

A Real Asset

Supported Volunteering: A Manual

By Peter Bates

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A note on layout, language and confidentiality

Throughout the book, we have put advice and guidance on the right hand page and used the left hand pages to give illustrations and examples.

We are aware that terms like ‘learning disability’ and ‘mental ill health’ can sometimes cause controversy. We have tried to write clearly and respectfully.

There are a lot of quotations from individuals in this book. We have changed the names of all the volunteers in order to preserve confidentiality.

About this book

This book is about setting up supported volunteering schemes. It was written following a project supported by the European Commission and involved participants from Britain, Germany and Spain.

The guidance here is written for people who want to set up a supported volunteering scheme in their locality. We present step-by-step guidance, giving suggestions for each stage of the process of establishing a scheme, building on the experience and best practice. This is not a complete 'how-to-do-it' manual, but it does present useful thoughts and tips from the projects we explored.

The book is divided into a number of sections:

Supported volunteering – a real asset sets the scene and makes the case for supported volunteering as a useful contribution towards social inclusion.

Getting started helps people think about setting up a supported volunteering project and takes them through the preliminary steps.

Working with people discusses the issues involved in finding volunteers.

Volunteer support workers discusses the role of support workers and how to recruit and support them.

Finding volunteer opportunities is about building links with potential volunteer sites and finding opportunities for individuals to volunteer.

Matching people and volunteering activities discusses ways of ensuring that potential volunteers get the right opportunities for them and the place they work.

Making it work is about ways of supporting people to be volunteers.

Running the project deals with management issues for supported volunteering projects.

Pamela in a new light

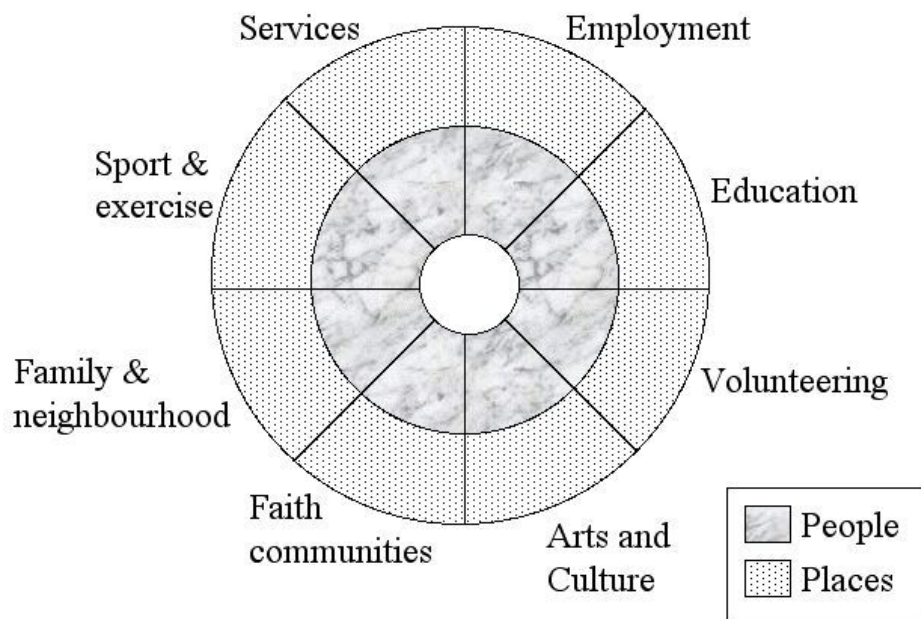
Nancy sat with her elbows on the kitchen table, the Daily Mail spread out in front of her and a mug of lemon tea at the side. We talked about the drop-in lunch club for elderly people that she and Victor run and the mixture of volunteers who keep the place going five days a week, every week. I asked about Pamela, who had been in and out of mental health places for years. Nancy's reply cast Pamela in a new light, summed up her own attitude and unwittingly provided a title for this report. 'She's a real asset', Nancy declared.

A challenge from Tony Blair

On 2 March 2000, at the Active Community Convention, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, issued his diversity challenge to the voluntary sector:

"Everyone in this country has something to contribute. But too many voluntary organisations have volunteers that all come from the same background, and their recruitment drives target the same group again. Today the Citizens Advice Bureau network, the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, the Red Cross and the RNIB and RNID - are all committing themselves to achieving a really diverse involvement of people within their organisations - a diversity that reflects the nation we live in. My challenge to other voluntary organisations is to join them".

Volunteering as part of the web of life



Supported Volunteering – A real asset

What is supported volunteering?

Volunteering is an activity carried out by many members of society. It makes some form of contribution to the community, the environment or other people and is done without payment.

In *supported volunteering* a person is given extra assistance to contribute as a volunteer. In this book, we look particularly at ways in which people with mental health problems or learning difficulties can be supported to volunteer.

Supported volunteering schemes

A number of organisations have now been established which give people who need it extra support to become volunteers. Sometimes these are existing volunteer bureaux, who build in additional support mechanisms; sometimes a completely new scheme is set up purely as a supported volunteer agency. Schemes may be set up to offer community-based day opportunities in place of traditional day centres or be part of an employment, training or education programme.

Supported Volunteering and community inclusion

Supported employment has long been regarded as a good way of enabling disabled people to make a valued contribution to society and to gain the benefits of having a job (see Appendix 3).

Some people may not want paid employment, or may not be able to get the support they need to find and hold down a job. For these people, supported volunteering offers a good way to contribute and get the benefits of taking part in valued activities in the community. Other people would like to contribute to society whether or not they have a paid job. Supported volunteering is one way in which people can make a contribution. The diagram opposite shows how volunteering is part of the web of life – one of the many aspects of our lives which puts us in contact with people and places.

In particular, people with a learning difficulty or people with mental health problems have found Supported Volunteering projects a useful way of becoming included in their local communities and making an important contribution to local life.

Many people in society volunteer.

Job satisfaction

'I get job satisfaction ... Doing voluntary work keeps my mind occupied. I'm not hearing voices so much.' (Carl)

Two way traffic

'It's not just a case of me helping them – it's two way traffic because it's me getting out to meet people and make new friends.' (Frank)

New friends for Elaine and Karen

Elaine has made friends with the staff at the Headway Club where she volunteers. They have visited each other's homes, exchanged confidences and been out together on social events. She has fewer distressing thoughts compared with a year ago. She has met friends of friends through Headway staff and they are now Elaine's friends in their own right.

After starting her voluntary work, Karen found new confidence. She met a couple and was able to start a friendship. Recently she and her friend went to Benidorm for a week, while her friend's husband stayed at home and looked after Karen's dog.

Taking control

'It enables you to take control instead of sitting about and waiting.' (Keith)

Challenging stigma

'It challenges stigma – people with problems contributing to their communities.'

Needed again

'I had looked after someone all my life until he died. It is so good to feel that you are needed again.' 'It helps the down and out in spirit – I was as low as you can get.' (Karen)

Healing

'Working at the plant nursery is away from the clamour (of modern life). It's healing to be part of growing rather than destroying.'

Why volunteer?

Although people don't get paid for volunteering, there are many other benefits:

- the satisfaction of doing something worthwhile makes you feel valued
- the opportunity to work flexibly
- opportunities to make friends
- the chance to get useful experience which could lead to paid work
- something to look forward to
- the chance to step out of the 'disability community' and share experiences with other people.

Many of the people we met in the course of writing this book told us how volunteering really added a new dimension to their life.

To work or to volunteer?

Some people we met talked about why volunteering suited them better than a paid job:

- voluntary work can be the first step on the journey towards employment
- it is easier to set up a number of taster sessions of voluntary work to help you decide what career you want to move into.
- there may be no available paid jobs in your chosen activity
- voluntary work can fit more easily around family responsibilities, visits to hospital or a part time college course
- a salary may be insufficient to cover the costs of your staffed housing.

Chelmsford

All applicants in Chelmsford who consider themselves to need the Supported Volunteering service are welcomed, irrespective of whether they have used health and social care services or not, and indeed whether a learning disability or mental health problem has been formally diagnosed or not.

Leicester

Funds for a day service for people with learning difficulties were invested into a Supported Volunteering project run by the Volunteer Centre. Full time volunteers serve as volunteer partners, working alongside people who need lots of support.

Somerset

The Somerset Supported Employment scheme is run by the Social Services Department and offers support to people with mental health problems to access employment, volunteering or education.

Cambridge

Cambridge Volunteers Plus finds volunteering opportunities for both people with learning difficulties and people with mental health problems. It is a separate organisation.

Halton

The Halton Volunteer Bureau serves the communities of Runcorn and Widnes. It offers volunteering opportunities to anyone from these communities, but in addition provides extra support to those who need it. At present the Bureau provides extra support to people with mental health problems, drug or alcohol difficulties, physical or learning disabilities, people who may have an offending background or may lack confidence and self-esteem.

Edinburgh

A team of people run the Community Care project within the Volunteer Exchange. This extra support needs scheme has been in operation since the early 1980's. It originally focused on people with mental health problems, but now works with people who need extra support for any reason.

Getting Started

In this section, we suggest some things to think about before you set up a Supported Volunteering project. We then look at some of the preliminary steps.

Who will you support?

At the outset, you will need to decide who your Supported Volunteering scheme will serve. Here are some possibilities:

- To offer support to anyone who wants to volunteer from a particular area or community.
- To serve people receiving particular services – for example services for people with learning difficulties or people with mental health needs.
- To serve those in greatest need. For example, a Supported Volunteering project may decide to work with only those people who are currently receiving specialist services. Those in the greatest need may require substantial input in order to make progress, but practitioners say ‘if we can succeed here, we can succeed anywhere.’
- To serve those who are most motivated. Sometimes this group is seen as the group of people who will make the most progress for the smallest input, and their success will encourage and motivate staff.
- To serve those who will benefit the most from the least input. This approach looks at the activity first and then selects a target group of people who are considered able to engage with and benefit most from this activity. Volunteering, along with employment and education opportunities are likely to be targeted on the people who need least support.

You may decide that starting small with a particular target group is a good way to develop a project.

Equal opportunities

“Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society. All people in the world should have the right to freely offer their time, talent and energy to others and to their communities.” (The Universal Declaration on volunteering, adopted by the International Association of Volunteer Effort, January 2001).

Job substitution position statement

NAVVB accepts that there is no single/simple test for knowing whether a volunteer is being substituted for paid labour. The criteria below are for guidance only and cannot be expected to cover all situations. For instance, a Volunteer Bureau may consider it appropriate to use a volunteer where voluntary work is the only way to relieve distress or meet an urgent need. The degree to which these criteria are applicable must ultimately be a matter of judgement for individual bureaux and will reflect local conditions.

NAVVB would consider volunteers are being substitutes for paid employment if they are:

- Working for a commercial or profit-making organisation.*
- Performing jobs or tasks in statutory or voluntary organisations that were formerly carried out by paid employees.*
- Performing jobs or tasks in statutory or voluntary organisations that are still carried out by paid employees.*
- Performing jobs or tasks that are primarily about personal or physical care, for instance washing and toileting.*
- Performing jobs or tasks which, because of their continuous, repetitive or unattractive nature require to be paid.*
- Performing jobs or tasks for organisations or individuals with the means to employ someone. This would include funds available through an organisations' or individuals' own resources or available through external funding or grants.*
- Performing jobs or tasks that are the legal responsibility of someone else.*
- Performing jobs or tasks for employees who are in dispute with their employers.*

A parallel issue is job substitution on Government Training Schemes or volunteer programmes where the 'volunteer' is paid an allowance. These individuals who are notionally 'volunteers' are in fact low paid workers. If an organisation provides a financial inducement for performing a job or task then it should be at the market rate for the job, with the recognition that the individual is an employee not a volunteer.

Equal Opportunities

Will you take steps to ensure that you support everyone from your target group who is eligible? How will you reach people from minority communities? Will you welcome people irrespective of disability, religion, sexual orientation, race? You will probably want to draw up an equal opportunities policy and take steps to follow it.

A new organisation?

Will you be setting up a new organisation, or will your Supported Volunteering scheme be part of an existing one? The answer to this question will probably influence who you serve and the resources available.

