 54 years of age were most likely to volunteer; the least likely to volunteer were the over-75s. In common with most surveys of volunteering, the 1997 survey found that people from higher socio-economic groups were more likely to volunteer, as were people who completed their education after the age of 21.

Volunteering

The most common activities undertaken by volunteers were as follows:

- 66% of volunteers were involved with raising or handling money.
- 55% of volunteers had spent time organising or helping run an event.
- 36% of volunteers were members of committees.
- 26% volunteered in a sports and exercise context.
- 23% volunteered in connection with religion and children's education.

A full analysis of volunteer profiles and tasks can be found in the 1997 *National Survey of Volunteering*; more up-to-date figures can be found in the 2001 *Home Office Citizenship Survey*, which includes a section of questions on volunteering. While these figures are more up to date, the Citizenship Survey does not examine the breadth of issues covered by the National Survey. The Citizenship Survey also followed a different methodology, and the figures cannot therefore be compared directly with those in the 1997 National Survey.

The Citizenship Survey, for example, reports 39% of the adult population volunteering, but we cannot say for certain whether this is an actual fall from the 1997 figure or whether it reflects the different methodology used. It is fair to say, however, that the citizenship survey was able to better capture information about ethnicity and volunteering than the National Survey because of its bigger sample size. While we would advise bearing methodological differences in mind, it is interesting to note that the Citizenship Survey did not uphold the common belief that black and minority ethnic communities are not represented in formal volunteering. In fact, according to this survey, black or black British people are more likely to volunteer than white people, with black African people being the most likely to volunteer.

What support do volunteers need?

The dynamic enthusiasm and motivation of volunteers continually changes our world – often incrementally, but sometimes radically. It is the harnessing of the power of volunteering that enables volunteers to achieve their full potential, and this is often the task of Volunteer Managers within the voluntary and community sectors.

The involvement of volunteers needs planning and forethought to make the experience worthwhile for both the organisation and the volunteer. While a growing number of organisations accept this, many still fail to understand volunteering and do not provide adequate support.

Volunteers need and deserve support – policies and procedures that guard their welfare, ensure that they receive feedback and a clear guide to their role. Having some structures in place also means that issues around diversity can be properly addressed. If no one is responsible for increasing accessibility or identifying excluded groups and reaching out to them, then nothing will change.

In *The 1997 National Survey of Volunteering*, 71% of volunteers said that their volunteering could be better organised. Research undertaken in 2003 and published by the Institute of Volunteering Research indicated that this was still an issue. In *A choice blend: what volunteers want from organisations and management*, volunteers identified the following requirements:

- Flexibility.
- Creativity.
- Informality.
- Involvement.
- Something different from the day job.

What challenges face volunteering?

Recognition that the demands of volunteers are changing

- The demographic profile of volunteering is changing, and the numbers of volunteers growing. However, at the same time the national demographic is also changing and society itself is moving forward, placing different demands on the populations. This is reflected in the way people want to volunteer: the time they have available; the nature of the volunteering they want to undertake; their expectations of the organisations they volunteer for; and specifically the expectations of the manner on which their involvement is managed.

The impact of government interest

- Whilst government interest in volunteering is valued and recognised by the voluntary and community sectors, it is important to recognise that there is more to volunteering than increasing the numbers of volunteers (the easily measurable statistics) and that work also needs to be done to improve the quality of the volunteering experience.
- It is also vital that volunteering is not perceived by the population as a government-controlled initiative to cut public expenditure. Whilst we do not believe this to be the government agenda, there is a real possibility that this could be the perception of the public. This could act as a deterrent to people volunteering.

Promote the importance *and the nature* of volunteering

- The contribution of volunteers has to be recognised. However, at the same time the spirit of volunteering needs to be understood. Decision makers both in government and the voluntary sector should be aware that volunteering has a unique nature, and why it should not simply be regarded as unpaid labour.

Highlight the case for volunteer management

- Formalised organisations involving volunteers need to take their management seriously. Volunteers deserve support.

Starving volunteering of resources, expecting volunteer management to be tacked on to other roles, and ignoring the need to make volunteering a worthwhile experience harms individual organisations and the sector as a whole.

Improve the status of Volunteer Managers

- In *Delivering the Goods* the author identifies that ‘respect for, and confidence in, volunteer management among institutions and the public is patchy’. There is a need to promote the necessity of a dedicated Volunteer Manager for formal groups; promote volunteer management as a skill, not just a series of rote tasks; and develop a collective voice for Volunteer Managers, in whatever form is appropriate.

Professionalisation must be for the benefit of volunteering as a whole.

- Not everyone will be in a position to attain the standard or do the certificate. Do we want standardisation? Will the accreditation drawbridge be pulled up by the larger national organisations? This is sometimes described as the ‘dinner party test’ – Volunteer Managers should be able to hold up their heads in the company of other professionals.

Wider access to information.

- The broad and diverse nature of volunteering means that the majority of people directly managing volunteers are never likely to be professionally accredited Volunteer Managers. Information and support needs to be as widely available as possible, so that everyone working with volunteers can readily access good practice information.

A structured approach to support for volunteering in England is needed

- In order to meet these challenges, volunteering needs assistance. An infrastructure to support the development and marketing of volunteers is needed. The next sections of this book detail how this support is currently provided, and the developments necessary to enable the volunteering infrastructure to continue to meet the needs of volunteering.

What is volunteering infrastructure?

Recent work by Compass Partnership and the Office of Public Management has defined voluntary and community sector infrastructure as:

“the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote front-line organisations thus enabling them to deliver their missions more effectively”.

This work also defines infrastructure organisations as:

“voluntary organisations whose primary purpose is the provision of infrastructure functions (support and development, co-ordination, representation and promotion) to front-line voluntary and community organisations”.

Compass Partnership and the Office of Public Management suggest:

“Voluntary sector infrastructure has a uniquely important role to play in supporting voluntary and community organisations and the communities they serve.

Infrastructure both strengthens and supports the capacity building efforts of individual voluntary and community organisations, provides a voice that can influence other stakeholders to create a more conducive environment for voluntary and community sector activity, and helps to build the knowledge, skills and resources required for both these things to happen.

Infrastructure is a highly efficient way to enhance the performance of the voluntary and community sector because knowledge, skills and experience can be gathered from many organisations both inside and outside the voluntary and community sector and disseminated as a public benefit – often free of charge or at low cost. At its best, infrastructure provides economies of scale that cannot be achieved by individual organisations acting alone.”

The focus of voluntary and community sector infrastructure is, by its very nature, organisationally focused. However, the

volunteering infrastructure is unusual, especially at a local level, in that its primary audience is the individual (whether they be an existing or a potential volunteer), and organisational development is supported to improve the quality and quantity of volunteering.

Who provides volunteering infrastructure nationally?

There are a number of organisations operating at an England-wide level offering support to volunteering². Some of these, such as Volunteering England, offer generic support for volunteering; others have expertise in specific areas:

- Support for Volunteer Managers is offered by agencies such as the National Association of Volunteer Service Managers; web-based networks such as the UK web group for Volunteer Programme Managers (www.groups.yahoo.com/group/UKVPMs); specific programmes such as the Excellence in Volunteer Management and Investing in Volunteers.
- Employee volunteering is encouraged and facilitated by agencies such as Business in the Community (through the Cares programme), Business Community Connections and Employers in the Community Network.
- Volunteering in health and social care is supported by a wide range of organisations in the public, voluntary and community sectors. Many of these have now come together under the umbrella of the National Strategic Partnership for Volunteering in Health and Social Care.
- Volunteers with additional support needs are supported by a number of agencies such as SKILL and the Professional Development Team.

² The organisations named in this list are not all of those involved in providing volunteering infrastructure but have been described to give examples of the range of providers and work available.

What is volunteering infrastructure?

- Volunteering in rural communities is of major importance, yet local infrastructure to support and develop this is currently weak and there is no dedicated national support, Action for Communities in Rural England and Volunteering England are currently exploring ways to address this need.
- Support for youth volunteering is a complex picture. Organisations such as Youth Action Network, Changemakers, the National Council of Voluntary Youth Service, and Student Volunteering England all offer different support and encourage a variety of models of youth volunteering and participation. Within government, bodies such as the Millennium Volunteers Unit and the Connexions Service have volunteering within their remit.
- Older volunteers are also supported through a variety of national organisations such as RSVP, Reach and the Experience Corps, as well as by major service delivery organisations such as Age Concern and Help the Aged.
- Volunteering amongst black and minority ethnic communities is supported through the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations which has regionalised this function to some degree.
- Volunteering as a route to employment is recognised by the Department for Work and Pensions as an important part of their activity, and their network of Jobcentre Plus offices supports this process.
- Promoting volunteering is undertaken in a variety of ways through a number of different organisations including TimeBank, do-it (www.do-it.org.uk), the Media Trust and Community Service Volunteers. These agencies concentrate on broadcast media such as television, radio, teletext and the internet.

Currently there is little generic support for volunteering at a regional level. Volunteer development agencies meet together on a regional basis, although the way in which this happens varies from region to region. In some regions there are also county-wide networks of volunteer development agencies.

In the North East and London regions there are constituted regional volunteering infrastructure bodies, with the majority of their membership coming from the volunteer development agencies in those regions. Neither of these organisations currently has any staff and both rely on volunteers for the delivery of their services.

The methodology for the support of volunteering by the nine regional voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations and the nine regional black and minority ethnic voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations varies. However, none of them are core funded to support volunteering.

Many large volunteer-involving organisations have a regional structure that encompasses their volunteer management functions; however such functions are not normally available to support other, often smaller, agencies.

Volunteering England is currently developing a regional volunteering infrastructure, and this work is described within the strategy.

What are the core functions of volunteering infrastructure?

At a local level, most generic support for volunteering is provided by the England-wide network of volunteer development agencies which has its roots in the national network of volunteer bureaux. Historically, volunteer bureaux were simply places where people could go for information and advice about volunteering opportunities in their area, and perhaps be referred as a volunteer to a specific organisation or group. The role of volunteer bureaux has changed over the years so that most now have five other functions as well as the brokerage function described above:

- Promoting volunteering.
- Enabling participation in volunteering.
- Providing information, training and research about volunteering.
- Commenting and campaigning on volunteering and related issues.

What is volunteering infrastructure?

- Most importantly developing volunteering in partnership with other local agencies and groups.

Those volunteer bureaux which now perform all six functions and focus on development are, by definition, local volunteer development agencies.

Volunteering: A Code of Good Practice recognises the value of volunteering infrastructure, the need for public funding and defines local volunteering infrastructure through eight core functions:

- Promoting volunteering and community involvement, as well as specific volunteering opportunities.
- Matching up people interested in volunteering with opportunities and/or volunteer-involving organisations.
- Acting as a local partner for national promotional campaigns.
- Building local partnerships which support volunteering.
- Developing strong local networks across all three sectors.
- Providing information, training and consultancy including a register of volunteers with professional expertise available for small community groups.
- Developing innovative volunteering opportunities and promoting diversity.
- Working with the local media.

The Code also identifies that at a national level a range of umbrella and resource organisations fulfil different aspects of the volunteering infrastructure functions in England, which it defines as:

- Undertaking research into volunteering.
- Raising awareness of the value of volunteering with policy makers across all sectors.
- Scrutinising public policy and legislation for its impact on volunteering.
- Training, professional qualification and accreditation of volunteer managers.
- Developing practitioner networks.

- Running a comprehensive national volunteering database.
- Promoting volunteering through the media.

During the recent consultations on the future of volunteering infrastructure it became clear that the existing, and unrelated, lists of core functions locally and nationally needed to be further developed and simplified in order to encourage strategic and cohesive delivery at a local, regional and national level. This was reflected in Volunteering England's December 2003 comment paper, and there has been widespread support for the proposed revisions which have now been adopted. The redefined core functions for volunteering infrastructure locally, regionally and nationally are:

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

Work is now under way to develop the detailed framework for the delivery of these functions and the inter-relation between different providers and geographical coverage in ensuring they are delivered in a strategic and cohesive manner. This work will contribute to a revision of *Volunteering: a code of good practice* which is to be undertaken during 2004/05.

What is volunteering infrastructure?

Volunteer development agency activity

Volunteering is primarily a local response to a local need or issue. The role of the local volunteering infrastructure, normally provided by the network of volunteer development agencies (the vast majority of which are in membership of Volunteering England) in supporting this process is often pivotal.

Headline analysis of volunteer development agency activity is provided here together with key comments on this. Volunteering England will be publishing further in-depth statistical analysis later in the year, and will provide further annual analysis building on the 2004 base-line in future years.

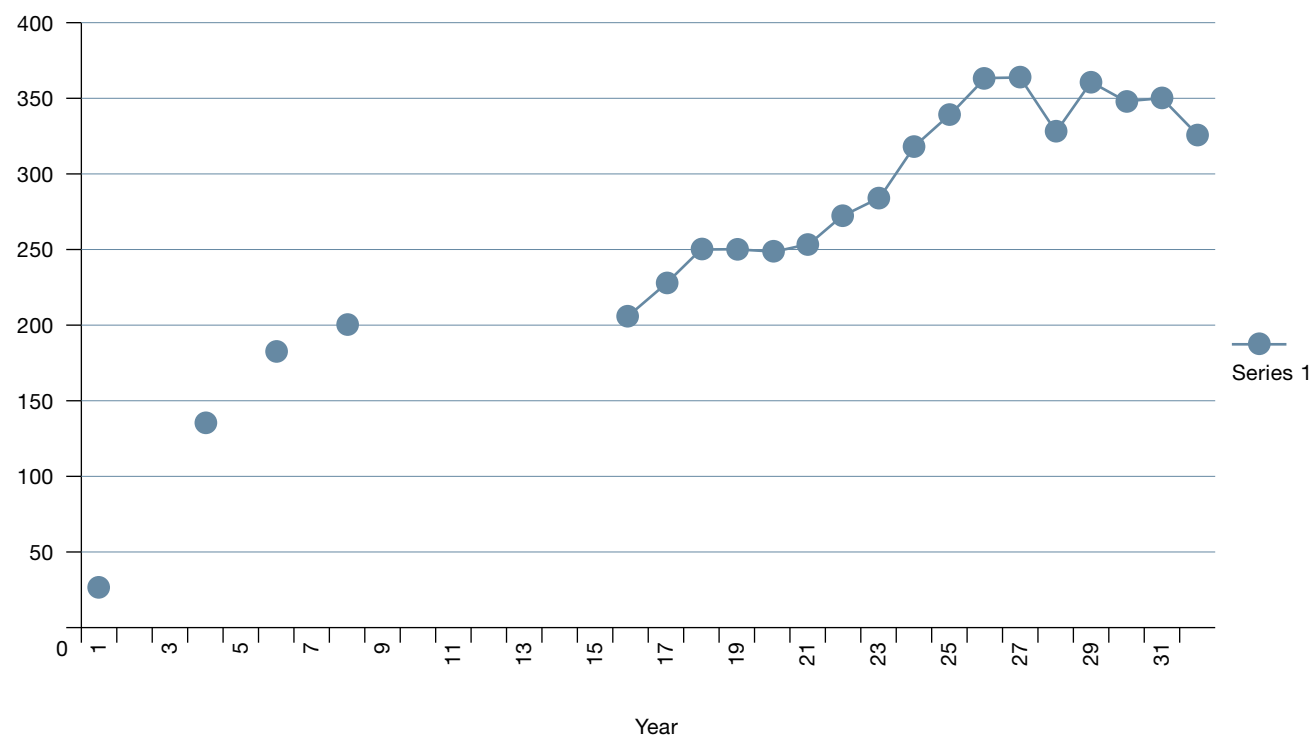
We are aware that headline figures are a crude way of analysing activity. While the information is statistically sound it is based on averages. This means that it can only be used to give national and regional pictures; it cannot be used to determine local policy. The averages do not include weighting for population size, local demography, rurality,

deprivation, the maturity of the local volunteering sector, etc; all of these issues will be addressed in the detailed analysis that will be published later in the year, which will also contain recommendations relating to funding levels and the outcomes that these should bring.

