

# TELFORD AND WREKIN CO-OPERATIVE COMMISSION

## REPORT OF THE VOLUNTEERING SUB GROUP

2 MARCH 2012

### 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the work of the Co-operative Commission sub group on Volunteering and to set out the proposed recommendations to be considered by the Co-operative Commission Assembly.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 A more joined up strategic approach is taken in relation to developing and delivering volunteering activity within the Borough, and that a **Strategic Volunteering Group** with representatives from voluntary public and private sector organisations is established.
- 2.2 That the Strategic Volunteering Group has an initial focus on developing a coordinated approach to developing volunteering around 4 key areas;
- Promoting volunteering  
Recognising and Valuing Volunteers  
Promoting and Sharing Good Practice  
Reducing barriers to Volunteering
- 2.3 That the Co-operative Commission Assembly/Cabinet agrees the actions proposed in Section 3 of this report, and that these actions form part of the initial work programme for the Strategic Volunteering Group, or are actioned by Telford and Wrekin Council as appropriate.
- 2.4 That the Strategic Volunteering Group considers ways in which the impact of the proposed actions and the work of the group is monitored and evaluated.
- 2.5 That Telford and Wrekin Council develops a Strategic Volunteering Policy across the organisation to ensure consistency for volunteers that support the delivery of Council services.

### 3.0 INFORMATION

#### 3.1 **Role of Volunteering**

There is an agreed recognition that volunteering makes a major contribution to all aspects of life in the local community and supports the delivery of services in both the voluntary and public sector. Volunteering brings benefits to both the individuals that volunteer in relation to building confidence, developing skills and building social networks, and to the organisations that are supported by volunteers, many of which wouldn't be able to operate without the input of volunteers.

The Co-operative Council Commission meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September identified volunteering as a theme for one of its working groups along with some of the issues the group should consider including;

- The need to have a more joined up approach to coordinating activity
- Maximising opportunities through communication and engagement
- Developing the skills of Young People
- Promoting civic participation and volunteering

### 3.2 Developing Key Areas of Focus

The volunteering sub-group mainly comprised of voluntary sector organisations and groups with experience of volunteering, these groups included large organisations such as CVS along with smaller resident led groups such as Brookside Improvement Group. The full list of group members is attached in appendix(i).

In order to identify the key areas of focus and agreed outcomes the group considered a range of information including existing good practice, direct experience from the organisations represented and research relating to volunteering. The group also considered the West Midlands Volunteering Development Council report 'Volunteering Matters in the West Midlands 2010', which involved an audit of activity carried out across the West Midlands in relation to volunteering, this document identified a number of gaps in relation to volunteering practice within Telford and Wrekin. This information along with the direct experience of the group members was used to form the key areas of focus for the group.

The Co-operative Council Community Forum meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December held 3 workshops to look at issues relating to volunteering. A member of the Commission sub-group attended this session, and the feedback from the workshops was used to develop the final recommendations. The key areas of focus were shared at these sessions and the workshop participants supported these key areas.

### 3.3 Rationale for Key Areas of Focus and Supporting Actions

The agreed overarching vision for volunteering in Telford and Wrekin as agreed by the group was to **develop and retain a diverse range of enthusiastic and motivated volunteers within Telford and Wrekin, who feel valued and are able to use and develop their skills through volunteering.**

The key areas of focus and proposed supporting actions have been developed as follows in order to support achieving this vision. Appendix (ii) provides a summary of the rationale for the key areas of focus, desired impact and further suggested actions.

#### **Promoting Volunteering**

Desired Impact:

- Raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering
- Increase number of volunteers
- Broaden the range of individuals who volunteer to ensure representative of the community
- Improve the image of volunteering and voluntary organisations

The group identified the need to have a consistent approach to promoting volunteering across the Borough. It was recognised that individual organisations carried out some good work in relation to promoting volunteering, however a greater impact could be achieved through a joint campaign.

It was felt that there were still some misconceptions around volunteering and a need to develop a more diverse group of volunteers, particularly in relation to encouraging Young People to volunteer.