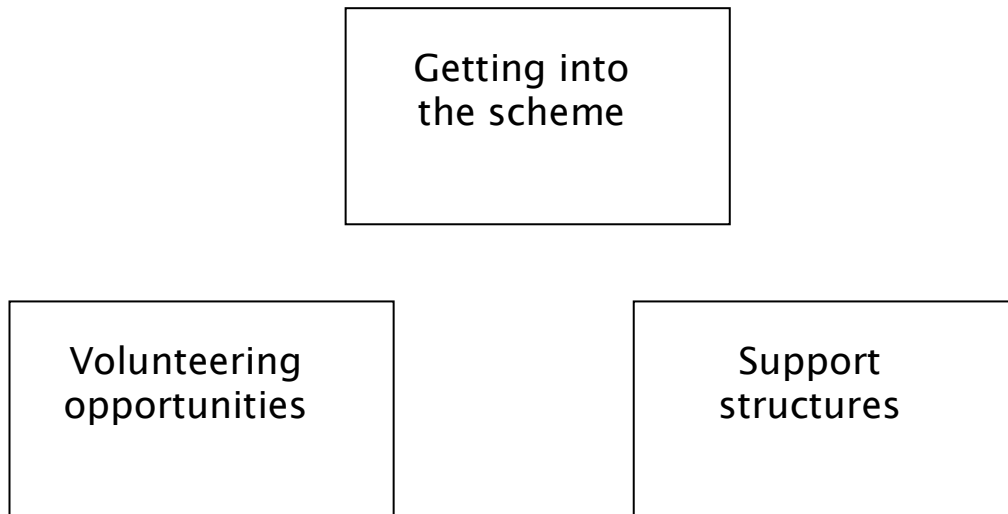
Job substitution?

You may want to ensure that your volunteering activity is not simply diverting people from paid work. The UK National Association of Volunteer Bureaux has a position statement on job substitution (see opposite).

There are a number of issues raised by this statement in relation to supported volunteering:

1. Some supported volunteering projects are deliberately using volunteering as a stepping-stone to a waged job. In this case, a period of unpaid work experience in a commercial setting might be helpful, but it should be time-limited and offer a real chance of employment and skills development.
2. Most volunteers we spoke to felt their volunteering activity was worthwhile and conveyed a sense of importance and usefulness. This is a key element in building self-esteem. It can be hard to find voluntary work that is genuinely worthwhile and yet not 'job substitution'.
3. Some of the people we interviewed were doing things that others might consider 'continuous, repetitive or unattractive', although they found them interesting and rewarding. We need to ask the person what they enjoy and ensure they have plenty of choice.

Basic components of a supported volunteering scheme



Getting started

*The **Edinburgh** scheme began within the mental health service and now works with everyone who needs extra support.*

*In **Chelmsford** the Volunteer Bureau surveyed the local volunteer labour force and found that people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems were expressing an interest in volunteering but not sticking at it as long as other people. They thought that a Volunteer Support worker would help people to find the right opportunity and overcome difficulties that arise from time to time.*

*The **Somerset** scheme is an offshoot of their work in supporting people with mental health problems to obtain jobs. Some people who approach the Supported Employment Bureau turn out to be more interested in voluntary work.*

***Cambridge** started as a part of the general volunteer bureau, but decided to separate and become an independent organisation.*

Basic components

You will need to think early on about the basic components which will have to be in place for Supported Volunteering to be effective. Some questions you might start asking are:

Getting into the scheme

How will potential volunteers get to know about the scheme and get access to it? Will you have an 'open door' policy, or will people need to be referred by other agencies? Will your scheme be linked to particular services? If so, you will need to think about your relationship to these services. For example, will care managers be involved and how will you work with them? In the next section we discuss ways of finding potential volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities

How will you find opportunities for people to volunteer? Do you have a good knowledge of your local community and the organisations that would welcome volunteers?

Support structures

How will you provide support to volunteers? We discuss later the various options and strategies you might wish to use, and in particular the role of support workers.

Some volunteer opportunities

The following range of opportunities were arranged by the Supported Volunteering schemes which took part in this project:

Adult education office
Bingo
Blood transfusion service
Cat's home
Charity shop
Citizens Advice Bureau
Community café
Complete Wasters recycling centre
Database management
Desk top publishing
Driving
Family centre
Fauna and flora
Hospital shop
Local radio
Lunch club for elderly people
Medical aids loan service
National Trust
Oxfam campaigns
Plant nursery
Playschool
Prison visitor centre
Railway museum
Reading on to tape
Refugee support group
Riding for the disabled
School
Shopmobility wheelchair loan service
Shopping for elderly people
Wildlife Trust
YMCA gym partner

First steps

Once you are clear about who you plan to support and the general direction of your scheme, you will probably want to take the following steps:

- **get to know your local community** – you will need to learn about your local community and how your scheme will fit in. What volunteering opportunities already exist? Can you work alongside an existing volunteering scheme, or do you need to set up a new organisation? Which are the major organisations who might be interested in working with volunteers? Who are the potential volunteers? What service organisations might you need to liaise with? The answers to these questions will probably help determine the sort of scheme you will establish.
- **find potential supporters of the scheme** – are there local businesses, services or key individuals who will lend their support to the scheme and help you see it through? You may want to invite such people onto a project steering group.
- **write a project plan** – so that you and others are clear about what you intend to do.
- **explore funding options** – so that you are clear about what resources are likely to be available.

In the following sections we discuss in more detail the steps involved in finding volunteers, involving support workers, finding volunteering opportunities, matching people to activities and other aspects of making a supported volunteer scheme work.

Letting people know

In Halton there is an exhibition display which is taken to different venues.

The Edinburgh scheme has a seven-minute video that illustrates the range of volunteering opportunities available.

Chelmsford produce regular advertising flyers that provide examples of the kind of volunteering opportunities that are available. They have also assembled a big album with photographs and stories that illustrate the range of opportunities available. Some prospective volunteers find this a helpful resource in selecting their voluntary work. It is also useful in the office waiting area.