As can be seen, the number of volunteer development agencies has grown considerably since 1973, the point at which they started to work together on a national basis. Detailed monitoring of numbers began in 1988.

The impact of the 1996 government's Make a Difference programme of volunteer development agency start-ups can clearly be seen, as can the temporary drop in numbers following the 1999 ending of this funding stream. However, numbers recovered as local areas fought to keep this valuable new resource. Numbers dropped again in 2001 as a result of a quality accreditation process leading to members withdrawing as they no longer delivered the core volunteering

Numbers of volunteer development agencies in membership of the national body



What is volunteering infrastructure?

infrastructure functions. A further drop was seen at the end of 2003 at the point when membership became England-only, and volunteer development agencies from the other countries of the UK ceased to be counted.

Throughout the last six years there have been closures due to lack of funding and start-ups to fill gaps in provision. On average these have balanced each other out; however, this is leading to a loss of skills and knowledge of local volunteering as agencies close and within a few years replacement agencies open. This effectively wastes money on reinventing the wheel, whilst at the same time loses the momentum of the original work.

Action needs to be taken to build on the current position to secure an England-wide network of effective, sustainable, and appropriately and adequately funded local volunteer development agencies in line with the strategy defined in this book.

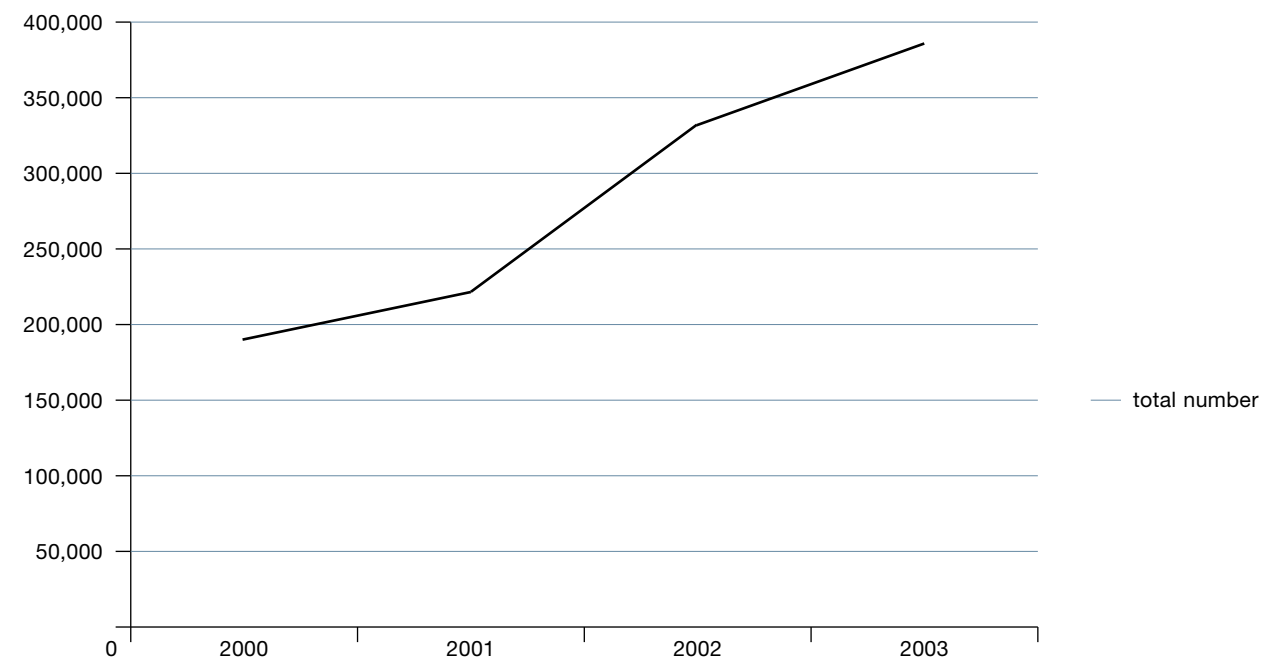
It is, perhaps, interesting to note that in 1992 30% of volunteer development Agencies served rural communities, by 2003 this proportion had dropped to 20%.

In 2003 the average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £24,542.

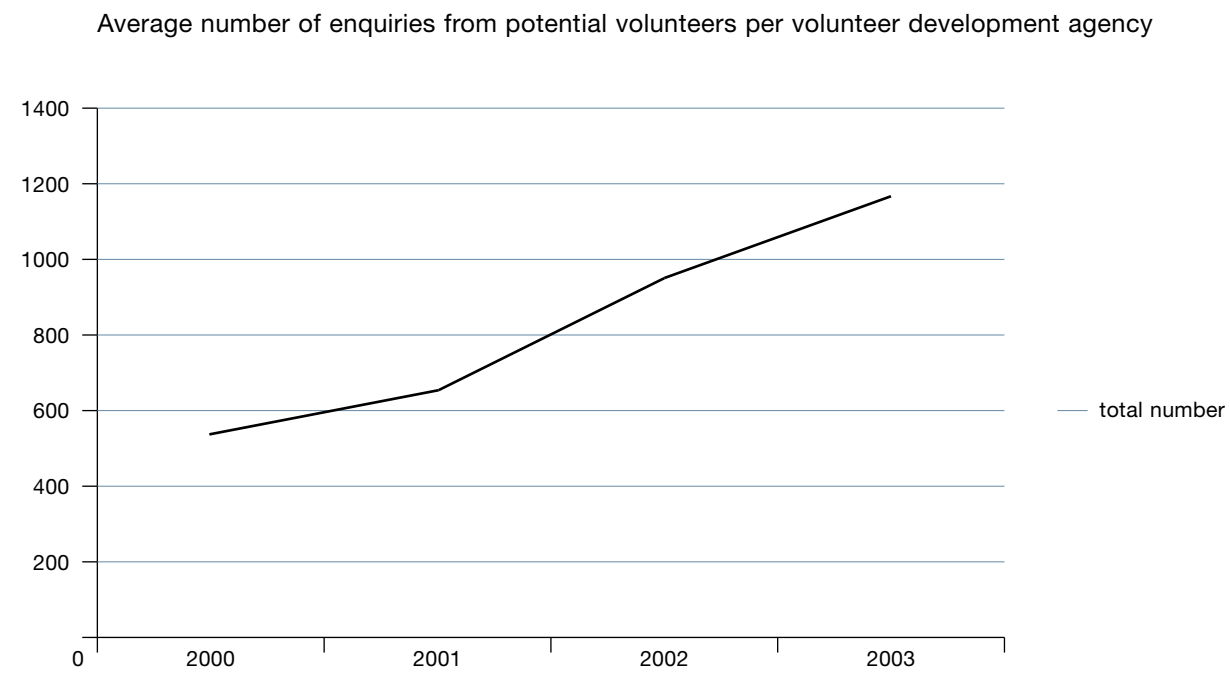
In this section we illustrate the activity of the local volunteering infrastructure in nationally consolidated figures showing trends 2000-2003 (a summary of this data can be found in Appendix 3).

Numbers of volunteers

Total number of enquiries received by volunteer development agencies from potential volunteers

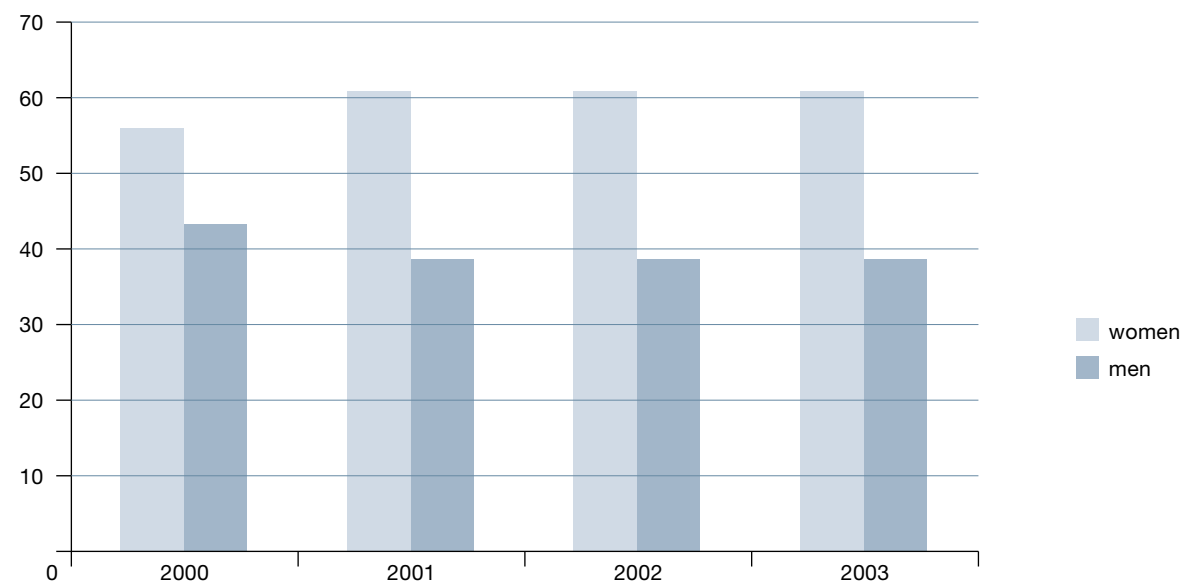


What is volunteering infrastructure?

