

NEWS FROM THE VOLUNTEER CENTRE

We are currently running a “Facing Facts” survey which is gathering information on the referral service offered by the Volunteer Centre.

If you would like a copy of the survey please contact Beverly on 01952 291350.

Beverly recently attended a ‘Grow Your Club’ evening with the Telford and Wrekin Council Sports Development Team to encourage sports clubs to use a Volunteer Co-ordinator.

It is hoped that all sports clubs take on this role.

If you are a sports club and are interested in developing this role, please contact Beverly.

The Volunteer Organisers’ Forum was well attended in October with a very useful information exchange followed by a short training session on Recruiting and Supporting Older Volunteers.

Following a Training Need Analysis there will be workshops on Volunteer Management in the new year, to include Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers.

ACCESS TO VOLUNTEERING FUND

The Office of the Third Sector has announced a £2m access to Volunteering Funds to support disabled people into volunteering. The fund is being piloted in three regions, including the West Midlands. Organisations can apply for £250—£5,000, the funds will support:

- Special aids and equipment; adaptations; travel costs for volunteers.

In particular, the fund is interested in applications that will lead to the wider outcome for disabled people, such as improved employment opportunities, health outcomes and an increase in social inclusion. If you are interested in applying for a Volunteering Fund grant **VOLUNTEERING ENGLAND TO EXAMINE VOLUNTEER RIGHTS**

Telephone: 03000 123
346

Visit the website at:

www.accesstovolunteering.org

Write to: Access to Volunteering Fund, c/o Charities Aid Foundation, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling. ME19 4TA.

There are concerns that unpaid staff can be dismissed without appeal.

Volunteering England is to hold an Inquiry to examine the issues and potential solutions around the subject of volunteer rights.

The Volunteer Rights Inquiry will meet three times in Central London between November 2009 and April 2010 and a report will be launched in Spring 2010.

Volunteering England is taking a strategic lead to create the Volunteer Rights Inquiry, which will provide a neutral space for the discussion and deliberation of the issues and concerns, following a series of high profile cases and campaigns.

Concerns have been raised that volunteers have no rights dealing with volunteer involving organisations when problems occur, be they rights in law or in procedures for redress. The Inquiry will examine a broad range of issues including, but not limited to, the legal rights of volunteers and will consider potential options for redress when things go wrong.

The first Volunteer Rights Inquiry was held on 25th November 2009 to explore the background to the Inquiry and allow for an initial exploration of possible solutions.

Following this there will be three evidence gathering sessions in early 2010 which will allow Inquiry members to hear from interested parties to explore the issues they have faced in more detail.

People will be able to attend the evidence gathering sessions in London, the Midlands and Manchester. There will also be a range of ways for people to give evidence without attending an evidence gathering session, such as via Twitter, YouTube and the Volunteer England website.

For further information visit: www.volunteering.org.uk

Comments from Beverly Harris

The debate seems to be mainly about having sufficient procedures in place to deal with volunteer grievances and to redress complaints of unfair treatment. Organisations need to have internal process in place and adequately supported and trained volunteer managers to deal with disciplinary and grievance procedures.

NEW GOVERNANCE GUIDE FOR FAITH-BASED CHARITIES

The Charity Commission publishes advice on good practice, legal information and case studies.

A new guide to good practice has been published for the 30,000 faith-based organisations in the third sector.

The regulator hopes its Faith in Good Governance guide, released to coincide with National Interfaith Week, will help trustees, staff and volunteers of charities established with a religious purpose.

The document includes legal information, recommended good practice and practical case studies. It is particularly targeted at smaller and new organisations that operate places of worship.

Dame Suzi Leather, Chair of the Charity Commission, said, "It is important that trustees have the flexibility and freedom to decide what is the best way to achieve their charities' aims, but at the same time they need good, useful guidance to help them in their work."

Harriet Crabtree, Director of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, which promotes good relations between people of different religious beliefs, said the guide would be an excellent resource for faith-based organisations.

Source: Third Sector

RECRUITING TRUSTEES?

There are a number of avenues open to organisations who wish to recruit committee members and trustees.

Register the opportunities with the Volunteer Centre—numbers of enquiries to the Volunteer Centre have increased over the last 12 months. In addition to this volunteers are presenting with higher levels of skills.