The Mind to Volunteer project in North Ayrshire is sited in a GP practice and takes referrals from the primary health care team. People with mental health problems are matched to support partners – who are often volunteers who have had similar difficulties themselves. Together, they engage with local leisure, recreational and educational opportunities. The Primary Health Care Trust funds the project.

Some agencies have a web site, where people can find out about the supported volunteering scheme.

Supported volunteering is popular

The six projects that participated in this study supported 607 people with either a mental health issue or learning difficulties to obtain voluntary work in the last year:

Others find there is real demand too

‘Whatever problems were identified in our study, a lack of referrals of volunteers with extra support needs was not one of them.’ (Scottish Volunteer Bureau Network and Scottish Council Foundation 2001)

Working with people

In this section we discuss ways of finding volunteers and finding out about their requirements and capacities. In later sections we think about ways of finding volunteer opportunities, matching people to them and arranging support.

Letting potential volunteers know about the scheme

You will need to let people know that your scheme exists and that you are looking for volunteers. There are many ways of doing this, but you may want to consider:

- advertisements in the local press or on local radio or television;
- a travelling exhibition;
- producing a short video;
- leaflets left in places where potential volunteers may see them (for example in libraries, clinics, surgeries, day centres, leisure facilities);
- word of mouth – this is often a very effective way of letting people know about a scheme. The more people who get involved, the greater the opportunities for spreading the word;
- contact with services – some people in key positions, for example social workers or care managers, may be in a good position to know people who might be interested in your scheme.

You may wish to produce a brochure or simple description of your scheme, setting out what you are offering and who you hope to support. This should be written in plain language and be easy to understand. Illustrations often help to communicate ideas.

It is worth remembering that some formats may be inaccessible or intimidating to some people (for example some people will not use a web site), so it will be important to use a range of different methods of publicising your scheme.

People will need to be clear about how to contact the scheme and how to get further information. If you give a telephone number for further details, make sure that someone is available to answer the phone and give information.

Welcoming everyone?

When Mark said in his first interview 'I'm not sure if I can do it', Theresa replied 'We'll find something you can do'.

No rejection

Community Service Volunteers' brochure says:

Q: What qualifications do I need?

A: None. At CSV we believe that everybody has something to offer. Whatever your skills or experience, if you make a commitment we will offer you an exciting volunteering activity in Britain that has most need of your energy and abilities.

Halton's guidelines

Halton's guidelines for referrers says:

- Basic qualities, which agencies are likely to look for in their volunteers include reliability, punctuality, some commitment and an ability to relate to others.*
- Sometimes voluntary work is not an appropriate step for a person to take at a given point in time. If the result is an unsuccessful placement, it can be disappointing for the referrer, upsetting for the volunteer and a source of difficulty to an agency using volunteers.*

Leicester

Staff in the Leicester project explicitly reject the 'readiness model' and consider that everyone who wants to volunteer could be supported to do so, and it is up to the service to find effective ways of providing suitable support.

Cambridge

The publicity material from Cambridge Volunteers Plus says, 'We believe that everyone has something to offer as a volunteer' and 'Cambridge aims to operate a non-rejection policy.'

Welcoming everyone

Different schemes adopt different approaches. Some have a 'zero rejection' policy and will undertake to find suitable volunteering opportunities for everyone who approaches them. Others have criteria.

Here is a list of good practice compiled by an international group of people interested in supported volunteering. Many of the suggestions are simply good practice for any volunteering project of or any high quality service, while others apply specifically to a supported volunteering project:

- ❖ Adopt a 'zero rejection' policy – set out to find a volunteering opportunity for everyone who wants to take part.
- ❖ Listen to the volunteer – the person knows best what contribution they can make and what support they need.
- ❖ Provide a clear description of the activity, but stay flexible on how much contribution a person need make.
- ❖ Find voluntary opportunities that are well matched to the individual.
- ❖ Identify a welcoming host in the organisation who will be the link person and first point of contact for the volunteer.
- ❖ Challenge discrimination amongst community organisations and volunteer-involving agencies by delivering disability equality training. Ask volunteers to become 'direct experience trainers' by sharing their experiences.
- ❖ Focus on the positive contribution that disabled people can make to their communities.
- ❖ Recruit family members to support the volunteering effort. This may be easier with young people.
- ❖ Provide more single-event volunteering opportunities.
- ❖ Invite established volunteers to advertise the benefits to other service users, perhaps in a presentation to a user-group. This can be more powerful and attractive than the same message from a professional.

A regular commitment?

The application form at Chelmsford asked, 'How often would you like to volunteer?' – daily, weekly, monthly or occasionally. Including the final option offers some opportunities to people who do not want to make a regular commitment.

One individual in Halton served as a long distance driver for the occasional minibus outings that a group made. He drives once every couple of months, and less frequently in the winter.

In Leicester, some people volunteer at the children's holiday club, and so are very busy for a few days during these times, and then do not volunteer again for several months. This is particularly useful for people who attend college and are looking for some activity during the vacations.

They don't have to do anything

At the Chelmsford lunch club, Nancy said, 'If the volunteers don't want to do anything, they just don't.' There is a clear expectation of what the voluntary task consists of, but each volunteer can engage at their preferred level each day.

A third way

One volunteer said that volunteering was a 'third way'. In the first way, a full time job provides money but also long hours and pressure. In the second way, unemployment brings boredom and loneliness. Volunteering can provide meaning, a chance to contribute, social contact and a structure for your time. Rob said, 'If you fear change, voluntary work can get you over the barrier. It is easier to return to voluntary work and pick up the threads – easier than with a paid job.'

How productive and motivated do people have to be?

If people are described as 'not motivated' then it may be that we haven't yet found out what they like. Is volunteering mainly a gift of your work or a gift of your presence?

Voluntary work is successful when it is a good mix of clear directions but no pressure. A number of volunteers described how they sometimes attended their voluntary activity, but felt unable to be productive on that particular day, while one person told us that she didn't go in at all when she didn't feel up to it. Volunteers approved of their activity when this freedom to attend or miss a day was accepted and they felt free to put down their duties and take them up again when they felt ready to do so.

Some people bring the gift of their presence, rather than their productivity, to the community. This reveals itself as membership of formal or informal groups. Some supported volunteer agencies have addressed this issue by maintaining the notion that volunteering is some kind of work and so demands productivity. Anyone who is unwilling or unable to be productive in this way is deemed to be 'not ready' for voluntary work.

Others have assumed that the person is not being productive because they have not found the right setting, the right task or the right time, and so continue the search, rather than give up on the person.

One challenge that people with disabilities bring to the volunteering sector is to re-think about what voluntary work is all about. While some people want to use volunteering as work preparation and productivity, others remind us that it is about community membership – a celebration of the diversity of humanity.

Preparing for an interview

Things for the volunteer to consider in advance

- *Why do you want to do voluntary work?*
- *What skills, qualities, interests and amount of time do you have to offer?*
- *What level of commitment can you offer? Are you reliable and good at time-keeping?*
- *What are your own needs and to what extent will they be met through volunteering?*
- *Will you need support to start or do your voluntary work? What kind of support and who will provide it?*
- *Is there anything that will restrict your choice of voluntary work, such as your ability to get on with people, ongoing symptoms of illness or a criminal record?*
- *Do you have a clear idea of what you want to do, or do you want to taste lots of different things before you commit yourself?*
- *How much personal information will you want to share with the organisation where you volunteer?*
- *Most agencies operate some form of selection. How well will you cope if your application to volunteer in a particular place is rejected?*
- *Are there any practical points to consider about where, when and for how long you will volunteer?*

Professionals in Chelmsford

The Chelmsford scheme often discourages professionals from attending the interview, since this may suggest that the volunteering scheme is part of the care system. Very good relationships with professionals are maintained in other ways.

Interviewing potential volunteers

You will probably want to invite potential volunteers to come for an interview to discuss their interests. Here are some things you may want to think about when you set up and conduct the interviews:

- Suggest some things the potential volunteer may wish to think about before the interview. Some possible questions are listed opposite.
- Make sure the interview is held in a welcoming and friendly room, with pictures and plants rather than clutter and noise. You may want to ensure that the interview is held on neutral ground. Some potential volunteers have spent a great deal of time in places where another person has a lot of power, such as social work offices and doctor's surgeries, and the Supported Volunteering office can feel just like another place of this kind. Make sure that the venue for the interview is on 'safe ground' for the person concerned.
- Find out if the person requires help with transport to get to the interview.
- Ensure that the person is clear about whether or not you will pay travel expenses to come to the interview.
- Ensure that the interview takes place in a private setting, is not overlooked or has people wandering through.
- Invite the prospective volunteer to bring a friend or supporter with them to the first interview if they want to. Sometimes a potential volunteer will want a supporter to come with them; sometimes they will prefer to come alone. You should welcome whatever they prefer. In some situations a care worker who 'referred' the person to the scheme may wish to be present. Again, the choice should be with the potential volunteer for whatever arrangement is most comfortable to them.

Initial interviews

The supported volunteering worker in Chelmsford, is also a trained counsellor, says that the initial interview sets the tone for the whole relationship between the person and the supported volunteering service.

Pat, a volunteer in Cambridge, found it helpful that the worker was not in a rush to get everything decided in a single interview. She was given time to reflect and this helped her make a good decision.

Disclosure

Each person makes their own decision about which parts of their life they what to talk about to the Volunteer Support worker or the volunteer manager. Some people feel that their mental health problems or learning difficulties are private matters. Here are some reasons we were given about why people might share their story, or be reluctant to do so.

<i>Reasons for Disclosure</i>	<i>Reasons against disclosure</i>
<i>Some organisations are keen to recruit a diverse group of volunteers and they can shape a better role for you if they know your skills and support needs</i>	<i>Some volunteer managers have pre-set ideas about learning disability or mental health problems</i>
<i>You can describe your circumstances in a positive light</i>	<i>Your 'label' may have no effect upon your ability to do the voluntary work</i>
<i>You must inform your volunteer manager about any health and safety issues</i>	<i>You may feel that it will give people the chance to label you by your disability</i>
<i>You will be in a better position of trust if you tell them yourself</i>	<i>You may not want to discuss personal things with a stranger</i>

Andy said that his volunteering was 'a fresh start – no one needs to know what you have been through – but if you told them the story they wouldn't feel any worse of you.'

The interview

You will need to be clear about the purpose of the interview and how you will achieve your aims. For example, the aims of the initial interview may be to:

- explain your volunteering scheme to the person, so that they are clear what is and is not on offer
- explain the support you are able to offer to volunteers
- find out about the person's interests, skills and talents
- find out what the person wants from a supported volunteering scheme
- find out about the person's support and other needs
- agree with the person what happens next in terms of taking their interest further.

After the initial interview, you will need to let the person know whether or not you will be offering them support to volunteer and, if so, what the next stage of the process will be.

You can find out more about interviewing by looking at materials from the Institute for Careers Guidance and the book on person-centred planning by Sanderson et al (1997)

Disclosure

Schemes need to decide their policy on the extent to which they disclose details of an individual's problems to the host organisation, support workers and to other volunteers.

The approach generally taken by the organisations we contacted was to disclose information (with the volunteer's consent) on a 'need to know' basis. The amount of personal information that is needed by each person may be mapped on a spectrum in which the care manager or responsible medical officer knows most about the person's life, followed by the Supported Volunteering worker, the manager of the volunteering opportunity, co-volunteers and the general public.

Thinking about risk

'I'm a volunteer manager at a play scheme for children. I have just interviewed a prospective volunteer who came across very well, enthusiastic, lots of experience of working with kids. To his credit, he was very open and told me that he has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder ('manic depression'). He says he is getting on well with the medication and is quite stable. Should I take him on?

If your equal opportunities policy does not already cover people with mental health problems, it should. As with any volunteer, the key question is 'are they able to do the work?'

The person who knows best in this case is most likely to be the person himself. He was willing to be open and honest about his condition. Why not have a fuller discussion with him and talk through any areas of concern that you might have. Are there any warning signs if he's getting high or low and what is the best course of action should they occur?

Safety is an important question for any volunteer manager, even more so around children. But remember that much of the information we receive about mental health seems to come from misleading media stereotypes.

Working with volunteers with extra support needs may pose a challenge but it can also be a greatly rewarding experience for all concerned.

(copyright the National Centre for Volunteering)

Would you say this?

The confidentiality policy of the Volunteer Bureau states that any information disclosed during this interview that is likely to be of concern to any organisation to which you may be referred could, at the discretion of the organisers, be disclosed to that organisation.

- *Do you have any health problems, disabilities or issues?*
- *Are you taking any medication that may affect your voluntary work? If yes, please give details.*
- *Are you currently involved with any other agency, e.g. social worker, health worker, doctor?*
- *Do you have a criminal record?*

Thinking about risk

The issue of risk may arise for some people for whom volunteering is a new experience and where there may be concerns about potential risk to themselves or others.

Some issues you should consider are:

- Does your agency have a formal policy on risk?
- If someone is 'referred' to your scheme from a service agency, that agency should provide relevant information about the person. If potential volunteers are supported by a service agency you may, with the person's permission, wish to discuss potential areas of risk with the agency.
- However, it is worth remembering that some services have a tendency to see the most negative aspects of some of their clients, rather than presenting a balanced view including the person's strengths and assets. In addition some projects consider that people's behaviour in health and social care settings is a poor predictor of behaviour in other places and that professionals are repeatedly shown to have been overly pessimistic about the abilities of their clients.
- The potential volunteer is probably the best person to identify risk. This will happen if they have good information, feel able to make choices themselves and can speak up about what needs to change to keep everyone safe.
- Most people find it hard to talk to strangers about times when things went wrong or times when they felt unsafe. These are private feelings and stories that will only be disclosed when people trust each other. This means that it can be more useful to build a relationship over time than asking the person to sign a 'disclosure consent form' in the first interview.
- Each person and place is different and so arrangements must be tailored to the person in that particular setting. Some volunteering opportunities (for example working with children or other vulnerable groups) may require a police check to be made on the potential volunteer.

Keeping confidences

Supported volunteers have often been on the receiving end of confidentiality policies and so may well be more sensitised to the importance of respectful practice than other citizens or paid staff. The volunteer agreement at Imagine includes a task list and specified hours, as well as asserting that volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff in their dealings with service users.

Too formal?

At Volunteers Plus in Cambridge they aim to make these expectations clear to everyone, but do not write it down. Volunteers who are uncomfortable with written materials may find such a document intimidating, and it may inappropriately suggest that volunteering is similar to waged employment with a contract and sanctions.

Clear about the role

A charity shop manager in Chelmsford is planning to specify competencies needed and gained in each voluntary activity. This will help potential volunteers to select appropriate roles, identify their training and support needs and form the basis for a detailed, competence based reference for each volunteer.

At a group meeting in Somerset, only one out of the five volunteers present had a written statement of their duties.

Volunteer rights

The policy documents issued to all volunteers in Chelmsford give a list of volunteer rights and responsibilities. The rights indicate that volunteers should have the right to:

- know the reason why, if they are not accepted for voluntary work,*
- be provided with adequate insurance cover,*
- have the opportunity to be involved with the organisation and decisions which may affect them where appropriate,*
- be valued and respected by paid staff who should be fully aware of the nature and purpose of volunteer involvement.*

A volunteer agreement

Some organisations draw up a formal agreement with potential volunteers, so that it is clear to everyone just what is on offer. Some people will want this to be written down, but often a conversation is sufficient.

We have included the Care Manager in this agreement. On many occasions, the person will want their voluntary work to be quite separate from the health and social care system – and this is fine. At other times, the volunteering opportunity will not be a success unless everyone pulls together. The relationship between all four people needs to be carefully worked out.

<p>The volunteer will:</p> <p>Notify an appropriate person if you are unable to carry out your activity.</p> <p>Respect the rights of those people you are in contact with, including the right to confidentiality.</p> <p>Attend training, ask for support when you need it, and stay in touch with the SV project.</p> <p>Follow policies as discussed.</p>	<p>The volunteer manager will:</p> <p>Provide the agreed activities or give reasonable notice.</p> <p>Respect the limits to the work that were originally agreed.</p> <p>Treat the volunteer with respect and without discrimination.</p> <p>Provide regular and positive feedback to the volunteer about their work.</p> <p>Keep the SV project informed of successes or problems.</p> <p>Coordinate diversity training for other people in the setting</p>
<p>The Supported Volunteering project will:</p> <p>Include the volunteer in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Ensure the best possible match between the volunteer and the opportunity and ensure the person has opportunities for development.</p> <p>Let the volunteer know exactly what the placement will involve</p> <p>Support the volunteer and the volunteer manager</p> <p>Treat the volunteer with respect and without discrimination.</p>	<p>The Care Manager will:</p> <p>Coordinate initial support for the volunteer to help them settle</p> <p>Support the person with issues outside the volunteering activity</p> <p>Help everyone concerned to make volunteering a success for the person</p> <p>Share in the process of keeping everyone safe.</p>

Arranging a personal mentor

One Volunteer Support worker established a different kind of link with the health and social care services. She found an experienced worker who was willing to be a mentor. They meet together for an hour every month to talk. No names are mentioned, but they explore different ways to support individuals and think up new solutions.

Here are some questions to consider when finding a mentor

- Do you share the same values about independence, disability, safety and participation?*
- What level of skill does the mentor need in disability, volunteering and mentoring?*
- What do your line managers think about the arrangement?*
- Do meetings take place in work time?*
- What will be written down?*
- Under what circumstances would the mentor talk to your line manager?*
- How and why would you bring the arrangement to an end?*

Another way to use mentors

In Peterborough the Volunteer Centre have a project to provide mentor volunteers who support people to think about voluntary work by supporting them with visits, training, development and welfare issues.

Professional attitudes?

We heard some people described as 'inappropriate'. Others felt coerced into volunteering.

Links with Care Managers and services

In some situations a Care Manager or other professional may play a significant role in referring someone to a supported volunteering scheme. The role of such a professional should be made clear:

- will they offer support to the volunteer, or be someone that they can turn to if problems arise?
- to what extent is the volunteering opportunity seen as a component of the person's 'care package'?
- what is the relationship between the care manager and the supported volunteering scheme?
- what support is the care manager able to offer, either to the scheme or to the individual volunteer?

There is a danger if supported volunteering is seen by services as just another service component (perhaps an alternative to day care). It is important to remember that volunteering is just that – something that someone elects to do so that they can make a contribution and gain the benefits of making a contribution.

Many people think that there are major advantages if the supported volunteering project is seen as a part of the community, rather than the service system. However some also point to the advantages of a collaborative project which allows skills from the community and the care system to be merged, and which also potentially influences the care system.

A person-specification for support workers

Skills and Knowledge

- *Excellent knowledge and understanding of the needs of people who need extra support.*
- *Working knowledge of the voluntary sector and factors affecting its growth and development.*
- *Excellent inter-personal skills and negotiation skills with an ability to empower and enable volunteers.*
- *Ability to develop and conduct training sessions for volunteers and local community groups.*
- *Excellent listening, written and verbal communication skills – the ability to communicate well in person, on the telephone and in writing to a wide range of audiences.*
- *Proven record of developing and managing projects.*
- *Ability to maintain accurate records. Computer literacy and the ability to use a variety of packages including word processing and desktop publishing.*

Experience

- *At least two years direct experience of working with people who face disadvantage either in the voluntary or statutory sectors or a qualification in a health or social care profession.*
- *Experience of working in or with the voluntary sector.*
- *Experience of interviewing.*
- *Experience of producing structured, clear reports.*
- *Aptitude for public speaking, making presentations and/or training.*
- *Direct experience of managing, recruiting and supporting volunteers*
- *Experience of fundraising*

Personal Qualities

- *Committed to the use of volunteering as one of the positive options available to people who need support.*
- *Creative flair, enthusiasm and flexibility in order to adapt to the changing priorities of the voluntary sector*
- *Understanding of and a commitment to the concept of equal opportunities and to providing a confidential service.*
- *Ability to prioritise a varied workload and work under pressure to meet deadlines.*
- *Friendly and approachable personality, with a sense of humour.*
- *Enthusiastic and creative approach to work and commitment to working as part of a team.*
- *Flexible attitude towards working hours.*

Volunteer support workers

A key role

The success of a supported volunteer scheme will depend to a large extent on the quality of the support provided to volunteers. Support workers play a crucial role in ensuring that volunteers are successful in their placements.

The job of the support worker is likely to include:

- enthusiastically explaining the scheme to prospective volunteers and host organisations;
- interviewing prospective volunteers and helping them to decide whether or not to become a volunteer and, if so, what support they require;
- matching volunteers with volunteer opportunities;
- negotiating volunteer placements with host organisations;
- providing support to volunteers and negotiating support within the host organisation;
- helping to resolve problems as they arise;
- keeping records;
- reporting on the scheme to a management group;
- negotiating with professionals around the support arrangements for individuals;
- fundraising.

A sample person-specification is shown opposite and a sample job description overleaf.

A Sample Job Description

Job Title: Supported Volunteering Co-ordinator

Responsible To: Volunteer Bureau Management Committee

Salary Scale: Varies according to local conditions

Hours of work: 37 per week

Location: Volunteer Bureau office

Principal Responsibilities and Duties:

- 1. To provide a specialist interview, placement and support service to potential volunteers who need extra support.*
- 2. To promote the scheme to volunteer-involving organisations, potential volunteers who require extra support, and health and social care agencies.*
- 3. To undertake the necessary administrative duties to secure the effective and efficient operation of the scheme.*

Running the Supported Volunteering Scheme:

- 1. Identify and interview potential volunteers with extra support needs in order to locate volunteer opportunities that match their interests, skills and support needs.*
- 2. Work with agencies that involve volunteers and encourage them to offer opportunities to people who need extra support. This encouragement will be provided through informal visits, written publicity material, training, presentations, ongoing support and, where necessary, challenging discrimination.*
- 3. Make the process of becoming a volunteer as accessible and appealing as possible by advertising the scheme to potential volunteers and easing the process by which people become involved. This will require frequent visits to day centres and other facilities used by people who need additional support, as well as liaison with health and social care staff.*
- 4. Promote the participation of volunteers in every aspect of the scheme, its operation and management.*
- 5. Liaise with similar projects and keep abreast of relevant literature and policy to ensure that best practice is identified and adopted and the benefits of volunteering are identified and shared with all stakeholders.*
- 6. Provide relevant information to all stakeholders.*
- 7. Offer support to volunteers as needed to ensure that maximum benefit is gained from the volunteering opportunity.*
- 8. Produce financial and activity reports as required.*

Recruiting Support Workers

Volunteer support workers may come from a range of backgrounds and bring with them a variety of skills and experience. You may find potential workers from within existing volunteer bureaux or from service settings. Alternatively, people with relevant experience may come from a variety of walks of life – older people, women returning to work, disabled people, younger people looking to increase their experience.

Backgrounds of the workers we met during the project included:

- professionals (occupational therapist, community psychiatric nurse, psychiatric social worker);
- psychology graduate;
- new graduate in Media and Cultural Studies
- supported employment
- community work;
- teaching;
- day services;
- advocacy.

Supporting the supporters

Volunteer support workers will themselves need support to ensure that they maintain a high standard of work and deal with problems which arise.

It is a good idea if workers can regularly meet on an individual basis with a nominated support person, for example a member of the management group. Such regular sessions will give an opportunity for highlighting successes, as well as discussing problems.

It is also important to ensure that support workers get opportunities to keep abreast of new developments through reading and meeting others. Arranging opportunities for support workers from different schemes to meet together at intervals is a good way of providing additional support.

Networking

The Supported Volunteering worker in Chelmsford regularly attends a local forum about disability and service development in order to keep up to date and identify marketing opportunities for the project.

Checklist for assessing the culture of a possible site

1. *Can the workplace culture be described as harassed and overworked or welcoming and relaxed?*
2. *Do people make time to talk to each other or do they just get on with their work?*
3. *Is the organisation focused on people, productivity and profit?*
4. *What attitude do workers have towards people who are often subject to discrimination?*
5. *Is the allocation of duties amongst individual workers and volunteers rigid or open to change?*
6. *Is this a learning organisation where supervisors are constantly seeking opportunities for individuals to progress and enrich their jobs and their lives? Alternatively, do people get stuck with the same duties for ever?*
7. *How does the organisation respond when individuals take time off sick or are otherwise under pressure or performing poorly?*
8. *Are you able to identify someone who will provide support?*

What makes a good place to be a volunteer?