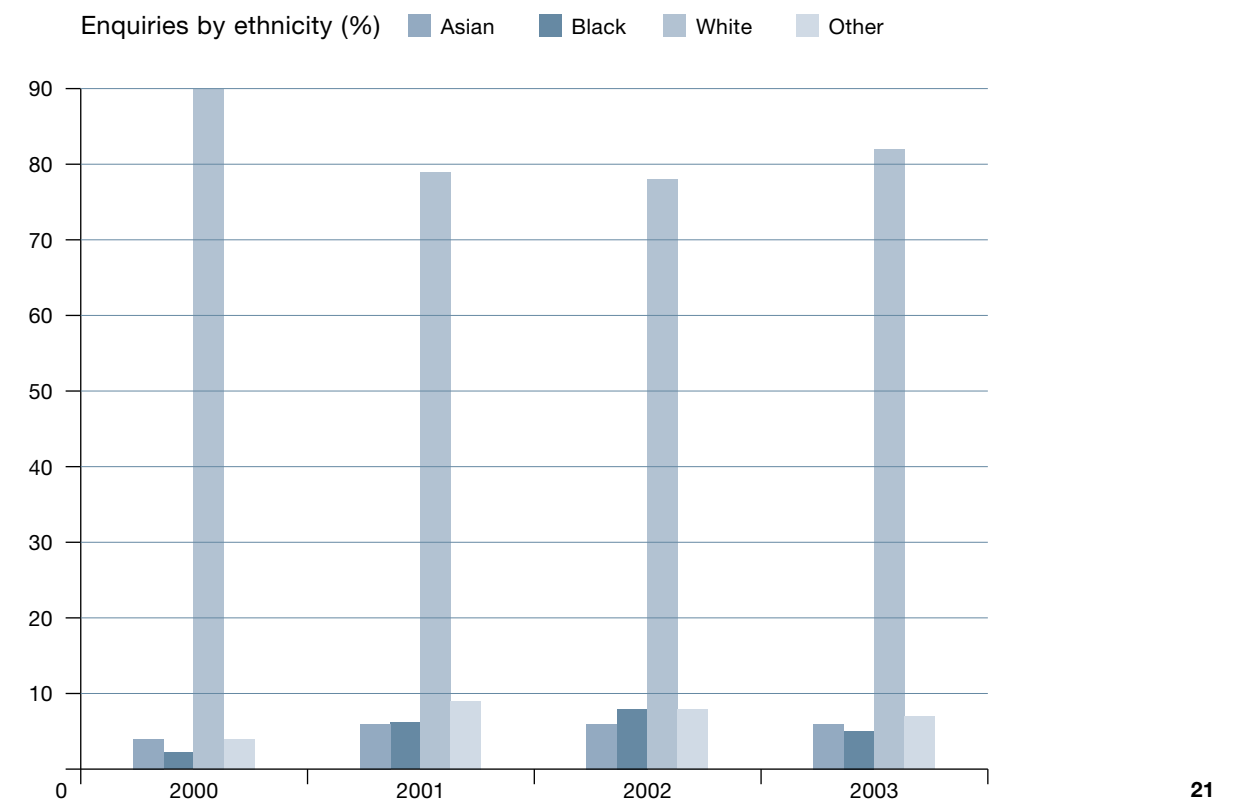
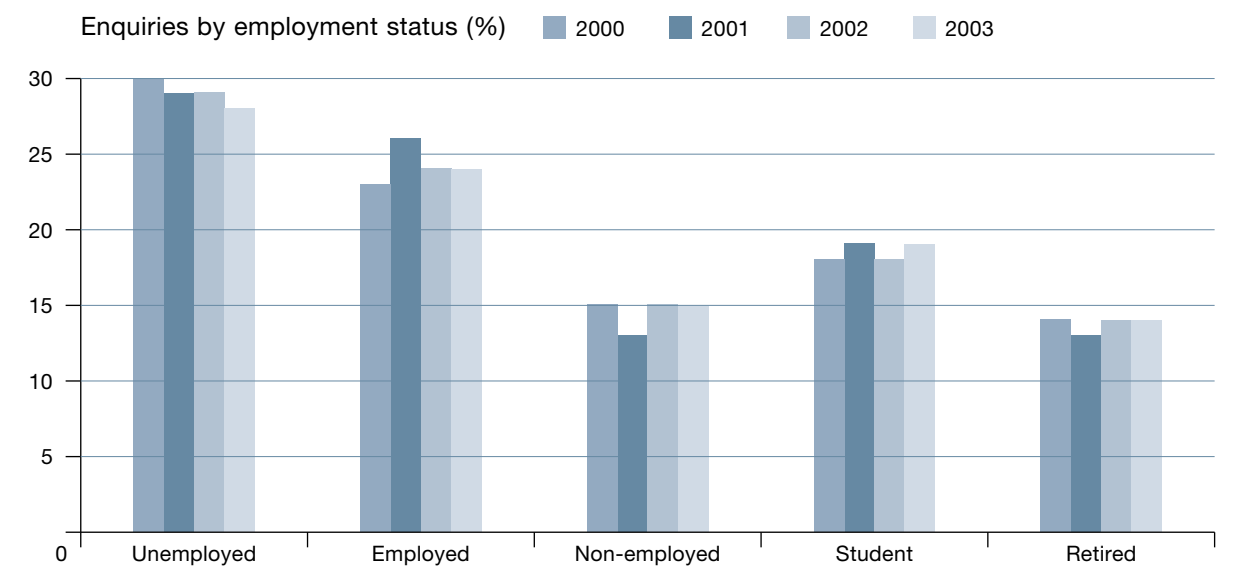
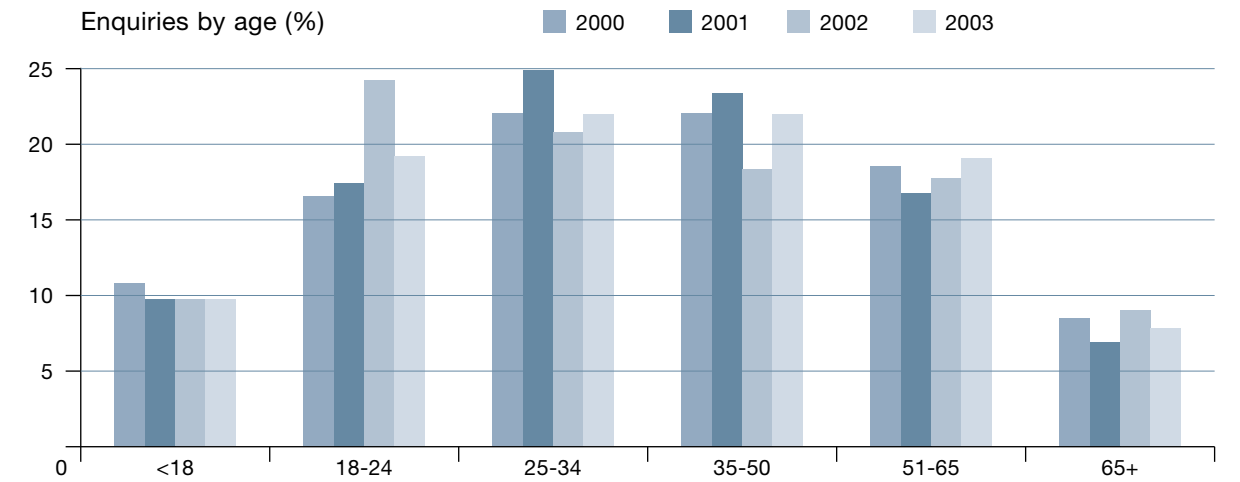


Demographic analysis of volunteers

Enquiries by gender (%)



What is volunteering infrastructure?



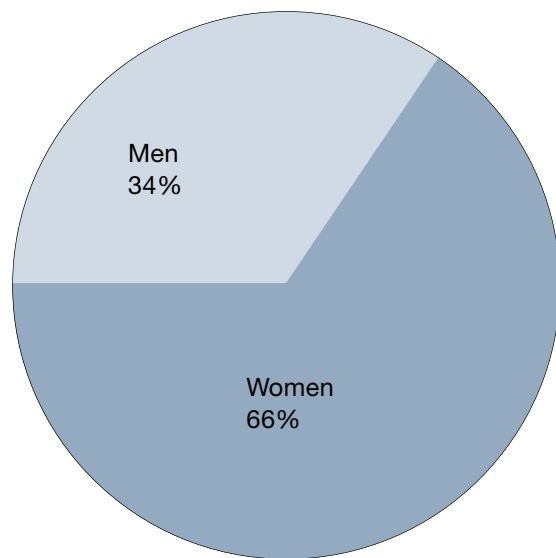
What is volunteering infrastructure?

Volunteer development agency activity by region – 2003

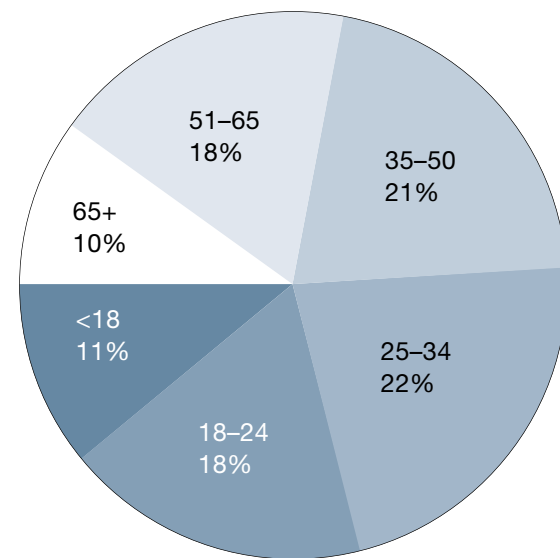
East Midlands Region

- In 2003 there were 53 volunteer development agencies in the East Midlands Region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £28,612.
- On average they each employed 1.4 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 1.6 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 588 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 150 volunteer-involving organisations.

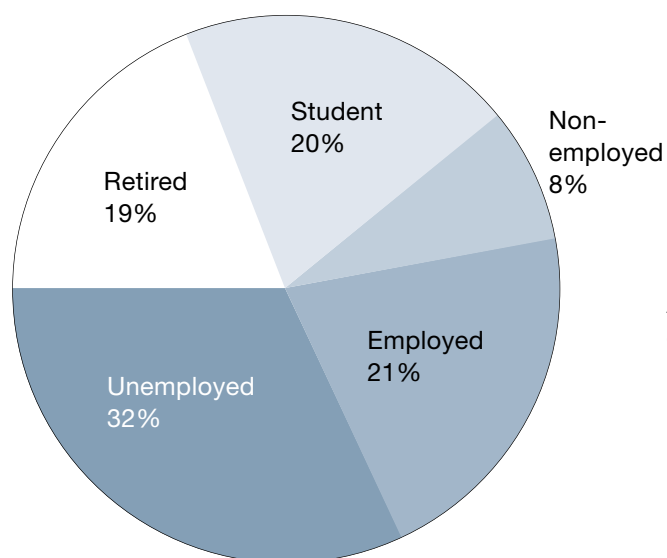
Enquiries by gender %



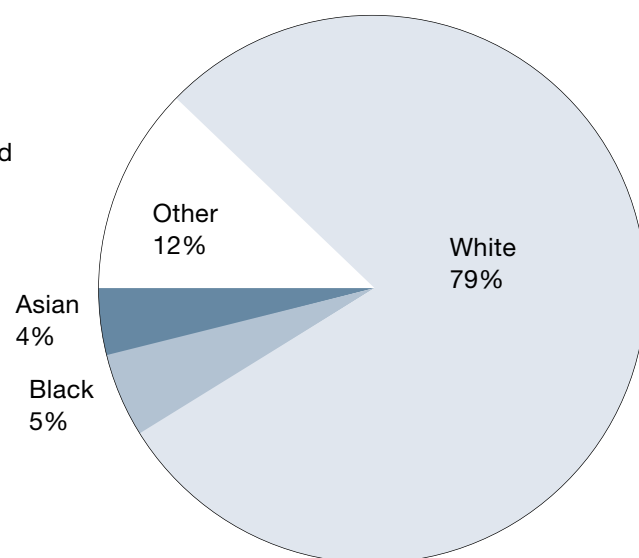
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %

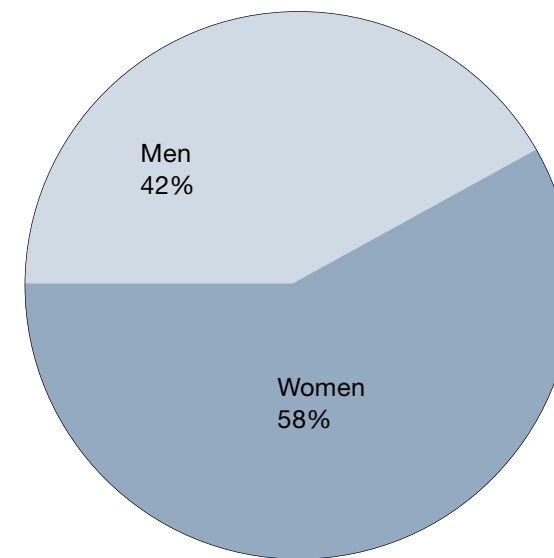


What is volunteering infrastructure?

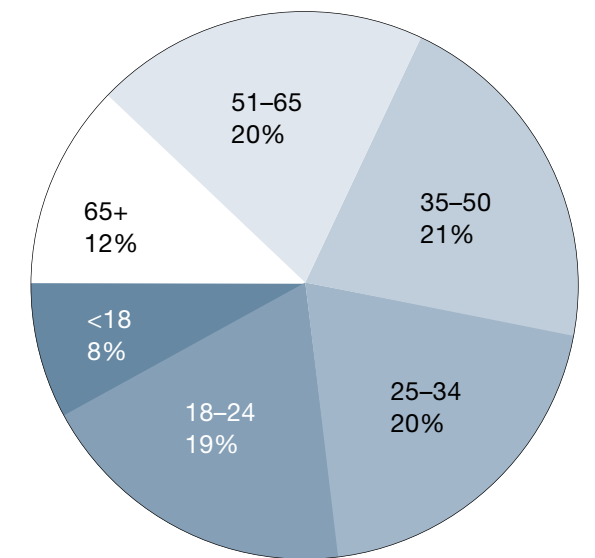
Eastern Region

- In 2003 there were 40 volunteer development agencies in the Eastern Region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £12,105.
- On average they each employed 1.9 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 1.1 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 1,636 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 120 volunteer-involving organisations.

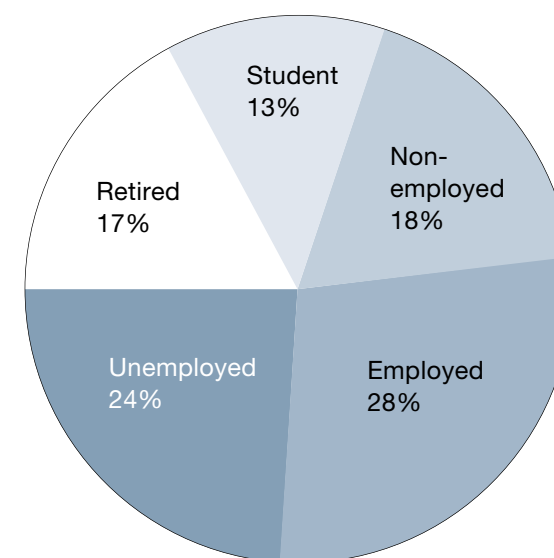
Enquiries by gender %



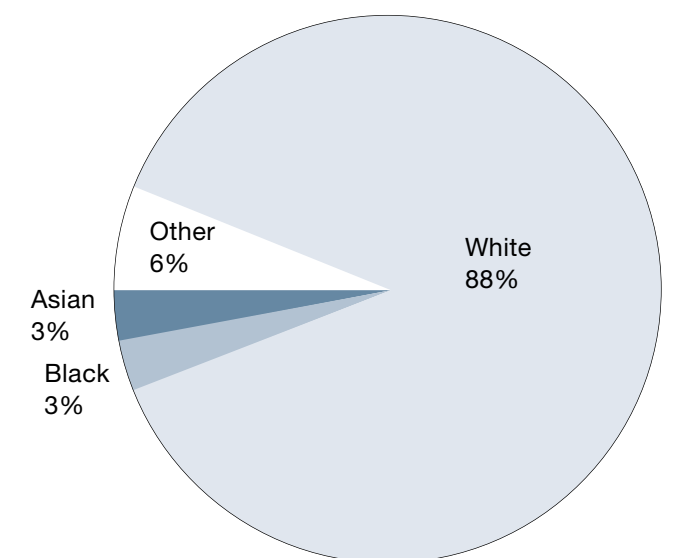
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %

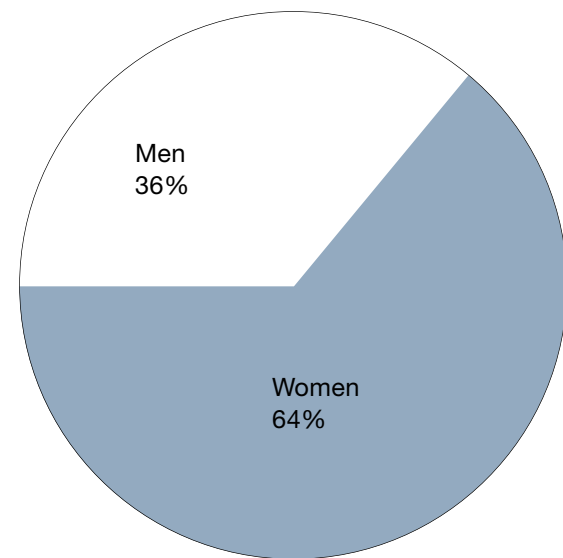


What is volunteering infrastructure?