In addition to this there is a specialist brokerage service—CTN The Trustee Network www.trusteenet.org.uk

Registering with CTN trusteefinder allows trustees and charities to post their own board vacancies free of charge.

Removing Barriers for Older Volunteers

The Volunteer Centre is currently running a campaign to encourage older people into volunteering. Statistics from the volunteer centre suggest that this group is currently under represented in the volunteering community. Organisations within Telford & Wrekin which use older volunteers reap many rewards as older volunteers;

- Can bring professional expertise
- Can usually devote more time to volunteering
- Are willing to give things a go
- Are usually reliable, patient and conscientious
- Can bring practical knowledge
- Have developed social skills
- Have many contacts
- Bring opportunities for funding

Despite the many advantages of including older people within a volunteering program older people often face the obstacles of overcoming stereotypes based on their age rather than their ability. A group/organisation that removes upper age limits on recruitment, and then bases their recruitment procedures on ability rather than age, will reap the many rewards of including older volunteers.

Telford & Wrekin Volunteer Centre is encouraging organisations to

- Remove upper age limit for volunteers where they are not reasonable
- Recruit on the basis of motivation and ability

To become more inclusive and to benefit from the many skills that older people bring, groups/organisations need to actively support their particular needs. Support needed may vary from volunteer to volunteer and from organisation to organisation, however, the following good practice points need to be considered.

Does your group/organisation:

1. Provide equality and diversity training that discourage negative images of older people?
2. Actively encourage older people to volunteer through the use of appropriate marketing campaigns that show positive images of older volunteers?
3. Consider overcoming any physical barriers to volunteering such as access to buildings, lack of suitable information resources or disability aids?
4. Provide a proper induction procedure and offer regular training?
5. Offer creative roles that value the skills that older people have?
6. Match older people to tasks based on their interests and abilities?
7. Make support ongoing and easily available?
8. Follow good practice in all aspects of volunteer management including recruitment and selection, training, insurance cover?
9. Make older people feel welcome and a valued part of the team?
10. Allow for flexible volunteering including weekends, evenings and one off volunteering?

Beverly is offering visits to groups who wish to improve their recruitment of older volunteers. For further details contact her on 01952 291350 or email her on beverlyharris@tandwcvcs.org.uk

TELFORD & WREKIN VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS) Governance Support Network

The Volunteer Centre is currently undertaking some research on behalf the Telford and Wrekin Infrastructure Consortium to investigate the support needs of trustees, governors and committee members. Please take the time to complete the form as this will support the planning and implementation of this new network. With this copy of Newsline you will have received a questionnaire regarding plans to set up a new Governance Support Network. We need your feedback to determine what kinds of support local voluntary groups and organisations need. The results of the questionnaire will help shape the project to meet the most urgent support needs. If you would like to discuss any aspect of this questionnaire or would like to make any further suggestions, please contact Beverly on 01952 291350 or email: beverlyharris@tandwcvcs.org.uk.

Frequently asked Questions

Volunteering England has updated its list of Frequently Asked Questions in the Managing Volunteers section of the website, so that they are fully integrated within the Good Practice Bank. The list of FAQs now links to relevant articles, Information Sheets or Good Practice Bank themes, making it easier to find all information on one topic.

Read the list of FAQs at: www.volunteering.org.uk/faqs

Governance Network/Governance Support

Thank you all for returning your completed questionnaires on the Governance Network. This information will help support a framework of support measures. However we still need more replies! Being a trustee/governor/committee member, although very rewarding, brings many challenges and responsibilities for each individual member. This is why we need your views on these challenges and how we can respond to them. Please tell us your views. The questionnaire is available to complete on line in the survey section at: www.tandwcvcs.org.uk.