#### **Recommended Supporting Actions**

- Develop a joint campaign across the Borough to promote the benefits of volunteering based on case studies of volunteers and those receiving services including a coordinated approach to celebrating 'National Volunteers Week'.
- Develop links from organisation's websites, including Telford and Wrekin Council, to the national volunteering website 'Do It' to promote volunteering opportunities
- Create a single point to access volunteering opportunities on Telford and Wrekin Council's website to promote volunteering opportunities and the impact of volunteering

## **Recognising and Valuing Volunteers**

Desired Impact:

- Ensure volunteers feel valued
- Improve retention of volunteers
- Promote the benefits of volunteering to potential volunteers via 'word of mouth'

The group identified recognising and valuing volunteers as one of the key ways of reducing the barriers to volunteering. Organisations identified that some volunteers do not see themselves in a volunteering capacity, and others can feel 'undervalued' which can lead to issues around retention. Individual organisations have their own mechanisms for acknowledging the contribution of volunteers and may have their own 'reward' system. However, it was felt that there was a need to acknowledge the large contribution that volunteers make to Telford and Wrekin as a whole and that this could be done through a joint volunteer award ceremony and through a greater celebration of national volunteer's week.

### **Recommended Supporting Actions**

- Hold a joint annual ceremony to acknowledge and celebrate volunteers and their achievements

## **Promoting and Sharing Good Practice**

Desired Impact:

- Improving practice by sharing lessons learned between organisations
- Reduce duplication and improve effectiveness for organisations and volunteers
- Increase number of volunteers

It was recognised that there is already good practice taking place across the Borough and that some mechanisms already exist to promote and share good practice including the Telford and Wrekin Volunteer Organisers Forum (supported by CVS) and iVolunteer (a social action website and interactive tool that connects voluntary organisations, volunteers and charities). However, a study in 2010 by the Institute for Volunteering found that managing volunteers is usually part of a wider role and that 56% of those with responsibility for co-ordinating volunteers spend less than a quarter of their time doing this. Telford and Wrekin Volunteer Centre highlights areas for development within the organisations it supports and also identifies examples of good practice.

There was a perception that there currently isn't consistency in the support to volunteers that are involved in the delivery of Telford and Wrekin Council services, it is therefore proposed that the Council develops an overarching policy in relation to volunteering as outlined in recommendation 2.5.

Further development of the Telford and Wrekin Volunteer Organisers Forum and promotion of iVolunteer were seen by the group as 2 effective ways of promoting good practice. Also, the promotion of the services to be provided through CVS at their new 'hub' was also seen to be a good opportunity to promote good practice, further information relating to the role of the CVS Volunteer Centre is included in appendix (iii).

### **Recommended Supporting Actions**

- Improve networking between organisations through the development of the existing **Telford and Wrekin Volunteer Organisers Forum** (supported by CVS) and the promotion of iVolunteer (interactive website)
- Promote the CVS hub to organisations when established
- Share good practice in relation to employer supported volunteering and corporate social responsibility as developed by Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
- Develop a web-based guide to resources available to support good practice

## **Reducing Barriers to Volunteering for Individuals and Organisations**

Desired Impact:

- Reduce the potential barriers to volunteering
- Reduce the potential barriers to organisations using volunteers
- Increase the number of volunteers and number of organisations working with volunteers

There are seen to be a range of barriers to volunteering that can relate to organisations, individuals or to the systems and processes that volunteers need to adhere to before they can take up their volunteering role. Anecdotal evidence from the organisations within the group also identified a range of barriers including the costs and time required for appropriate checks to be carried out on volunteers. Further information relating to the barriers to volunteering are included in appendix (iv). A number of the other recommendations also have the potential to contribute towards reducing these barriers; however, a simple action that the Council could take to support volunteering across the Borough is to assist with Criminal Record Bureau checks at a reduced cost. It is also recommended that a further piece of work is carried out with organisations and residents within the Borough to identify the barriers to volunteering locally.

### **Recommended Supporting Actions**

- That the Council carry out CRB checks on behalf of small voluntary organisations at a reduced cost (£5). The Council currently carries out CRB checks on behalf of a range of organisations for a cost of £30, this current charge applies to both businesses and voluntary organisations.
- That research is carried out locally to identify the barriers to volunteering for individuals and within organisations, and appropriate actions are developed to address these barriers (through the Strategic Volunteering Group)

## **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The group agreed that there is already good practice in relation to volunteering across Telford and Wrekin, local case studies are included in appendix (v). The Borough has a wide range of organisations that are supported by volunteers. These organisations vary in size including large national voluntary organisations, locally based organisations and small residents groups. The valuable role that volunteers play in supporting sports clubs and public sector services was also recognised.

There was recognition that financial resources are limited and that volunteering in the Borough could be more effective if a more coordinated approach was taken. The recommendations outlined above are seen as an initial step towards improving the coordination of activity and sharing of resources and good practice. A key challenge for the group was accessing reliable data on the number of volunteers within the Borough. It was recognised that although this information would be useful, particularly in relation to monitoring the outcomes of the recommendations, collation of this data is challenging. It was suggested that the Strategic Volunteering Group consider ways in which the impact of the recommendations could be measured.

## **5.0 OVERLAP WITH OTHER COMMISSION SUB GROUPS**

- Employment, Skills & the Economy – the importance of volunteering as a pathway into work.

## Appendix i - Members of Co-operative Commission Volunteering Sub Group

Anna Brennand	Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
Jan Ellis	TCAT
Cllr Rae Evans	Telford & Wrekin Council
Rose Gregory	Donnington Lifelong Learning Centre
Ann Johnson	Federation of Small Business
Mick Lloyd	Council for Voluntary Service
Cllr Jim Loveridge	Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council
Mike Lowe	Dawley Regeneration Partnership
Tina Rogers	Brookside Improvement Group
Hannah Roy	Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust
Paul Shuttleworth	Radio Presenter
Cllr Angela McClements	Telford & Wrekin Council
Beverly Harris	Telford & Wrekin Volunteer Centre (CVS)
Ella Sips	Council for Voluntary Service
Jayne Stevens	PODS Telford
Kathryn Poli	Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust

### Support Officers

Rachael Jones	Telford and Wrekin Council
Parvinder Chana	Telford and Wrekin Council

## Appendix ii - Co-operative Commission Working Group – Volunteering- Overview

Area of Focus	Recommendation	Rationale	Desired Impact	Supporting Actions
<b>Overarching recommendations</b>	<p>Establish a Strategic Volunteering Group to look at the 4 key areas below.</p> <p>Develop a joint approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the recommendations on volunteering across the Borough</p>	<p>There is existing good practice within the Borough, however organisations don't currently plan together and there could be increased effectiveness by identifying areas where resources could be joined up.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more strategic approach to developing volunteering, to enhance the sharing of resources and information and to more effectively measure the impact of volunteering.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult Chief Officers Group and Local Strategic Partnership on proposal and to agree role and membership of the group.</li> <li>• Develop terms of reference for group and agree coordination arrangements</li> </ul>
<b>Promoting Volunteering</b>	<p>Develop a joined up approach to promoting volunteering opportunities and the benefits and outcomes of volunteering.</p>	<p>Resources are limited within organisations and a more joined up approach should lead to a greater impact in recruiting volunteers, currently organisations promote volunteering on an individual basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the image of volunteering</li> <li>• Increase numbers and retention of volunteers</li> <li>• Broaden the diversity of volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through Strategic Volunteering Group develop a joint campaign linked to national volunteer's week (June 2012) and throughout the year</li> <li>• Improve communication around volunteering opportunities by linking to 'Do it' website and the Council developing an area on it's website for volunteering.</li> </ul>

Area of Focus	Recommendation	Rationale	Desired Impact	Supporting Actions
<b>Recognising and Valuing Volunteers</b>	Develop a joint annual celebration event to recognise the contribution of volunteers	There is a need to promote the contribution of volunteers across the Borough, show the diversity of opportunities available and support volunteers to feel valued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support volunteers to feel valued</li> <li>• Promote range of volunteering opportunities available</li> <li>• Increase the numbers and diversity of people volunteering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through Strategic Volunteering Group develop a joint celebration event linked to national volunteer's week (June 2012) and throughout the year</li> <li>• Share good practice through Volunteer Organiser's Forum on recognising and valuing volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Promoting and Sharing Good Practice</b>	<p>Improve the existing networks for sharing good practice, strengthen links between organisations that are supported by volunteers</p> <p>Develop a consistent policy for volunteers supporting the delivery of Telford and Wrekin Services</p>	<p>Good practice already exists in the Borough but some organisations do not currently access the support available.</p> <p>There is a perception that the experience for volunteers supporting Council Services isn't consistent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve volunteering experience for individuals</li> <li>• Improve practice across the Borough</li> <li>• Reduce duplication and enable the sharing of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further develop the existing Telford and Wrekin Volunteer Organisers Forum</li> <li>• Promote the use of iVolunteer</li> <li>• Promote the CVS hub</li> <li>• Develop a web-based guide to resources available to support good practice</li> <li>• Collate information on practice across the Council and develop an appropriate overarching policy</li> </ul>
<b>Reducing the Barriers to Volunteering</b>	Gain an understanding of local barriers for volunteers and organisations and to take a strategic approach to	The cost of CRB checks was identified as a key barrier for some small organisations. There were seen to be misconceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the barriers to volunteering for individuals and organisations</li> <li>• Increase the number of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council to consider carrying out CRB checks on behalf of small organisations at reduced cost</li> </ul>

Area of Focus	Recommendation	Rationale	Desired Impact	Supporting Actions
	dealing with these	around the bureaucracy relating to volunteering, these could be addressed through sharing good practice	volunteers and organisations working with volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Volunteering Group to coordinate research into barriers locally, identify actions to remove barriers and share good practice</li> </ul>





The Volunteer Centre is the public face of Telford & Wrekin Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). It supports individuals into volunteering, as well as meeting the infrastructure support needs of the voluntary sector. As the only volunteer development agency, within the borough of Telford & Wrekin, it has to meet 6 core functions:-

### **Six Core Functions**

#### **1. Brokerage**

- offers guidance to individuals from all sections of the community on volunteering by offering face to face interviews, telephone interviews, email etc
- matches individual's skills and their motivation for volunteering to available volunteering opportunities
- signposts and refers volunteers
- inputs local volunteering opportunities onto an internal database (Vbase) and onto the national volunteering data base ( [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk) )
- ensures that information on the database is current and up to date by regularly reviewing the information with the sector.

#### **2. Marketing**

- promotes the many benefits of volunteering to all sections of the community by displays, visits to groups, and by the use of social networking such as facebook  
<http://www.facebook.com/VolCentreTelford?ref=ts>
- provides a variety of ways to find out about volunteering opportunities:- one to one interviews, telephone interviews, talks to groups, posting opportunities onto its own website <http://www.telfordvc.tandwcvcs.org.uk/> and the national volunteering website [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)

#### **3. Developing Volunteering Opportunities**

- increases diversity and quantity of local volunteering by working with organisations to create more flexible and varied opportunities.

#### **4. Good Practice Development**

- provides a local source of information about relevant legislation
- provides information and training on good practice for volunteers. All trainers are qualified to at least PTLLS (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector) and the Volunteer Centre Manager is a member of the IFL (institute for Learning)
- facilitates networking and partnership working amongst Volunteer Managers including the Telford & Wrekin Volunteer Organisers Forum and the group on the Social Action network i-volunteer  
<http://www.i-volunteer.org.uk/groups/telford-wrekin-volunteer-organisers-forum/>

#### **5. Campaigning**

- provides comment to decision-makers on the significance of volunteering in effecting positive change and improving the quality of life

- campaigns against barriers to volunteering

## 6. Strategic Development

- participates in local and regional partnerships to ensure volunteering is considered in planning and strategic thinking. The Volunteer Centre manager is Chair of the regional Volunteer Centre Network and sits on local partnerships such as the Recruitment and Redundancy Group, Telford 2012, The County Sports partnership, Greenshoots, Parks for People, Community Learning Partnership.
- The Volunteer Centre is currently developing a skill based Employee Volunteering Scheme to generate unrestricted funds for the brokerage function.

### Staffing Levels

The Volunteer Centre currently operates with two members of staff:-

#### **Post 1. Volunteer Centre Manager 28hrs**

The Volunteer Centre Manager has overall responsibility for the 6 core functions and for the management of the Volunteer Centre, its staff and volunteers and has direct operational responsibility for 4 functions, namely:

- Good practice development
- Development of volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development

#### **Post 2. Client Information & Advice Officer 18hrs**

This member of staff undertakes the 2 core functions of:

- Brokerage of volunteering opportunities
- Marketing of volunteering

#### **Volunteer 1. Customer Services Volunteer**

This role involves following up after the client has visited the Volunteer Centre to see if they are currently volunteering or require further assistance.