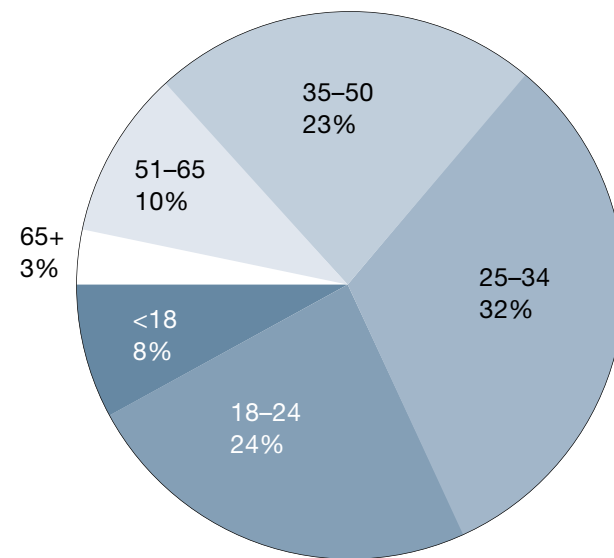
London Region

- In 2003 there were 28 volunteer development agencies in the London region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £60,814.
- On average they each employed 2.4 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 3.6 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 3,629 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 258 volunteer-involving organisations.

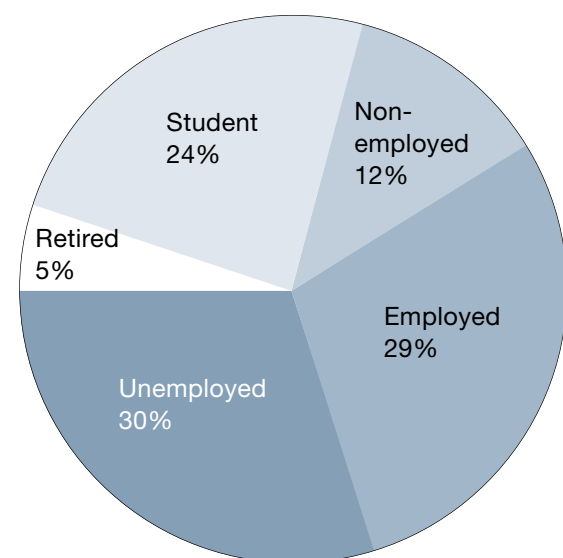
Enquiries by gender %



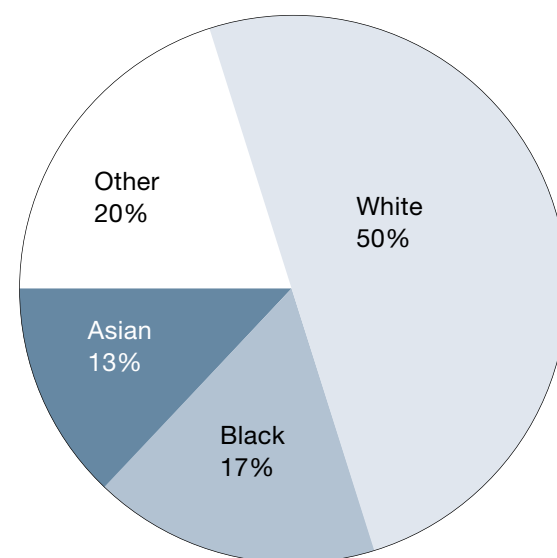
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %

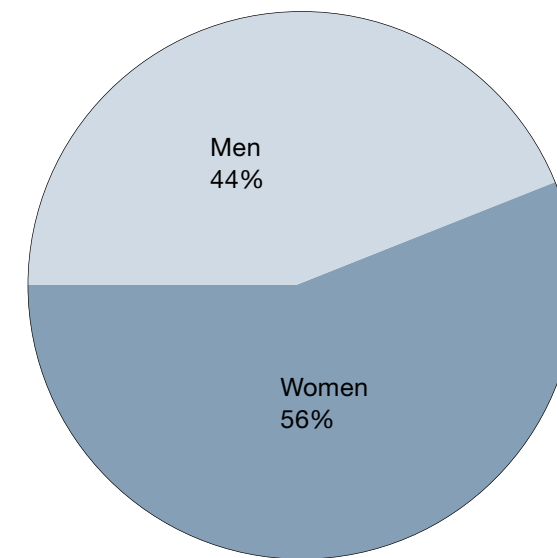


What is volunteering infrastructure?

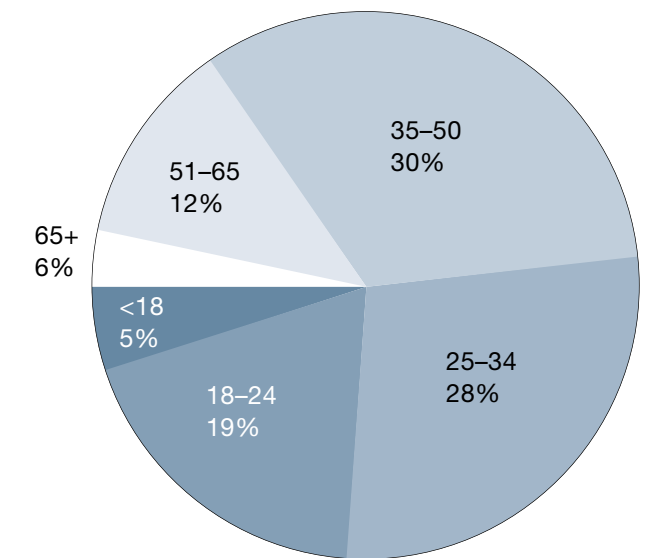
North East Region

- In 2003 there were 17 volunteer development agencies in the North East Region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £22,023.
- On average they each employed 1.3 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 2.3 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 702 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 172 volunteer-involving organisations.

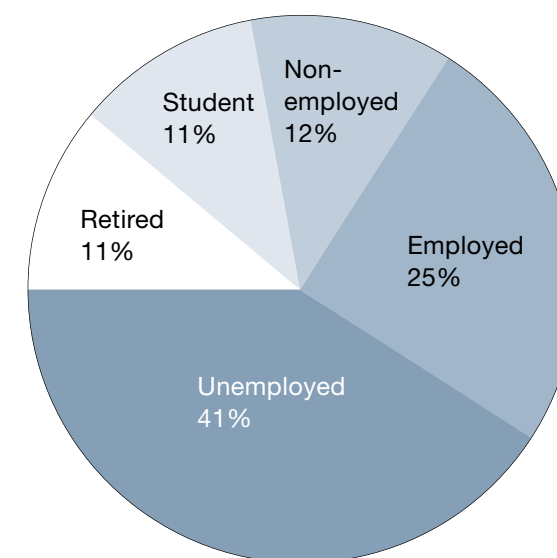
Enquiries by gender %



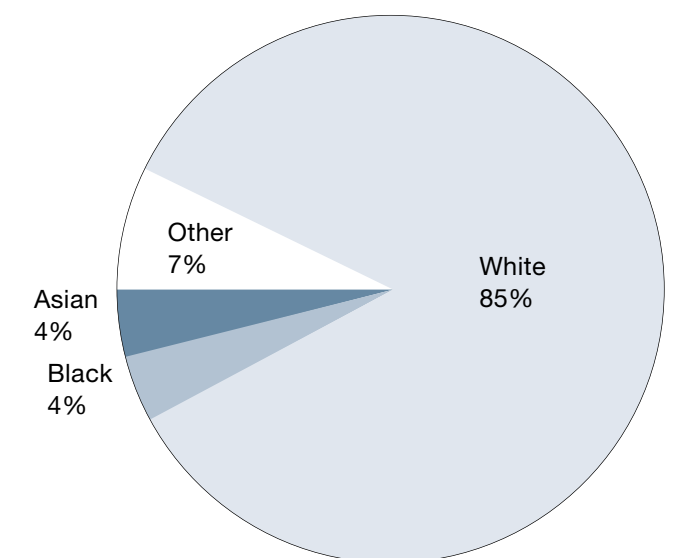
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %

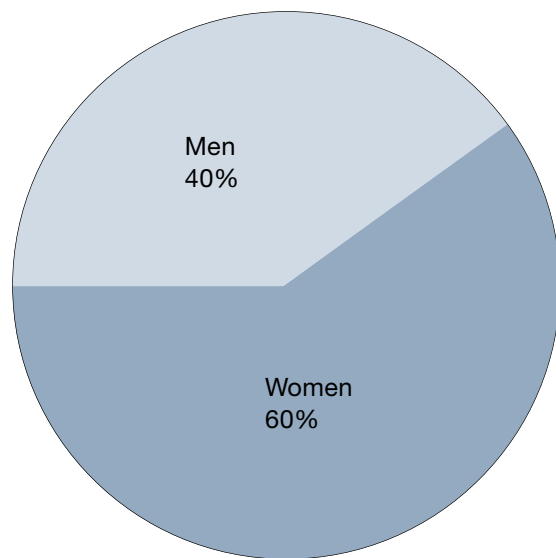


What is volunteering infrastructure?

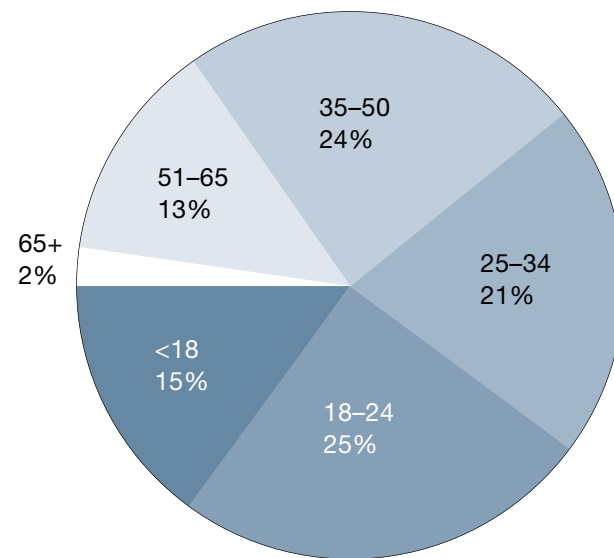
North West Region

- In 2003 there were 36 volunteer development agencies in the North West Region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £17,962.
- On average they each employed 1 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 1.6 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 821 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 263 volunteer-involving organisations.

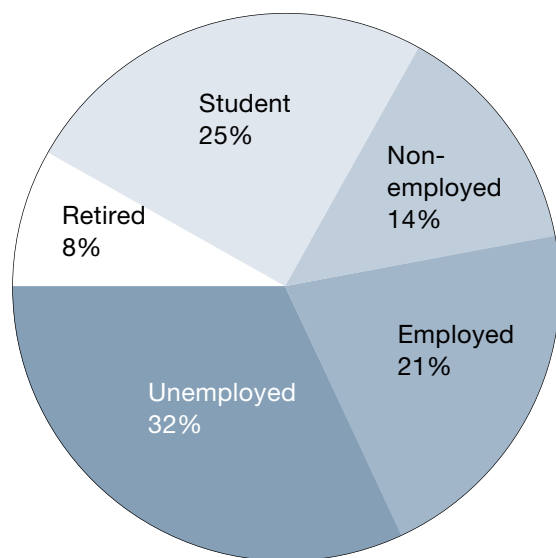
Enquiries by gender %



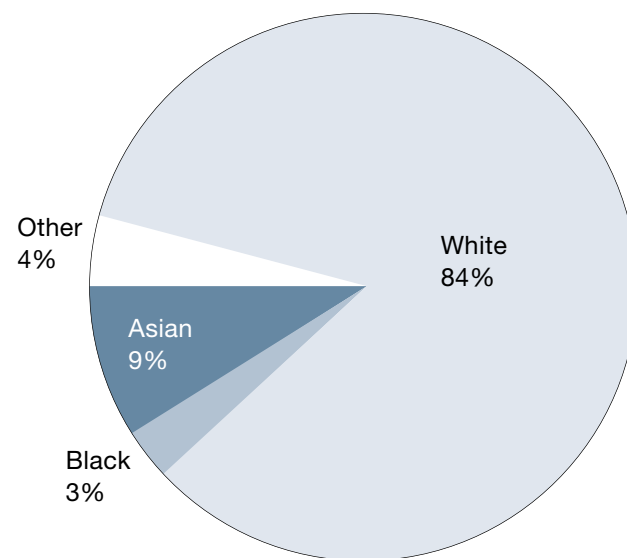
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %

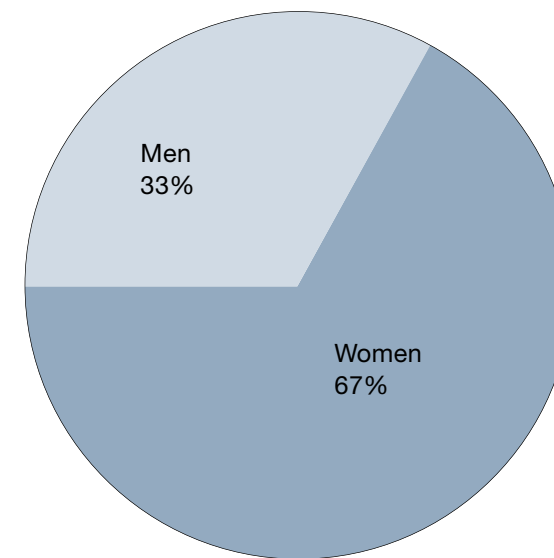


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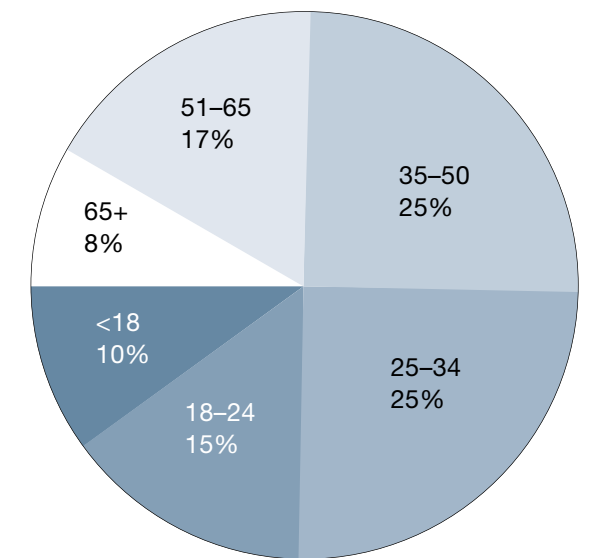
South East Region

- In 2003 there were 61 volunteer development agencies in the South East Region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £18,412.
- On average they each employed 1 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 1.3 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 651 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 167 volunteer-involving organisations.

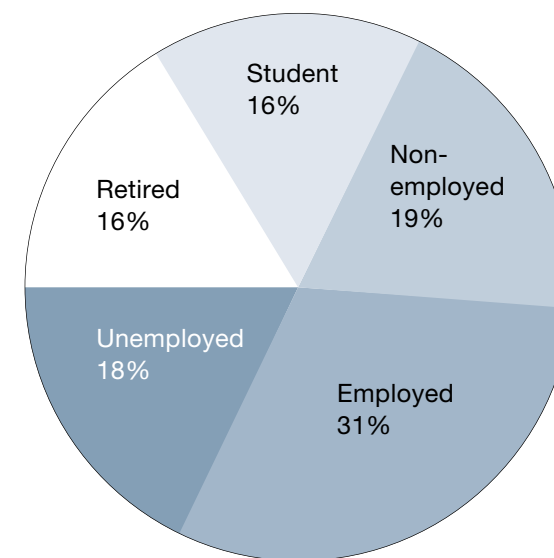
Enquiries by gender %



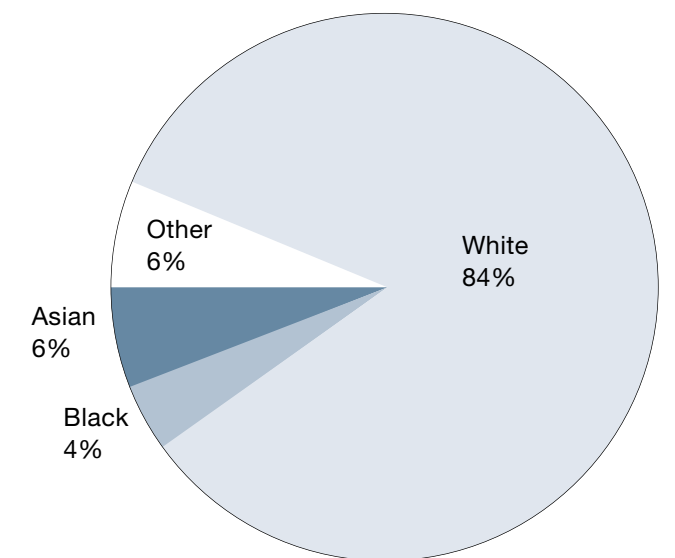
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %

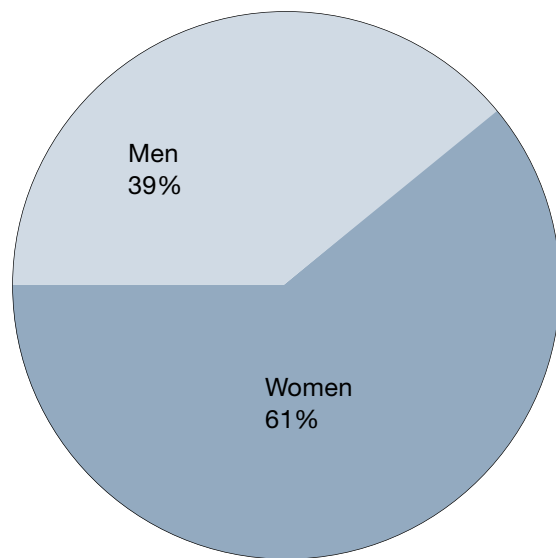


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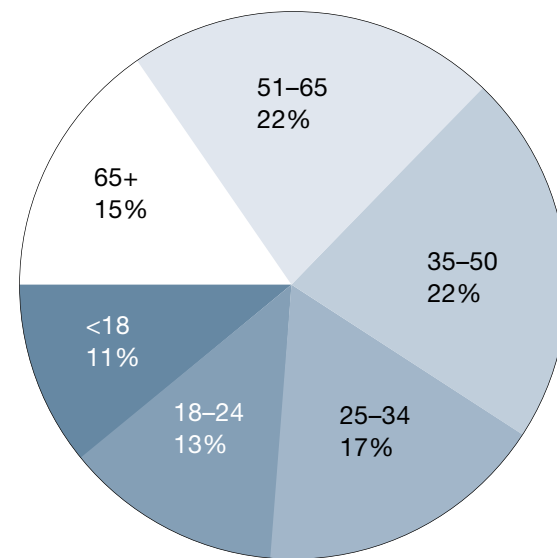
South West Region

- In 2003 there were 35 volunteer development agencies in the South West Region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £13,403.
- On average they each employed 1.2 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 1.3 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 927 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 134 volunteer-involving organisations.

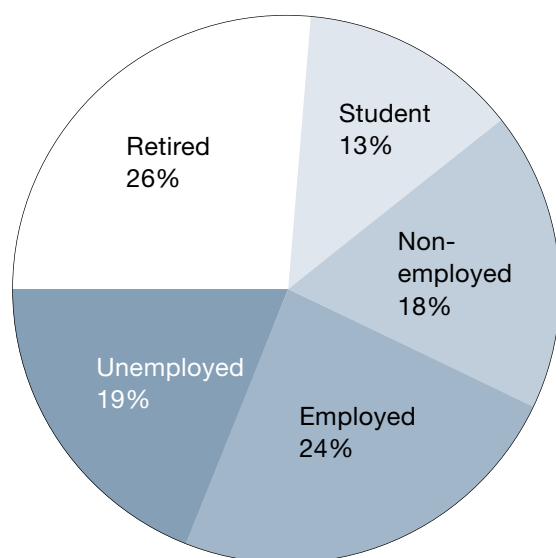
Enquiries by gender %



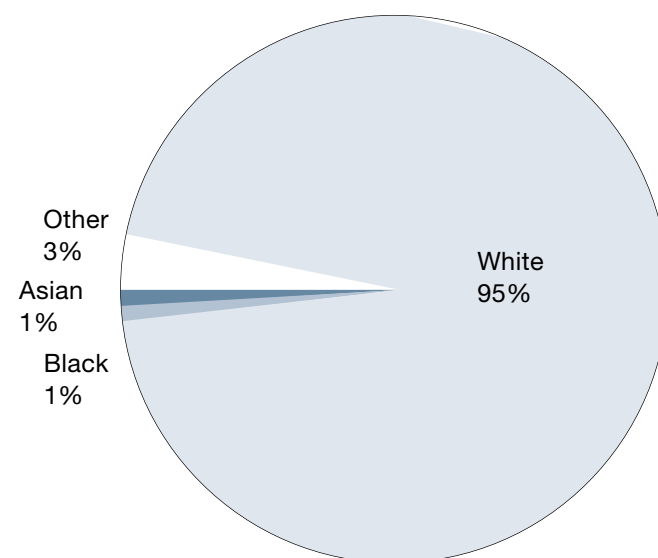
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %

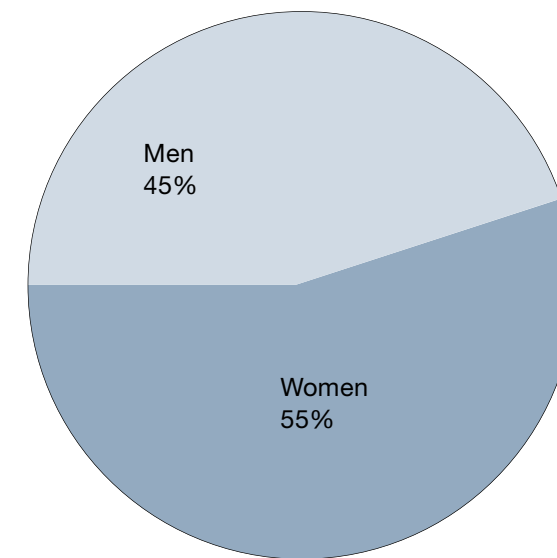


What is volunteering infrastructure?

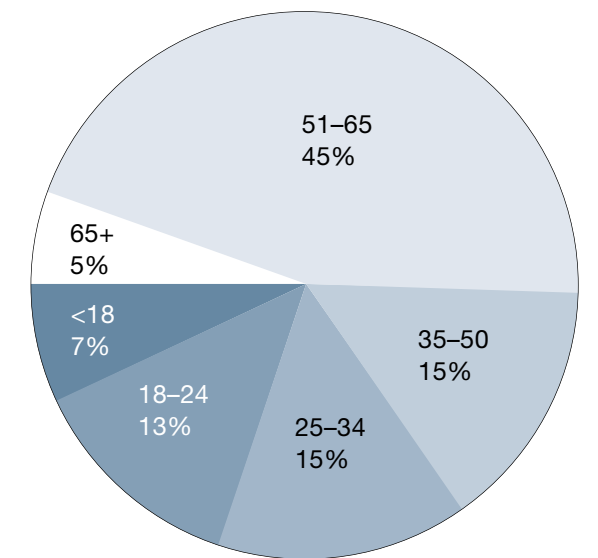
West Midlands Region

- In 2003 there were 32 volunteer development agencies in the West Midlands Region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £26,508.
- On average they each employed 1.1 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 1.3 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 640 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 182 volunteer-involving organisations.

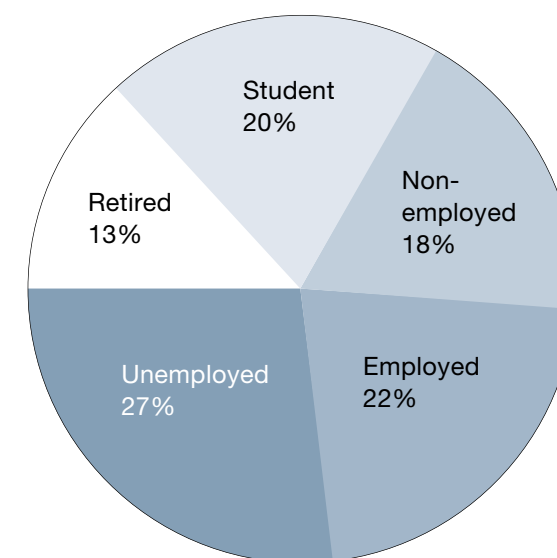
Enquiries by gender %



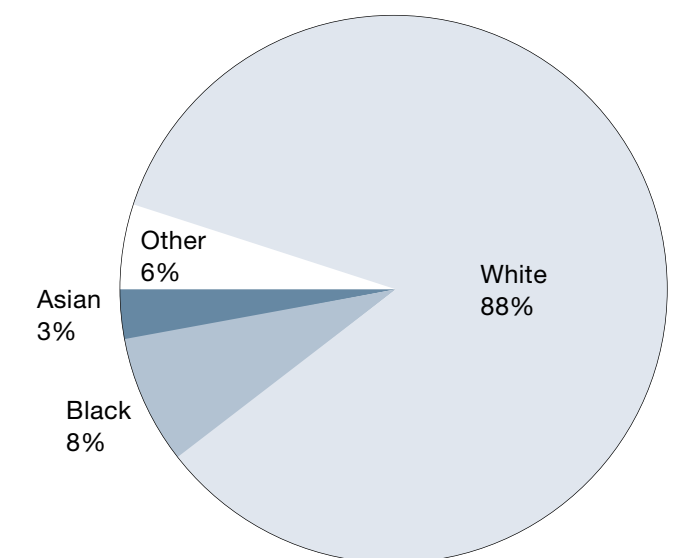
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %

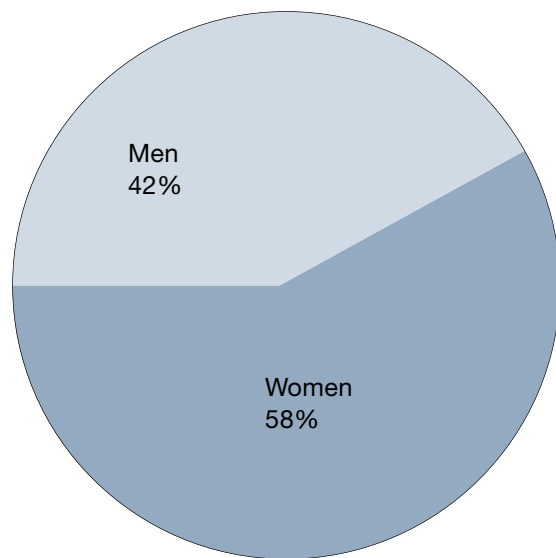


What is volunteering infrastructure?

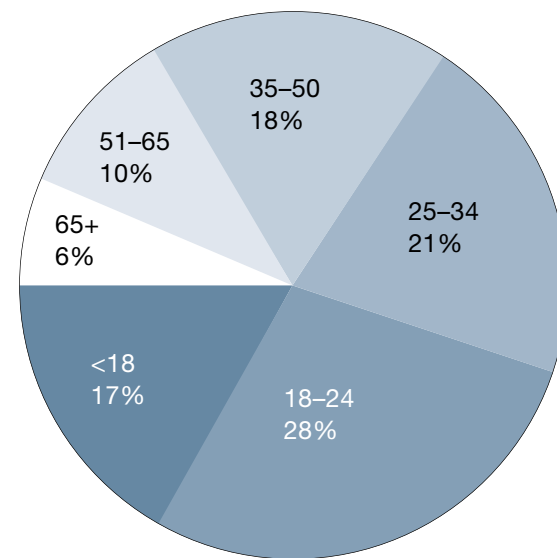
Yorkshire and Humber Region

- In 2003 there were 22 volunteer development agencies in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.
- During the year their average income from statutory sources towards the costs of delivering the core functions of a volunteer development agency was £21,039.
- On average they each employed 1 full-time equivalent staff to deliver their core functions, and in addition employed 2 full-time equivalent staff to run projects.
- Each volunteer development agency, on average, received 781 enquiries from potential volunteers and supported 167 volunteer-involving organisations.

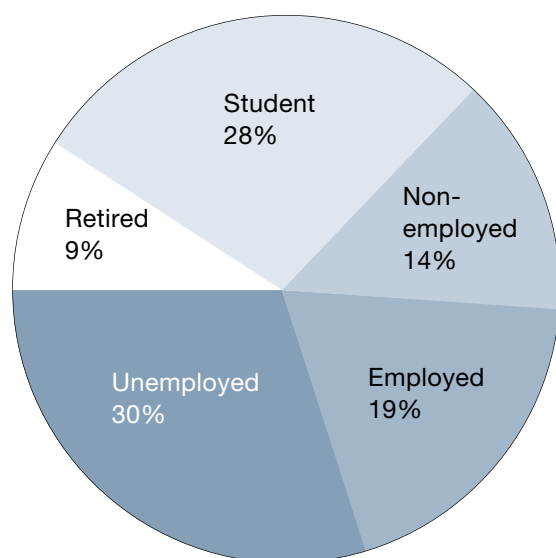
Enquiries by gender %



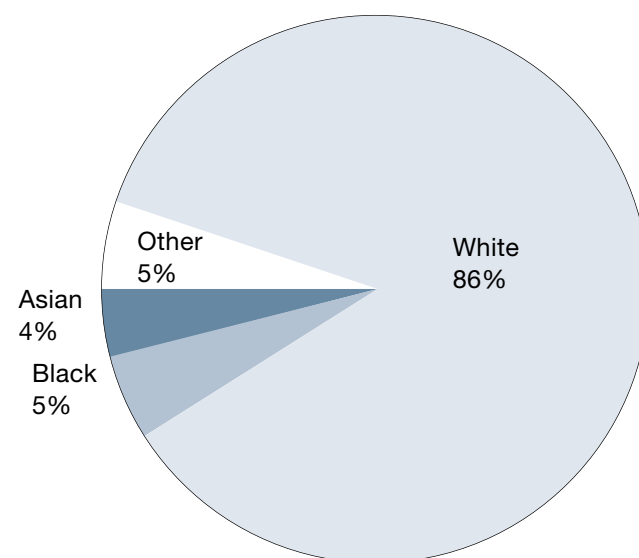
Enquiries by age %



Enquiries by employment status %



Enquiries by ethnicity %



What is volunteering infrastructure?