For a paper copy contact Beverly Harris on 01952 291350 OR EMAIL: BEVERLYHARRIS@TANDWCVS.ORG.UK

UPDATES ON VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

The Volunteering England Policy and Information team has written three new information sheets to help those managing volunteers. Resources for Volunteer Managers (a signposting tool for volunteer managers). Finding Volunteers (for anyone wanting to recruit volunteers). Safeguarding student volunteering in the Further Education Sector: Information for volunteer involving organisations and brokerage organisations (to complement the new Volunteering England publication “Safeguarding Student Volunteering in the Further Education Sector”). **A comprehensive list of their information sheets can be found at:** www.volunteering.org.uk/information sheets

VETTING AND BARRING SCHEME ROADSHOW

The dates for the Vetting and Barring Scheme information road shows have been announced. The series will demonstrate how the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) will deliver the new scheme following the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The events will explain the scope of the scheme and its impact on employers, voluntary organisations and service users and provide an opportunity for attendees to have their questions answered. The events are free and open to all interested parties. However, places are limited and must be booked in advance through the ISA website. Please see the website for the full list of dates, times and locations. If you have any questions, please contact the ISA at: scheme_info@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Review Amid Storm Over New Vetting & Barring Scheme

Recent press coverage about the new scheme, due to be launched in October, has been overwhelmingly negative and hostile, sparking a huge debate about the issue.

Children's Secretary Ed Balls has written to Barry Sheerman MP, Chair of the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee, to say that he is asking Sir Roger Singleton, Chairman of the ISA, and the Government's Chief Advisor on the Safety of Children, to report back by December about whether any adjustments need to be made to the new rules.

"In recent weeks some concerns have been voiced again about this specific point. The responses we have received to our consultation suggest to me we have got to get the balance about right, but it is tremendously important that we are certain that this is so."

Sir Roger told the BBC the review provided an opportunity to "listen carefully to those people who have expressed concern and to see whether we can get something that is more acceptable".

'Intrusion' to Volunteering

Critics, who range from organisations in the third sector, opposition parties, children's authors and campaigners, have branded the new rules as an "intrusion and argue that the regulations may put some people off volunteering.

CSV's Director of Part-Time Volunteering, Sue Gwaspari, said, "We must do everything we can to protect children from the attentions of criminals, but in doing so we must be careful not to add additional barriers that will discourage volunteers from giving their time and creates a world of distrust and apathy."

Children's experience at school, involved in sport and/or leisure activities is enriched by the involvement of hundreds of volunteers who willingly give their time. Eternal vigilance, good support and supervision give greater protection than any check however thorough."

CSV's view is that volunteering is 'service' freely given without expectation of reward and that many volunteers resent the intrusion and are ceasing to volunteer.

However, Children's Minister Delyth Morgan told the BBC that the new scheme was "about ensuring that people in a position of trust that work frequently with and intensively with children are safe to do so".

The new Independent Safeguarding Authority will be the biggest of its kind anywhere in the world, where two hundred case workers in Darlington will collect information passed to them by the police, professional bodies and employers and rule on who is barred from working with children.

Advantages of New System

Mike Locke, Director of Public Affairs, said, "Volunteering England is working alongside the Government to ensure that new regulations do not create a barrier

to volunteering. We are trying to keep the red tape involved to a minimum and ensure that the new scheme will not incur any cost for the volunteer.

The new vetting and barring scheme has advantages over the present CRB system. It will continuously monitor that status of volunteers and should alert volunteering involving organisations should volunteers cease to be suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.

We want to offer children and vulnerable adults working with volunteers the best protection possible.

We therefore urge people to keep the new regulations in perspective and do everything they can to make them work.”

The new scheme follows recommendations by the Bichard Report into the murders of Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells in Soham by Ian Huntley.

Worth it if it Stops One Child Becoming a Victim—Barnardo’s Chief

Once people are given legitimacy to work with children they have the trust of innocence and the next time they see a child, in the park or outside the school gates, there may be nothing to keep that child out of danger.

It is implicit that we do all we can to protect children from harm, prevention is better than cure.

If the vetting and barring scheme stops just one child ending up a victim of a paedophile then it will be worth it.”

Barnardo’s works with more than 100,000 children, young people and their families in 383 specialised projects in communities across the UK.

Barnardo’s Chief Executive Martin Narey, former Director General of the Prison Service, said. “ I have worked with sex offenders and know something of the unique way they plan their crimes and groom children.

REVISED GUIDE TO VOLUNTEERING AND BENEFITS

Jobcentre Plus has recently published new guidance on volunteering while on benefits. The Government has responded to concerns voiced by charities that individuals receiving benefits are not always aware of their right to volunteer. The guide offers clear advice on how both part time and full time volunteering will affect benefits. Volunteering While Receiving Benefits can be downloaded from the ‘customers’, leaflets and guides section at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk