

Volunteer Centre Forum Notes
27th October 2009

Attendees from:

A4U
Age Concern
British Red Cross
Heart of England in Bloom
Home Start
Madeley Community Orchard
NACRO

Pets as Therapy
RAF Museum Cosford
Shropshire MIND
Stirchley Thrift Shop
Telford & Wrekin CAB
Telford & Wrekin CVS
Wrekin Riders BMX Club

Apologies:

Age Concern Trading
Barnardo's Bride by Appointment
Chums
Independent Age
MEA
No Panic
One Stop Shop
Severn Gorge

Shropshire Child Contact Centre
SOVA
Telford Christian Council
Telford Gov
Telford PCT NHS
Transport CVS
West Midlands Ambulance Service

Aim of the Forum

Aim of the Forum - Being a volunteer organiser/supervisor can be a very demanding role. The aim of this forum is to give each other support, information and to share our successes and failures so that we can learn from each other. It is also the opportunity to receive informal training and updates on the world of Volunteer Management.

The forum can also be seen as a force for change as together we can influence local and national policy on issues that affect volunteers and volunteering.

If you would like specific issues covered in future forums please contact Beverly on: -

☎ 01952 291350 or ✉ beverlyharris@tandwcvcs.org.uk

Updating

The Volunteer Centre is constantly updating its data base to ensure that the information we hold is accurate and reflects a true picture of your volunteer program. Please let us know of any changes. For example;

- If you have sufficient volunteers
- If you urgently require more
- If any details change in your program - times needed, venues, training schedule
- If there are any changes in your contact details
- If you have any new opportunities

Impact of the Recession

Numbers of visits to the volunteer centre have increased substantially over the last year due to the recession. Telford & Wrekin is not unique in this. Volunteering England reports that;

Nearly 90% of volunteer centres' in England saw an increase in inquiries over the six months to March

It also found of those centres' polled, about three-quarters reported volunteers wanting the experience of volunteering to help them find a job.

Among them are new graduates, laid-off workers in their 30s and 40s, as well as older people losing out on jobs to younger people in an increasingly competitive market.

Experience within the voluntary sector suggests that individuals have made a strong link between volunteering and getting back into work.

“Increased demand for volunteering is largely a result of rising unemployment in the recession. It's also the result of a series of Government plans to use volunteering to address social issues. [Unemployment](#), [antisocial behaviour among young people](#) and [immigration](#) are three of the latest issues to which volunteering have been offered as a response.”

Source: Kaye Wiggins, Third Sector Online, 19 August 2009

The Volunteer Centre also has found that increasingly clients are presenting with a higher range of skills currently not requested by organisations.

If you would like to explore different ways of using volunteers please let us know and we can discuss it. Obviously having more volunteers will be challenging but it may bring many advantages to your organisation including;

- Increasing the range and scope of what your organisation can offer
- Increasing the range of skills available to your organisation
- Raising the profile and reputation of your organisation
- Supporting and increasing new avenues of sustainable funding
- Increasing the level of support provided to vulnerable members of the community
- Supporting economic recovery

Satisfaction Survey

You have all either been emailed or mailed a satisfaction survey on the brokerage service within the volunteer centre.

Please complete this survey as it supports the continuous cycle of improvements within the volunteer centre.

Training

CVS is currently looking for funding to support a program of workshops. Following on from a training needs analysis of the sector we hope to put on: -

- Recruiting and Selecting Volunteers
- Supporting and Supervising Volunteers
- How to keep volunteers motivated
- Communication skills for volunteers

Excellence in Volunteer Management

EVM is a flexible program delivered in a variety of ways through a national network of licensed training providers. The training is a “pick and mix” of modules which can be assessed through face to face, distance learning, one to one coaching or interactive online.

For further details visit
www.volunteering.org.uk

Andy Nicholson from NACRO said it was a good experience and is on the last leg of his course and hopefully this will be signed off shortly.

Vetting and Barring Scheme

The Independent Safeguarding Authority has produced guidance on how the new vetting and barring scheme will affect different sectors.

Volunteering England has worked with the Office of the Third Sector on the guidelines specifically to include volunteer involving organisations. The scheme will assess people's suitability to work or volunteer with children and vulnerable adults. The ISA will make the decision who should be barred from working with vulnerable groups.

It does not replace CRB's or absolve organisations from making their own checks such as checking identity, qualifications and references.

The guidelines are available on the Home Office website.

Other Sharing

CAB

The training system for volunteers is changing in February/March 2010. Volunteers have an informal chat and discuss if they are prepared to commit to a minimum of 4 months including one month training. They do have a mentor/advisor with them for a short period until they feel confident. Any volunteers not prepared to commit to an advisory role can help with admin/reception roles.

Pets as Therapy

More volunteers were needed as their project was growing. Volunteers worked with mentors as they found this was a more beneficial way of training people to work with animals.

Stirchley Thrift Shop

The volunteers were all very good and helpful but the organisation was having difficulties in obtaining public liability and building insurance. Anyone with any ideas or contacts would be appreciated as they may have to close at Christmas.

Wrekin Riders BMX Club

The BMX Club are an informal group and are currently in the process of re-organising and are looking for volunteers to help find grants and a secretary.

A4U

A4U are looking for able bodied and/or disabled volunteers for their Shrewsbury Office. The organisation was originally set up by disabled people to take up disability issues.

British Red Cross

The Red Cross has recently moved and have had increased number of older volunteers. With the swine flu situation they may need more help as patients may be discharged early and need care and help at home.

Madeley Community Orchard

This is an outdoor project group where volunteers are needed on a more formal/qualified basis to help with courses, workshops and projects to help the community.

Age Concern

An inter-generation project is being set up with various schools and day centres in the Telford and Wrekin area. So far this has been very successful and helpful to both groups of people. They are trying to expand the project and are looking for Mentors to work with the schools to help with the transition from one school to another. Also Gardening Clubs for Schools, possibly this could be linked with help from other voluntary organisations. Another project being considered was for grandparents to help/support younger people.

The Home Visiting Scheme uses a wide range of volunteers but would like on on-going commitment from them. The vetting and barring was having a big effect on them as all their volunteers would have to go through this process.

RAF Museum Cosford

Many of the volunteers at Cosford were older people with technical and professional backgrounds. It was discussed how these volunteers could be used to help other organisations projects.

Shropshire MIND

It was felt that more frequent training was needed either through government schemes and/or in house training. Many of the volunteers were from a professional background and some of the younger volunteers were looking to gain experience to help with psychology courses being taken. A subscription was introduced to encourage more commitment from Volunteers.

Home-Start

Management Committee Volunteers were needed and they were looking for a 1- 2 year commitment.

NACRO

Training for volunteers was very important as this helped them to improve their own skills and progress further.

CVS

CVS are undertaking the BASIS Project. This is a 5 year Lottery funded project, currently in its first year; co-ordinated by Colleen Wickstead with myself, Kath Fackrell, as project worker. This project will give us the opportunity to generate income streams using internet technology, via researched internet donation sites, use social networking to enhance our web presence and open an e-bay for charity shop for online trading.

Over the next 4 years we will be developing and delivering training and giving support to our target of 50 Telford and Wrekin voluntary groups, the aim being for them to become internet 'savvy'.

Future CVS Events

Telford & Wrekin CVS are holding an Expand & Contract event on: -

Friday 6th November
at
Meeting Point House
9.30 - 1.30
Including a buffet lunch

This is free to members of CVS although a £10 booking fee is required. This is refundable on attendance at the event.

The aim of this event is to explore expanding your income by contracting out your services.

For further information or a booking form please ☎ 01952 291350

Training notes on the Recruiting and Supporting Older Volunteers Workshop

What Volunteering can offer older people

- Structure to their lives
- Make them feel valued
- Gives them the opportunity to support a cause they are passionate about
- Gives them the opportunity to try something new
- Makes them feel involved
- Gives them status and self worth
- Gives them an opportunity to use skills
- Improves their health & well being
- Personal development
- Improves their social circle

Possible barriers to older people volunteering

- Age barriers
- Preconceptions of what older people can do
- Jargon and technology
- Selection and recruitment is overlong and confusing
- Organisations did not respond promptly or professionally
- Expenses not paid promptly
- Opportunities not flexible times/days/venues
- Transport
- Caring responsibilities
- Health issues

Removing Barriers

- Promote positive images of your organisation in posters and leaflets
- Respond quickly and enthusiastically to their enquiry
- Have an efficient recruitment and selection process in place
- Don't be constrained by preconceptions of what older people can do
- Deal promptly with practicalities like access issues, transport, expenses
- Give adequate support and supervision
- Have an effective induction process in place
- Be flexible with your opportunities
- Have an open mind!

Benefits of using Older People in your volunteer program

- They are committed and loyal
- Have more spare time
- Have fewer family commitments
- Have well developed social networks
- Have a wealth of experience
- Give an added dimension