Towards the future

The consultation on volunteering infrastructure has identified the following role for Volunteering England. The organisation

“will take strategic responsibility for the support and development of local and regional infrastructure; good practice development and sectoral networks.

It will take a strategic approach to the development of social policy at local and regional and national levels, aiming to support proposed changes which would facilitate volunteering and challenge proposed changes which could inhibit volunteering. It will monitor and evaluate the impact of the volunteering infrastructure.”

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.

In recent years many volunteer development agency staff have been telling us that they have to spend large parts of their time fundraising in order to meet their own salary costs, and that it is difficult to deliver all (and sometimes any) of the core functions at a local level. This is happening in an environment where we are seeing volunteer development agencies close due to lack of funding to undertake their core functions. Volunteer development agencies have asked Volunteering England to intervene in this situation.

Recent work by the Compass Partnership and the Office of Public Management as part of the government’s infrastructure review suggests that there are in the region of 450 local volunteer development agencies in England. In some local authority areas there can be as many as five volunteer development agencies each offering the full range of core functions and often being funded by the same funder. Over recent years many of these funders have begun to question the validity of funding more than one organisation to deliver the same services in the same area.

Within this picture of substantially more volunteer development agencies than local authority areas, however, there are many local authority areas in England where there are no agencies offering the full core functions of volunteering infrastructure. These range from London boroughs such as Lambeth, Barnet and Brent to metropolitan areas such as Manchester and Newcastle through to rural/semi-rural areas such as Lincoln and the County of Wiltshire.

It is within the context of all of the explanatory information outlined in this document, together with the ongoing monitoring of provision undertaken on an annual basis by Volunteer Development England, that Volunteering England is proposing a vision for the volunteering infrastructure in England and a workplan to achieve this.

Values of volunteering infrastructure

Consultations and experience demonstrate that the volunteering infrastructure operates to a discrete value base that underpins its core functions and delivery mechanisms.

The specialist volunteering infrastructure is formed by an England-wide network of independent development agencies concerned with volunteers and volunteering and working locally, sub-regionally, regionally or nationally.

As the membership body for the specialist volunteering infrastructure Volunteering England believes, in no particular order of importance, that:

- As volunteers have fewer rights, ways and means, or reasons for challenging discrimination because there is no financial investment or protection arising out of a contract of employment, volunteers and volunteering require a champion of the values of volunteering and an advocate for their role.
 - Whilst volunteering is freely given, it is not cost free - volunteering requires an effectively resourced and professionally run infrastructure to sustain and develop it.
 - The volunteering infrastructure is independent of government but works within the Compact and the associated codes.
 - Volunteering infrastructure is committed to accessibility and diversity encompassing a broad definition of volunteering - everyone has the right to volunteer without experiencing unfair discrimination – all volunteer-involving organisations must be encouraged to operate in a similar manner.
 - Volunteering is a matter of free choice and there can be no compulsion to become a volunteer.
 - Volunteering is a valuable and integral part of society and as such volunteers deserve support and recognition.
 - Volunteers assist in effecting social change and improving quality of life, and play an essential role in alleviating the effects of poverty, ignorance, inequality and injustice.
- Volunteers should be offered opportunities to be involved in decision making related to their volunteering.
 - Volunteering is not undertaken for any financial reward.
 - Volunteering is undertaken for a wide variety of reasons often involving holistic personal development, reflective learning, skills development and societal change – volunteering opportunities must support the volunteer in their motivation for involvement.

Core functions of volunteering infrastructure

This strategy proposes that the volunteering infrastructure in England delivers a set of core functions that are consistent locally, regionally and nationally and are delivered in a cohesive manner. The redefined core functions for volunteering infrastructure locally, regionally and nationally are:

- Brokerage
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development

- Developing volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development of volunteering

Each of these functions is described below, and the expectations of what will be delivered locally, regionally and nationally are also provided.

Brokerage

This is the primary function of which many other local functions are a sub-set/delivery mechanism

The volunteering infrastructure will have a clear understanding of the role, range and remit of voluntary and community activity. It will hold information on a wide range of volunteering opportunities.

It will seek out information on a comprehensive range of volunteering opportunities. It will offer potential volunteers support and advice in matching their motivations to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Key descriptors for this function include: informing, advising, matching, signposting, supporting, facilitating, enabling, connecting, linking.

Local role	Regional role	National role
Matching individuals' and groups' motivations to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities	Supporting the strategic implementation of brokerage services	Strategic development of brokerage services
	Co-ordinating sub-regional and regional activity	Supporting national and multi-regional activity
Disseminating information on volunteering opportunities	Acting as a regional point of contact for information on regional volunteering opportunities	Acting as a national point of contact for information on national volunteering opportunities

Good practice development

The volunteering infrastructure will have a commitment to promoting good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer-involving organisations, and will actively support this.

It will work to increase the volunteering knowledge base of its own staff and volunteers as well as of other individuals, organisations and groups at all levels.

It will develop and deliver training and accreditation strategies for potential volunteers, volunteers, Volunteer Managers and volunteering infrastructure organisations.

It will hold resource and training packs. It will ensure that all the information it holds is available to other agencies, individuals and groups. It will offer volunteer-specific training to existing and prospective volunteers and to staff and volunteers from volunteer-involving organisations. It will be aware of, and implement, best practice in delivering training to various groups and individuals in different settings.

It will regularly be contacted by other agencies, groups and individuals seeking information about volunteering issues.

Local role	Regional role	National role
Adopt, advocate for and support national models of good practice in volunteering	Ensure consistent good practice in volunteering across the region	Devise, develop and disseminate models of good practice in volunteering
Local operational delivery to inform regional and strategic development	Identify exemplars and champions	Promote exemplars and champions
Feeding local experience of the implementation and development of the model back to the regional infrastructure	Collate local developmental ideas and ensure they are implemented by the national infrastructure	Develop and implement standards of accreditation informed by local and regional experience, monitoring and evaluation
Programme delivery agents for national standards and accreditation	Coordinate the implementation of national standards and accreditation	Develop national standards and accreditation, and links to other accreditation schemes
Networks of and support for local Volunteer Managers	Networks of and support for regional Volunteer Managers	Networks of and support for national Volunteer Managers
Identify volunteer specific needs for local training and inform the regional infrastructure of this	Collate local volunteer specific training needs analysis. Ensure they are fed into the national planning process and are met in regional and local delivery plans	
Identify and secure audience for delivery of local components of national training strategy (developing links to other infrastructure organisations)	Co-ordinate, resource and deliver (including locally) the work identified in the national training strategy	Devise, accredit and deliver national training strategy, including regional and local support

Developing volunteering opportunities

The volunteering infrastructure will take a strategic approach to the development of volunteering opportunities.

It will work in close partnership with other statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies, as well as with community and faith groups, to develop volunteering. Locally it will also have an understanding of the potential within the community in which it operates, and have clear plans for working to realise that potential.

The volunteering infrastructure will ensure that its services are accessible, and that it communicates clearly to individuals, organisations and groups at all levels. It will implement an equal opportunities policy, with a clear commitment to diversity, equality and anti-oppressive practice. It will target its promotion of volunteering at specific groups of people who face barriers to volunteering. It will also cater for the needs of hidden groups, such as those with less visible disabilities, and lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

The volunteering infrastructure will work creatively to develop imaginative, non-formal opportunities for potential volunteers.

Local role	Regional role	National role
Develop volunteering opportunities with local volunteer-involving organisations, partnerships, networks and local Volunteer Managers	Develop volunteering opportunities with regional volunteer-involving organisations and networks of other volunteer-involving organisations	Develop volunteering opportunities with national volunteer-involving organisations and networks of other volunteer-involving organisations
Stimulating volunteer participation via projects in response to local interest need or desire		

The specialist volunteering infrastructure will work creatively to develop imaginative, non-formal opportunities for potential volunteers and act as a catalyst for campaigning and advocacy by volunteers

Policy response and campaigning

The national volunteering infrastructure will devise and lead on policy development which serves to influence and create a social policy climate in England (and by extension the UK and Europe) which is volunteer-friendly and volunteer-literate. This will be informed by values, current thinking and practical experience of practitioners.

The volunteering infrastructure will maintain awareness of local, regional and national government proposals and policies which may have an impact on volunteers. It will lead and/or participate in campaigns on issues that affect volunteers and volunteering.

The volunteering infrastructure will seek recognition as the first port of call whenever a comment related to volunteering is sought by the media.

It will campaign regularly and proactively for increased awareness of volunteering and for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer-friendly climate.

It will support people who wish to volunteer to effect positive social change and improve the quality of life in their community.

It will challenge received wisdom about the capacity of existing service provision and about the ways in which people can or cannot get involved in volunteering and its development.

Local role	Regional role	National role
Identify issues, proposals or legislation that have an impact on policy and campaign issues requiring a local response	Identify issues, proposals or legislation that have an impact on policy and campaign issues requiring a regional response	Identify issues, proposals or legislation that have an impact on policy and campaign issues requiring a national response
Develop and disseminate local policy responses where appropriate	Develop and disseminate regional policy responses where appropriate	Develop and disseminate national policy responses where appropriate
Local consultation with members, stakeholders and other fora	Ensure that local and regional consultation contributes to national policy development	Develop and disseminate a coherent national policy framework ensuring that this is informed by practitioners at local and regional levels

Strategic development of volunteering

Volunteering England will take strategic responsibility for the support and development of local and regional infrastructure; good practice development and sectoral networks.

It will take a strategic approach to the development of social policy at local and regional and national levels, aiming to support

proposed changes which would facilitate volunteering and challenge proposed changes which could inhibit volunteering. It will monitor and evaluate the impact of the volunteering infrastructure.

The volunteering infrastructure will maintain awareness of the volunteering needs and existing practices of all volunteer-involving organisations. It will have close links with those organisations and groups, and be actively involved in relevant networks.

Local role	Regional role	National role
Inform regional and national thinking and develop local strategies	Inform national thinking and develop regional strategies ensuring coherence with local strategies	Develop national strategies and ensure coherence with regional and local strategies
Ensure that local infrastructure are perceived as the local experts on volunteering	Promote and advocate for the role of the local infrastructure with the Government Offices for the Regions and non-statutory regional bodies	
	Support for and monitoring and evaluation of local intelligence	Volunteer development agency co-ordination, protocols and funding arrangements
Develop a strategic and sustainable local response to funding issues ensuring volunteering has a place in local planning and strategies	Resource the local infrastructure to develop a strategic approach to local funding issues	Develop a range of funding models appropriate to local determinants
Contribute to development of national thinking on and undertake local monitoring and evaluation analysis measuring impact	Contribute to development of national thinking and undertake regional monitoring and evaluation analysis measuring impact	Lead on research, monitoring and evaluation measuring the impact and outcomes of the volunteering infrastructure

Vision for volunteering infrastructure

The volunteering infrastructure in England:

- Exists to increase the quality and quantity of volunteering.
- Will be a modern, dynamic, strategic, co-ordinated and sustainable infrastructure for volunteering at national, regional and local level – it will be rationally configured; locally, sub-regionally, regionally and nationally appropriate and economically viable; and catalytic.
- Together will provide a comprehensive understanding of volunteering in all its expressions in England – and will be known and recognised for this expertise within its staff and volunteers.
- Will be publicly recognised with a physically identifiable local presence.
- Will be respected for its person-focused approach to social issues such as citizenship, civil renewal, regeneration, health, education, criminal justice and the environment – and to this end will support volunteering in all of its diversity.
- Will speak authoritatively, with an independent voice, from a strong, integrated, evidentiary base of outputs, impact assessment and research locally, regionally and nationally.
- Will be trusted and respected for its expertise, flexibility, campaigning, quality of service, effectiveness and efficiency.
- Will be confident in setting a cutting-edge agenda in opinion forming and policy development within the field of volunteering.
- Will be accessible, collaborative, empowering, professional, and transparent in all of its dealings with people and organisations.
- Will be seen as indispensable by the public and by the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

- Will work to rigorous, externally accredited and comprehensive minimum standards locally, regionally and nationally in order to ensure high-quality, innovative and progressive services that are focused on measurable outcomes to the public and the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.
- Will have strong international links within the other countries of the UK, Europe and the international community.

Volunteering England recognises that the majority of volunteering infrastructure organisations in England need to be prepared to change to achieve this vision and is committed to work to achieve this.

A ten-year strategy for volunteering infrastructure

In preparing a strategy for the volunteering infrastructure in England, ten key areas of work were identified. Some of these are volunteering infrastructure-specific; others are of broader importance for the volunteering world, but have implications for volunteering infrastructure – in these cases the work identified is that where the volunteering infrastructure has a role. The strategy also identifies methodology for delivery across all ten key areas.

The definition of volunteering

During recent consultations there have been a substantial number of comments about the need to update the current definitions of volunteering as outlined in *Volunteering: a code of good practice*.

Concern has been expressed that these do not adequately reflect the breadth of voluntarism. That definition should: include activity by groups as well as individuals; reflect the diversity of volunteering and people's motivations to volunteer; stress that volunteering is a "normal" activity for people; make it clear that volunteering is not owned by any agency, but rather by volunteers themselves.

There has been a consensus that volunteering is not about doing favours for family or friends, nor is it about enforced participation, compulsion or financial reward – and describing any of these elements as volunteering is wrong. It has also been made clear that volunteering should not remove statutory obligations of local or national government, and neither does it replace employment or the work of employees.