#### **Volunteer 2. Data Base Volunteer**

This role involves regularly reviewing and updating the data on Vbase

In addition to this the Volunteer centre receives 10 hours admin support from Telford & Wrekin CVS

### Quality Marks

The Volunteer Centre and Telford and Wrekin CVS have a number of quality marks in recognition of the comprehensive support they offer to the voluntary sector

### Volunteering England Quality Assurance

Telford & Wrekin Volunteer Centre is a Volunteer Development Agency member of Volunteering England. In order to maintain this membership the effectiveness of the six core functions is measured every three years through a robust quality assurance process. This entitles the use of the dynamic “V” logo as a visible symbol of an accredited Volunteer Centre to the community.



Telford and Wrekin Volunteer Centre received 100% for the measurement of each core function. The Volunteering England assessor wrote;

*“This is an excellent portfolio that has been thoughtfully constructed with relevant and appropriate evidence. It demonstrates what can be achieved by a small individual VC. The evidence points to a well respected VC that has good relationships with the organisations that it serves and who are well represented in local and regional fora. All core functions are well evidenced. This is particularly noteworthy as the Business Plan identifies that 90% of VC time is spent undertaking the brokerage function. The VC should be proud of what it has achieved.”*

**Source: Report on Telford & Wrekin Quality Assessment December 2010**

### **The Matrix**

The Volunteer Centre also holds the Matrix quality assurance mark for Information Advice and Guidance.



*“The Volunteer centre has effective systems in place to ensure clients and organisations receive the best support and service they can offer. “*

**Source: Matrix Accreditation review report February 2010**

### **Quality Marks for Telford & Wrekin CVS**

Telford & Wrekin CVS has also achieved the **PQASSO** quality assurance system to ensure that the whole organisation adopts a continuous cycle of monitoring, evaluation and improvement. It has also been awarded the **NAVCA Quality Award** (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action) after a recent assessment process. This is a rigorous, externally audited, evaluation of the quality of services offered to voluntary and community groups by local support and development organisations that are members of NAVCA. The NAVCA approved award is assessed against the NAVCA Performance Standards and once awarded, the Quality Award is valid for three years.

## **Appendix iv - Barriers for Organisations/Groups**

- Lack of funding for organisations/groups to recognise and support volunteers
- Few organisations with a dedicated Volunteer Manager
- Engaging with people in rural areas
- Reluctance of some volunteers as they have been signposted to volunteering from another agency
- Limited resources to support volunteers
- Insurance issues for younger people causes barriers for groups/orgs to take on young people
- Organisations not ready for an influx of volunteers
- Organisations not ready for developing additional opportunities
- Stereotypes associated with volunteering
- People not wanting to do something for nothing but not realising the benefits of volunteering
- Space in order to accommodate volunteers
- Many organisations are not fully resourced or skilled in providing meaningful personal development for volunteers
- Taking on volunteers can be costly as once they are keen to develop they move on to paid work quite quickly
- Difficult to get volunteers to commit long term

## **Barriers for Individuals**

- Opportunities through training/education not readily available to help people understand what volunteering is
- No progression pathway after the volunteering opportunity is completed
- Lack of funding opportunities to kick start volunteering opportunities and the support related to this
- People not being aware of the opportunities available and where
- A mismatch between the opportunities desired by the volunteer and the opportunities available
- Over the top red tape and bureaucracy to approve volunteers
- Peer pressure from other young people that stops those interested in volunteering pursuing opportunities
- Financial/ constraints that stops people from volunteering
- Lack of confidence stops people from volunteering
- Opportunities not available in the times to suit volunteers if they are in other paid employment
- People who don't 'conform' aren't encouraged to volunteer