The revised and agreed definition of volunteering needs to be backed up with two additional statements; one on the importance of volunteering, and one placing volunteering within the culture and ethos of society in England.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- Volunteering England to lead on research and consultation within the volunteering sector and its stakeholders to arrive at a new commonly agreed definition of volunteering.
- The new definition of volunteering to be included in a revised edition of *Volunteering: a code of good practice*.
- This definition to be used to build a consensus definition within the UK and Europe.
- A statement with examples of the importance of volunteering to be published.
- A statement placing volunteering within the culture and ethos of society in England to be published.

Volunteer management

Work undertaken by the Institute for Volunteering Research on behalf of the England Volunteering Forum (*A choice blend – what volunteers want from organisation and management*) and the results of our own consultations identify a number of key areas for action to strengthen volunteer management:

- It has been suggested that volunteer management is the most frequently overlooked building block in a volunteer-involving organisation's internal infrastructure.
- Volunteer-involving organisations need to make it easier for people to volunteer. Volunteer-involving organisations need to develop a greater range of quality opportunities for volunteers – not just the tasks that nobody wants to do – and that these opportunities need to reflect volunteers' availability both in terms of time commitments and when they want to volunteer.
- It is recommended that volunteers should be able to be involved in their organisation's decision-making processes, and that volunteer-involving organisations should be looking at models of campaigning/activism/bottom-up community development as part of the spectrum of volunteering available.
- There should be widely recognised accredited qualifications for Volunteer Managers. Volunteer Managers should be appropriately recognised within their organisations and decision making processes. There should be a stronger sense of career development and progression for staff within the world of volunteering.
- Volunteer-involving organisations should also have access to an accredited quality standard for the management of volunteers.

Volunteering infrastructure needs to build on its existing work to address these issues, and develop the mechanisms required to implement the core functions proposed to support this.

Volunteer-involving organisations frequently comment on the difficulty of identifying dedicated resources to fund their internal volunteering infrastructure. There is a role for volunteering infrastructure in lobbying funders for prioritisation of funding (or making funding available) for volunteer management, provision of specific funding advice and potentially a role in developing the funding streams to support this work.

Our research and existing knowledge reveals a wide range of ways in which Volunteer Managers and volunteering infrastructure organisations relate together. However, it has also identified the potential for improvements in both the quality and quantity of volunteering through the increased sharing of knowledge and expertise as well as the opportunities for sharing some functions, especially in small to medium-sized organisations. Volunteering infrastructure, locally, regionally and nationally, has been identified as needing to play a role in facilitating these developments in existing relationships, and in extending existing networks.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- Training needs analysis undertaken.
- Investing in Volunteers launched
- Excellence in Volunteer Management programme launched.
- Good practice guidelines on volunteer involvement in organisational decision-making developed.
- Accredited training linked to the National Occupational Standards for Volunteer Managers to be developed.

- A service to advertise employment opportunities within the field of volunteering to be developed and launched.
- Analysis undertaken of existing sources of funding for volunteer management.
- Information available about sources of funding for volunteer management.
- Mapping of existing relationships between Volunteer Managers and the volunteering infrastructure.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- England-wide accredited training programme for Volunteer Managers launched.
- Volunteer-involving organisations are participating in Investing in Volunteers, and the programme is financially self-sustaining.
- Active participation in the Excellence in Volunteer Management programme.
- Vacancies are being advertised through the employment opportunities service.
- Strategy for persuading funders to prioritise or fund volunteer management developed and implemented.
- Strategy for creating funding streams to be delivered by the volunteering infrastructure developed.
- All volunteering infrastructure organisations to have developed an action plan to develop their interaction with Volunteer Managers and facilitate Volunteer Managers linking together, identifying common needs and avoiding duplication of effort.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- Investing in Volunteers standards to be reviewed and revised as appropriate.
- Investing in Volunteers programme to continue to be financially self-sustaining.
- Investing in Volunteers programme to have recognition.

- Growing numbers of volunteer-involving organisations to have achieved the Investing in Volunteers standard.
- Accredited training for Volunteer Managers to be available throughout England, and individuals to have achieved qualification.
- Growing numbers of active participants in the Excellence in Volunteer Management programme.
- Excellence in Volunteer Management programme to be reviewed and revised as appropriate.
- The employment opportunities service being recognised as the first port of call for the recruitment of staff in the field of volunteering.
- Volunteering infrastructure delivering funding streams for volunteer management.
- Healthy and effective networks exist linking Volunteer Managers with each other and with volunteering infrastructure organisations.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2014

- Investing in Volunteers seen as an essential achievement by volunteer-involving organisations.
- Investing in Volunteers to be an income-generating programme.
- Accredited training for Volunteer Managers seen as an essential requirement, and funded by volunteer-involving organisations.
- Excellence in Volunteer Management programme to be the market leader in development and implementation of good practice and learning.
- Excellence in Volunteer Management to be an income generating programme.
- The employment opportunities service to be the market leader in recruitment of staff in the field of volunteering.

Awareness of volunteering

Volunteering should be given a high profile. There should be campaigns to raise public awareness of the range and variety of roles undertaken by volunteers and of the impact of volunteering in order to encourage wide societal recognition and celebration of volunteers. In simplistic language - volunteering should be seen to be indispensable to the well-being of society in England.

There should be consistent, coherent and strategic support for volunteering at local, regional and national levels. This support should have a strong consumer focus and provide accessible and appropriate information on volunteering. At a local level there should be strong local knowledge and interaction. Further thought should be given to the role of information and communications technology in the provision of this support. In simplistic language - everyone who wants to volunteer can easily find routes to doing so.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- Promotional materials giving key messages to be produced, these to be linked to the new brand for local volunteering infrastructure.
- The effect of promotional materials to be evaluated and the results used in developing new materials and campaigns.
- Pilot work on use of information technology in public places to promote volunteering to be commenced.
- Specific campaign themes for the coming year to be identified.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- Specific campaigns to be run to promote volunteering, these to be linked to the local volunteering infrastructure brand.
- The effect of promotional campaigns to be evaluated and the results used in developing new materials and campaigns.

- Pilot work on use of information technology in public places to promote volunteering to continue and be evaluated.
- If appropriate, funding to be sought to develop the pilot work on use of information technology in public places to promote volunteering for wider use.
- New methods of using information and communications technology to raise awareness of volunteering to have been identified, feasibility studies undertaken and funding secured.
- A programme of specific campaigns and generic materials production for the coming three years to be developed and funding secured.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- Volunteering has a high profile, with a wide variety of tools being used to promote the message.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2014

- There is wide societal and recognition and celebration of volunteers.

Volunteering infrastructure – general

There should be a clearly identified volunteering infrastructure, with strong relationships with volunteer-involving organisations, provided locally, regionally and nationally.

There needs to be clarity about the roles of the many organisations involved in delivering the volunteering infrastructure locally, regionally and nationally.

There should be substantial development of collaborative working practices within the volunteering infrastructure and with other parts of the voluntary and community sector infrastructure.

It is suggested that there should be clear memoranda of understanding between all appropriate organisations in order to ensure that the core functions of volunteering infrastructure are strategically delivered and not duplicated.

Volunteering infrastructure organisations must be externally facing, addressing potential and existing volunteers as well as volunteer-involving organisations, opinion formers and policy makers.

There should be a strong consumer brand for volunteering infrastructure, and at a local level this should be consistent.

The value base for volunteering infrastructure should be generally adopted by volunteering infrastructure organisations, and be reflected in all areas of work.

Our consultations have revealed the need for the development of a coherent national policy framework for volunteering, and that this should be reflected regionally and locally.

The core functions of volunteering infrastructure as defined in the Compact should be revised. This is a major development, and would include redrafting of section seven of *Volunteering: a code of good practice*. Volunteering England should ensure that quality accreditation and guidance for volunteering infrastructure reflect any changes.

Our consultations have shown that volunteering infrastructure organisations recognise the importance of the *Compact code on relations between government and the voluntary sector* and its associated codes, especially *Volunteering: a code of good practice*. In all of its work the volunteering infrastructure will work to implement and promote the use of the Compact.

Consultations have revealed the need for training specifically for the specialist skills required by staff within volunteering infrastructure organisations. It is recommended that training programmes are developed, and where possible accredited.

The volunteering infrastructure in England is a world leader; by continuing and building on its existing relationships with the other countries of the UK, within Europe and internationally it should consolidate and build on this position. In being a world leader the volunteering infrastructure in England should be seeking to support and encourage the development of volunteering infrastructure in other countries, whilst at the same time being willing to learn from the experience of others.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- Mapping to be undertaken to identify the roles undertaken by all volunteering infrastructure organisations, and this mapping exercise to be published.
- Areas of duplication in provision identified by the mapping exercise to be addressed by those organisations involved.
- A strategy to be developed for the provision of infrastructure support identified by the mapping exercise as not currently being provided.
- The value base for volunteering infrastructure to be promoted.
- A coherent national policy framework for volunteering to be prepared for consultation.
- A second edition of *Volunteering: a code of good practice* to be developed; consulted on; and prepared for publication and launch.

- A training programme for staff of volunteering infrastructure organisations to be developed, and funding, to include income generation, identified to deliver this.
- Training programme to be linked to existing accreditation processes where possible.
- Work to commence with the Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation to identify competencies in Volunteering Infrastructure Management, this to be linked to other competencies and qualifications within the voluntary and community, public and private sectors, and a strategy developed to develop this piece of work into approved qualifications.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- There should be growing awareness of the roles of different volunteering infrastructure organisations among policy makers, opinion formers and the sector.
- There should be growing awareness amongst the public about where to go to get appropriate support in accessing volunteering.
- Duplication in volunteering infrastructure provision begins to be addressed.
- Gaps in volunteering infrastructure provision begin to be filled.
- Memoranda of understanding between volunteering infrastructure organisations to be developed.
- The second edition of *Volunteering: a code of good practice* to be published and launched.
- A coherent national policy framework for volunteering to be consulted on, and the results of the consultation disseminated.
- Training programme for staff of volunteering infrastructure organisations to be launched.
- Agreement on National Occupational

Standards for staff of volunteering infrastructure organisations.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- There is clarity and awareness about the roles of different volunteering infrastructure organisations.
- Duplication in existing work has been addressed, and gaps filled.
- Work to be undertaken to identify any new gaps in provision.
- Memoranda of understanding between volunteering infrastructure organisations to be reviewed.
- Accredited training leading to qualifications available for staff of volunteering infrastructure organisations.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2014

- Gaps in provision identified in 2009 have been filled.
- Memoranda of understanding between volunteering infrastructure organisations to be reviewed.

Volunteering infrastructure – national

Since 2001 the national volunteering infrastructure has moved substantially towards a more strategic approach to delivery. This is reflected in the formation of the England Volunteering Forum and through the creation of Volunteering England.

It has been identified that the membership and remit of the England Volunteering Forum should be extended to meet the future needs of volunteering.

It is recommended that Volunteering England leads on the creation of an England Volunteering Development Council with clear terms of reference, memoranda of understanding and codes of conduct.

Members of the England Volunteering Development Council should develop close collaborative working practices through the establishment of formalised partnerships and strategic alliances.

The England Volunteering Development Council should work to see that the Volunteering Infrastructure Strategy actions and milestones are achieved.

The England Volunteering Development Council should ensure the effective, coherent and strategic delivery of the national volunteering infrastructure functions.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- A strategy is developed by the England Volunteering Development Council to address these issues, this to include on-going targets and review.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- The England Volunteering Development Council strategy is implemented.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- The England Volunteering Development Council strategy is reviewed.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2014

- The England Volunteering Development Council strategy is reviewed.

Volunteering infrastructure – regional

Recent work undertaken by both the government and the voluntary and community sector as part of the consultation on the government's infrastructure strategy for the voluntary and community sector identifies inadequate volunteering infrastructure support at a regional level.

Volunteering England research and consultations has shown there to be a need for a regional tier of volunteering infrastructure, and identifies this should be provided by the national volunteering infrastructure rather than through the creation of nine new organisations.

The regional volunteering infrastructure should be primarily engaged in strengthening local volunteering infrastructure by improving the quality of provision and ensuring consistent coverage. In the early stages of development this will mean working to see new areas of England provided with a volunteering infrastructure; working with existing agencies to reduce duplication and improve effective working; and furthering the adoption of the quality accreditation process as a tool for continuous improvement.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- Volunteering England to have commenced the implementation of the regional volunteering infrastructure, with at least one dedicated regional volunteering development officer in each region.
- A strategy for each region to be produced, this to include: ensuring coverage of all local authority areas by a volunteer development agency; reduction of duplication and improvements in working practices at a local level; 100% take-up of quality accreditation of volunteer development agencies and the associated use of the local volunteering infrastructure brand; and the funding required to provide developmental resources necessary to achieve this and deliver on the regional volunteering infrastructure functions as previously described.

- Each regional strategy to reflect the contents of the government's infrastructure strategy for the voluntary and community sector.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- Regional volunteering infrastructure in place, with key partnerships established, in each of the nine government regions.
- Strategy for each region implemented, funding to deliver work programmes coming from these secured, targets set for the year achieved.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- Regional volunteering infrastructure well established and delivering on all of its core functions.

Volunteering infrastructure – local

Work undertaken by both the government as part of its review of the voluntary and community sector infrastructure and Volunteering England in the preparation of this strategy identifies an unsustainable number of local volunteer development agencies and declining provision in rural areas as two major points of concern.

Volunteering England's research indicates that at a local level there should be fewer organisations, employing more staff in order to achieve more effective local penetration of volunteering infrastructure services. Staffing at a local level needs to increase and the footprint of access into communities needs to be extended, whilst at the same time the network of local volunteering infrastructure providers is getting smaller as the current organisation of local coverage is neither England-wide, reaching into local communities or sustainable – that is, there are too many local volunteer development agencies with inadequate resources to deliver services at a community level across England.

There should be a common consumer brand for volunteering infrastructure providers.

Support (organisational and financial) must be provided to enable the substantial changes indicated here to occur.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- A common consumer brand for the local volunteering infrastructure to have been developed and implemented, with 75% of quality accredited volunteer development agencies adopting its use.
- A development plan for each county/unitary authority/metropolitan area to be developed in close consultation with the appropriate Volunteering England Regional Volunteering Development Officer and implemented in line with the existing cross-sectoral analysis and reflecting this strategy, the government's infrastructure strategy for the voluntary and community sector and local authority strategic development plans.

- Resources needed to implement each county/unitary authority/metropolitan area strategy are identified, and funding to achieve the strategic aims secured.
- Undertake work to identify the roles and relationships between local and regional/national volunteering infrastructure in order to deliver the revised core functions.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- A common consumer brand for the local volunteering infrastructure implemented, with 90% of quality accredited volunteer development agencies adopting its use.
- Development plans in all counties/unitary authorities/metropolitan areas being implemented.
- Ongoing resources necessary to deliver county/unitary authority/metropolitan area strategies continuing to be provided.
- Partnership agreements in place to deliver the revised core functions locally with links to other local infrastructure providers (whether generalist, specialist or volunteering) and both regional and national volunteering infrastructure as appropriate.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- The common consumer brand for local volunteering infrastructure being used by all local volunteer development agencies.
- Development plans for all counties/unitary authorities/metropolitan areas have been implemented.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2014

- The vision for volunteering infrastructure locally is being delivered, and the vision statement being developed to deliver future improvements.

Quality standards for volunteering infrastructure

The responses to both the Active Community Unit and Volunteering England consultations have emphasised the importance of quality standards and impact assessment.

It is clear from the responses to the Volunteering England consultation that both volunteer development agencies and volunteer-involving organisations would like to see the process of quality accreditation become more sophisticated and be both tough and credible.

Volunteering England recognises that it is appropriate, given the proposed inter-relationship between the volunteering infrastructure locally, regionally and nationally within the revised core functions, that this process should be extended to regional and national volunteering infrastructure organisations.

There are currently no nationally agreed impact assessment processes for volunteering infrastructure; it is recommended that these are developed and implemented.

It is recommended that in developing this work the role of benchmarking the effective delivery of core functions be included.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- Quality accreditation process to be revised to reflect the redefined core functions of the volunteering infrastructure, and evidence requested to become more sophisticated.
- Quality accreditation to include performance measurement of quality of service by volunteering infrastructure to the public and to volunteer-involving organisations.
- Quality accreditation awards to be conditional on use of the new common consumer brand for local volunteering infrastructure.
- 75% of all local volunteering infrastructure organisations to be engaged in quality accreditation process.

- Research scoped to develop impact assessment and benchmarking measures for effective delivery of core functions by volunteering infrastructure organisations, and funding secured to develop this.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- 85% of all local volunteering infrastructure organisations to be engaged in quality accreditation process.
- Pilot work to develop impact assessment and benchmarking measures for effective delivery of core functions by volunteering infrastructure organisations to have commenced.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- Impact assessment and benchmarking measures for effective delivery of core functions for volunteering infrastructure organisations agreed and in place.
- Quality accreditation process has been further revised to incorporate all regional and national volunteering infrastructure functions, and evidence requested to become more sophisticated to include impact assessment and benchmarking measures for effective delivery of core functions of volunteering infrastructure.

- 100% of local volunteering infrastructure organisations to be quality-accredited.
- 75% of regional volunteering infrastructure providers to be quality-accredited.
- 75% of national volunteering infrastructure providers to be quality-accredited.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2014

- Quality accreditation, impact assessment and benchmarking measures are adopted by all volunteering infrastructure organisations locally, regionally and nationally.
- The quality standard is well known and respected, with the use of the local brand being identified with excellent service by the public and volunteer-involving organisations.

The role of volunteering initiatives

Volunteering England acknowledges that there will always be initiatives, whether from government, funders or the sector, to improve the quality and/or quantity and/or diversity of volunteering.

Volunteering England believes that in developing and delivering new initiatives it should always be remembered that volunteering is predominately a local activity, and as such the role and importance of the local volunteering infrastructure should be acknowledged, recognised and recompensed.

Research has identified the lack of a high-profile national annual volunteering award scheme. It is recommended that Volunteering England develops such an initiative to recognise volunteers, Volunteer Managers, Employee Volunteering, volunteering in health and social care, volunteering infrastructure and other areas that become apparent; the scheme should have regional and national awards and have local relevance. It is recommended that such an initiative should be funded through a mixture of sponsorship, grants and income generation.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- Work with government to establish a protocol for the appropriate involvement of volunteering infrastructure in initiatives to improve the quality, quantity or diversity of volunteering in England.
- Develop, gain funding for and launch a national annual volunteering award scheme.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- Identification, by the sector, of initiatives required to improve the quality, quantity or diversity of volunteering in England, and a strategy developed to take these ideas forward.
- First national volunteering awards to be made.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- The sector is leading on initiatives to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of volunteering in England, and is at the same time influencing others in the development and delivery of their initiatives to deliver in these areas.
- Annual national volunteering awards to be widely recognised.

Funding

Volunteering is freely given but is not cost free – and there needs to be a funding framework to support all of this activity.

There is a need for a strategic funding framework for volunteering infrastructure locally, regionally and nationally.

The resource requirements for local volunteering infrastructure providers should be related to size of the local population, demographics, geography, local economic factors and the evolution of the local voluntary and community sector.

The volunteering infrastructure needs to identify which existing services can be charged for, and areas for new income-generating services to be developed.

Support should be given to enable the volunteering infrastructure to develop new and sustainable funding streams.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2005

- Work with national and local government, local strategic partnerships and statutory bodies being undertaken to identify benchmarks and frameworks for funding of the local volunteering infrastructure, including clarity about the outputs and outcomes that can be expected from investment and funding.
- Identify existing exemplars of funding of volunteering infrastructure organisations by national and local government, local strategic partnerships and statutory bodies; produce a case study for each of these; and publish and disseminate the resulting documentation.
- Identify existing and potential volunteering infrastructure services for which charges can be made, and establish a process to undertake feasibility studies on these.

- Examine the implications of the government's infrastructure strategy for the voluntary and community sector in relation to charging for infrastructure services and ensure that this informs the process of developing services that can be charged for.
- Launch the Employee Volunteering Toolkit for volunteer development agencies, which will contain a variety of income-generating ideas in this area of work where there is substantial potential for developing markets.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2006

- Benchmarks and frameworks for the funding of the local volunteering infrastructure in place.
- Value for money analysis of local volunteering infrastructure organisations undertaken as part of benchmarking and framework process, results of this work to be disseminated.
- Undertake feasibility studies into charging for services provided by volunteering infrastructure, and evaluate these pieces of work.
- Gain agreement from across the volunteering infrastructure sector about levels of charges based on the feasibility and evaluation processes.

Action and/or milestones achieved by March 2009

- Funding tied to benchmarks and frameworks now being provided for the quality-accredited local volunteering infrastructure.
- All volunteering infrastructure organisation are funded from a variety of sources, including a variety of statutory agencies, income generation, sponsorship and grantmaking trusts.

Methodology

Where new ideas are being developed Volunteering England will seek to establish pilot projects to trial methodology and become exemplars for other volunteering infrastructure organisations.

Where existing ideas are to be developed and disseminated Volunteering England will seek to work with the agencies that have established the work in order for them to become exemplars for other volunteering infrastructure organisations.

In areas of specific expertise in volunteering infrastructure function delivery, Volunteering England will identify Centres of Excellence, especially amongst local volunteer development agencies.

Volunteering England will provide resourcing (both from its own time and in securing additional funding) to enable the work detailed in this strategy to be undertaken.

An annual review of progress against the strategy will be undertaken. The review will lead to further development of the actions and milestones, together with identification of other areas for development.

Appendix 1: Background

Over the past four years there has been a growing discussion about the purpose, role and structure of the infrastructure to support volunteering in England.

In April 2001 the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux published *Going the extra mile: the specification for an ideal local volunteer development agency* at the same time launching an associated quality accreditation process of the core functions it described. In October of the same year *Volunteering: a code of good practice* was published as part of the *Compact code on relations between government and the voluntary sector*. Together these two developments for the first time codified the expectations and functions of the volunteering infrastructure in England.

During the latter half of 2001 there were discussions between a number of England-wide organisations with a major role in delivering national volunteering infrastructure functions. As a result of these discussions the England Volunteering Forum was formed under the chairmanship of Christopher Spence.

Between autumn 2001 and spring 2002 the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux undertook a major strategic review which resulted in a clarification of its vision, mission, aims and objectives and led to an organisational re-branding as Volunteer Development England.

During the strategic review process it became clear that there was a major crisis in the funding of the local volunteering infrastructure. As a result of representations to government the Emergency Fund for Volunteer Bureaux and Councils for Voluntary Service 2002/03 was provided – the first time any government had been involved in the core funding of existing local volunteering infrastructure organisations.

The National Centre for Volunteering and Volunteer Development England have had a strategic alliance for a number of years, however no major action had ever been taken to turn the agreement into practical expression. Following strategic reviews in both organisations a joint meeting of the

Executive Committees was convened in April 2002. This meeting identified a number of ways in which the strategic alliance could become demonstrated, and the establishment of a regional volunteering infrastructure was at the heart of this development.

Over the summer of 2002 it became clear that there was an underlying question: was the volunteering infrastructure at a national level best served through the National Centre for Volunteering and Volunteer Development England working as separate entities? At the same time the Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering were seeking a closer strategic alliance or merger with a major national volunteering infrastructure organisation. In September 2002 the boards of the three organisations accepted a proposal from the three Chairs and Chief Executives that they should combine to create a new volunteer development agency for England. This proposal was put to a six months consultation process before being approved by each organisation.

In September 2002 the Treasury and Home Office published *The role of the voluntary and community sector in public service delivery: a cross cutting review* which identified the need for appropriate infrastructure provision locally, regionally and nationally. This was followed in December by *Next steps in volunteering and giving: a discussion document* a further joint publication by these two departments of state.

Following these publications, Lord Filkin, then Home Office minister with responsibility for the voluntary and community sector began a process of consultation with the sector that led to the publication of *Recruiting and supporting volunteers: outcomes of a joint government and voluntary sector working party* which formed an action plan for the Active Community Unit.

In September 2003 the Home Office published *Voluntary and community sector infrastructure: a consultation document*. At the time of writing this book the resulting strategy for the development of the voluntary and community sector infrastructure has not been finalised and published.

Throughout this period staff at both the National Centre for Volunteering and Volunteer Development England have been discussing issues of infrastructure support for volunteering with a wide range of stakeholders. Volunteer Development England has also used the pages of *Action* to raise key issues.

In October 2003 Volunteering England published *Volunteering infrastructure: shaping the future* a series of three discussion documents which formed the basis for a wide consultation to inform the development of its strategy for capacity building and infrastructure development and responses to government consultations. In addition to a number of regional events, Volunteer Development England hosted a think tank weekend at Longhirst Hall, Northumberland in November 2003 as a part of the process.

In December 2003 Volunteering England published its response to the government's infrastructure review and *Volunteering infrastructure: shaping the future – a briefing on current thinking for comment*. This publication was an opportunity for results of the first two months of consultation to be disseminated and for further thinking to be developed.

In February 2004 the Volunteering England Capacity Building and Infrastructure Committee considered the vision and strategy prior to these being presented to the Volunteering England Trustee Board.

In February 2004 the Volunteering England Trustee Board approved in principle this vision and strategy.

In April 2004 a pre-publication draft of the core functions and strategy was presented to the Volunteering England conference for volunteering infrastructure organisations.

Appendix 2: Infrastructure functions provided as part of a larger organisation

In many cases organisations, in addition to their primary purpose, carry out infrastructure support for the wider voluntary and community sectors. This can provide economies of scale, but can also bring with it issues about organisational focus. The following guidelines have been produced in order to assist in effective delivery of infrastructure functions:

Basic principles:

- Agencies delivering specific infrastructure functions must have a distinct and discrete identity within the host organisation.
- The infrastructure agency must deliver the core functions prescribed/required by membership bodies, the Compact and the Compact Codes.
- Provision of the infrastructure function should be the primary focus of the integrated agency.
- The integrated agency delivering specific infrastructure functions must be:
 - Effectively resourced.
 - Discretely resourced.
 - Have evidence of a separate budget head.
- The integrated agency delivering specific infrastructure functions must subscribe to any nationally recognised brand for specific infrastructure functions and use/display such nationally recognised branding locally.
- The integrated agency must be working with a nationally recognised Quality System and either been awarded, or working towards Quality Accreditation for specific infrastructure functions where this is available.
- The integrated agency delivering specific infrastructure functions must have a formal Advisory Group within the host organisations structure.

- The integrated agency's Advisory Group will include at least one representative of the Trustee Board of the host organisation, who in turn reports to the Trustee Board on the activities of the integrated agency.

General principles covering integrated agencies in membership of Volunteering England:

- Volunteering England believes that there is no single best option in relation the delivery of local volunteering infrastructure functions through either an independent or integrated agency – whatever works best works best.
- Historically, most host agencies have been Councils for Voluntary Service although YMCAs, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Rural Community Councils and others have also taken on this role. In the future this will change, as there are likely to be a range of host organisations that have integrated agencies delivering local volunteering infrastructure functions.
- Volunteering England is the membership body for local volunteer development agencies. Volunteering England has responsibility for developing a coherent volunteering infrastructure strategy, including the setting, accreditation and delivery of volunteering infrastructure functions locally, regionally and nationally.

Appendix 3: Summary of local volunteer development agency statistics 2000-2003

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number of volunteer development agencies	358	347	350	325
Enquiries from potential volunteers to volunteer development agencies				
Total number	186,518	217,734	326,550	374,653
Average number per volunteer development agencies	521	628	933	1153
Enquiries by gender (%)				
Women	56	61	61	61
Men	44	39	39	39
Enquiries by age (%)				
<18	11	10	10	10
18-24	17	18	24	19
25-34	22	25	21	22
35-50	22	23	18	22
51-65	19	17	18	19
65+	9	7	9	8
Enquiries by employment status (%)				
Unemployed	30	29	29	28
Employed	23	26	24	24
Non-employed	15	13	15	15
Student	18	19	18	19
Retired	14	13	14	14
Enquiries by ethnicity (%)				
Asian	4	6	6	6
Black	2	6	8	5
White	90	79	78	82
Other	4	9	8	7

Appendix 3: Summary

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Income				
Total core funding to volunteer development agencies (£)				7,976,150
Average core funding per volunteer development agencies (£)				25,542
Total income to volunteer development agencies including project funding (£)	18,554,066	23,807,220	28,737,381	
Average income per VDA including project funding (£)	51,827	68,609	83,098	
Volunteer development agencies by locality (%)				
Volunteer development agencies serving inner city/urban communities		46	48	
Volunteer development agencies serving smaller town communities		32	32	
Volunteer development agencies serving rural communities		22	20	
Volunteer involving organisations registered with volunteer development agencies				
Total registered	75,538		70,350	58,500
Average registered per volunteer development agency	211		201	180
Staffing full time equivalents in volunteer development agencies				
Core funded		507	630	455
Average core funded per volunteer development agency				1.4
Project funded		451	657	585
Average project funded per volunteer development agency				1.8
Volunteers involved in volunteer development agency core functions		1,258	1,717	
Volunteers involved in volunteer development agency projects		11,146	9,569	

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