## Appendix v - Volunteering - Case Studies

<p><b>Name of organisation/group:</b>Telford and the Wrekin Citizens Advice Bureau</p>
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens Advice service helps people to resolve their legal, money and other problems through information and advice and by influencing policy makers. We provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to anyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination. Service aims are:</li> <li>• To provide the advice people need for the problems they face</li> </ul> <p>Improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives</p>
<p><b>Volunteer Outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment – skills gained as a volunteer adviser are transferable to a number of jobs in customer services, care, advice etc</li> <li>• General work experience and development of skills and knowledge including IT skills.</li> <li>• Work experience for Law graduates and under-graduates – CAB adviser qualification reduces length of legal training contracts</li> <li>• Enhanced confidence, self esteem, self-worth etc</li> <li>• Sense of purpose, achievement and fulfillment. Making good use of skills and experience gained from work and life in general. Sometimes making something positive from negative experiences.</li> <li>• New friends &amp; sense of belonging</li> <li>• New challenges</li> <li>• Sense of perspective</li> <li>• Relief of boredom</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organisation/group Outcome:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased capacity – use of volunteers allows us to help many more clients. We have volunteer advisers, receptionists, admin support, social policy workers etc. We wouldn't have an 'open door' service without volunteers</li> <li>• Wider range of life experiences, languages, specific knowledge etc that contribute to the total pool of organisational knowledge, learning and development</li> <li>• Diversity – interesting and stimulating working environment</li> <li>• Ability to understand and represent the whole of the community – and be seen to represent the whole community</li> <li>• Increased efficiency – making most cost-effective and efficient use of paid 'expertise'</li> <li>• Caring and committed work force that is driven by client need</li> <li>• Skilled pool of potential employees</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lessons Learned:</b></p> <p>The role of the volunteer adviser is very demanding – takes a long time to train and develop experience and is always somewhat nerve-racking. We know that volunteers need thorough training and consistent 'hands on' support from a paid supervisor. Volunteer advisers do not generally like working in isolation for example</p>

at outreach. We know that if good support is not available for volunteer advisers the quality of advice provided for clients drops.

- The volunteer adviser role is not suitable for the short-term volunteer. It takes at least a year of 6 – 10 hours per week to gain the adviser qualification and at least 6 hours per week to maintain skills level required. Therefore our potential volunteer pool is limited.
- Cost of training volunteer advisers is high – approx £2,500 per volunteer. We need to ensure that the organization is getting something back for this investment. This means we have to be selective in taking on new volunteers – we don't have the resources to take on short-term volunteers looking for a few weeks work experience.

**What Works:**

Essential that all staff and trustees understand and value volunteering. No 'us and them' attitudes. Helps if all paid staff have some experience of being a volunteer themselves as understanding volunteering is not easily taught.

Flexibility to match volunteers needs with organizational needs. Finding ways to harness what volunteers can offer in order to provide benefits for clients within the organizational framework.

Need to understand that volunteering is not a gift – it is an exchange. Find out what the volunteer wants to achieve from their volunteering and be clear and honest about whether or not the organization can deliver this.

Making sure that volunteers have meaningful roles that give them job satisfaction and real sense of worth without creating too much pressure – getting this balance right by providing plenty of support.

Keeping volunteers informed about the whole organizational picture not just the issues that directly affect their volunteering. Good, effective communication

Developing a sense of 'ownership' – volunteers need direct links with management and Trustees in order to feel involved and empowered to contribute fully to the organisation.

**Pathways:**

The training and experience is the most important thing that we provide and is highly regarded by potential employers. We also provide references for current volunteers. We advertise our own vacancies amongst volunteers and other CAB vacancies as they arise.

We don't have spare resources to provide help with CV's, interview practice, job-search etc and it is not what our charity funding is provided for so could be classed as misuse of charity resources if were to do so.

However volunteers can have free access to the internet for job-searching and volunteers and staff often assist other volunteers in their own time.

**Numbers of Volunteers:**

Approx 80 excluding Trustees.

**Additional Information:**

Two of our volunteers have been offered full-time jobs in the past week. Whilst we are delighted for them they will be sadly missed by colleagues here and our clients.

We are concerned that in the current economic and political environment there is a growing dependence on volunteers whilst at the same time the potential pool of volunteers is diminishing through rising retirement age and changes to welfare benefits. There is a distinct shift to short-term volunteering for work experience which does not work cost-effectively for highly skilled volunteering roles such as CAB advisers. Thus our volunteer costs are rocketing just to maintain our current levels. As the funding diminishes where are the long-term volunteers and the funding for recruitment and training going to come from to develop volunteers to take on even more demanding roles currently provided by paid staff. This, for me, is the most significant and pressing issue.