- *'A place that deals with all kinds of people in a non-judgemental way.'* (Andy)
- *'A place where there is hope.'* (Laura)
- *'A place you can see other people make progress and do better.'*
- *'A place where everybody is willing to give something.'*
- *'People in the organisation need to be willing to listen and take advice from the volunteer.'*
- *At a charity shop in Chelmsford, Jose said that her approach was to suggest to people that they try a variety of tasks. People often perform better than observers expect.*

Finding volunteer opportunities

In this section, we discuss ways of finding opportunities for volunteers and building links with potential volunteer sites.

An important part of your work as a Supported Volunteering agency is to make links with local organisations which will welcome volunteers. This can be done by word of mouth, by making visits to likely organisations, through publicity leaflets, through telephone calls, etc. Find out about any existing volunteer opportunities and see if they can be built on.

Building links with potential sites

It is worth investing time and effort to build links with organisations which will welcome volunteers.

Some of the strategies adopted by agencies in our project included:

- making informal visits to discuss possible opportunities;
- distributing a newsletter;
- putting on an exhibition;
- making a video;
- advertising in a shop window;
- using a website;
- making presentations to interested organisations;
- sending out literature;
- arranging a party and using it to promote the scheme;
- wider networking with local disability or volunteering groups.

The Disability Rights Commission

The Disability Rights Commission has the task of supporting the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and sees a positive role for volunteering. While we recognise that the formal status of volunteers in respect of the DDA has not been tested thoroughly in case law, we were pleased to see the following statement from the DRC:

“To exclude disabled people from voluntary work is almost certainly illegal and definitely a barrier we would like to see lifted immediately. In many cases, volunteering is the first step back into employment. In every case, voluntary work brings people into the mainstream and helps challenge prejudice, negative attitudes and stereotypical imagery”.

“Through its Helpline and Practice Development Team, the Disability Rights Commission can help organisations change their policies, practices and procedures so that disabled people are welcomed as volunteers, employees and customers. Organisations needing advice can call the Disability Rights Commission Helpline on tel 08457 622633, as should disabled people who experience such discrimination.”

Capacity building

One worker told us that there is no time to educate volunteer managers – they are so busy that they just want you to get out of the way.

A role for Laura

Laura does not use words to communicate, but now serves on the cash till in a charity shop.

Partnership

Carl told us ‘I serve customers, but I have difficulty with maths, so Sue uses the till or I’ll take the money and tell her what it is for and she’ll bang it in the till.’

Expanding community capacity

Supported Volunteering agencies can do a great deal to work with the local community and encourage it to welcome volunteers, including those with a disability. This means presenting potential volunteers in a positive light and emphasising the benefits they will bring to local organisations.

Community mapping is a useful exercise. Take time to find out about local organisations and the individuals within the community who are the 'movers and shakers'.

Some organisations may need help and encouragement to welcome volunteers with disabilities. This might be because:

- they have been let down by support agencies in the past when they had a volunteer who needed help
- they are under pressure to meet productivity targets and have less time available to offer support
- they have limited or inaccurate knowledge of the effect of mental health difficulties or learning disabilities.

Very often, getting key individuals on your side can have major benefits in making contacts and 'selling' your scheme locally.

Job development

One worker said, 'perhaps the difficulty is that the placements we offer lack flexibility and adequate support rather than the volunteers are inherently 'difficult'. It is sometimes possible to work with a host organisation to develop new jobs or modify existing ones, so that these are suitable for supported volunteers. For example a job can be modified to exclude one element that someone finds difficult. People can often work in partnership to achieve what neither individual could carry out alone.

A good place to volunteer – a magical place

Someone described a lunch club which welcomes volunteers and said 'It is a place without rigid boundaries – volunteers can become members and vice versa. There is an inclusive atmosphere where everyone joins in, and organisational transparency – it is very obvious how the whole place operates. Volunteers can start with a very small commitment, but the culture fosters growth and involvement by everyone, so it is easy to increase your involvement'.

An ideal volunteering opportunity

Participants in our project identified the following characteristics of an ideal volunteering opportunity. We list these over this page and the next:

- It is well matched to the volunteer's preferences.
- A place where the most friendly and welcoming person in the organisation is assigned to support the new volunteer.
- A friendly and relaxed atmosphere where people have fun and seem happy to be there.
- A supportive organisation where the volunteer feels they are included and belong with an opportunity to build emotional bonds with others. A growing sense that you are seen as more than 'just a volunteer'.
- The person in charge is aware of any difficulties and has an understanding attitude – they 'look beyond the labels'.
- Clear expectations about the volunteering task and what is required.
- Clear feedback on performance along with lots of encouragement and an opportunity to gain confidence.
- The volunteer is needed and people in the organisation say so.
- It is good when beneficiaries of the volunteering activity say 'thank you'.
- The manager keeps volunteers informed and involved in decisions that affect them.
- The volunteer is provided with a reference.
- An opportunity to help others. A worthwhile activity that the volunteer believes is important.

- Open to training from the Supported Volunteering project about how to provide effective support.
- Understands about mental health needs and learning difficulties and creates a positive partnership with the Supported Volunteering project to individualise support to each person's needs.
- Initial support over the first few sessions with good induction training and the tasks analysed. A trial period to see if you like each other before making a longer commitment.
- Natural supports are quickly established.
- Clear identification of the person in charge and who to approach in the event of difficulties in order to solve problems early on.
- Plenty to do so that the volunteer is not bored, but no pressure.
- Opportunities to progress into new activities and develop new skills within the volunteering role. A chance to review involvement from time to time rather than an expectation of unlimited and uniform commitment. An ability to recognise and accept when it is time for the volunteer to leave.
- A place that creates a sense of being part of the wider community.
- Flexibility. For example, a place where it is acceptable to miss a day sometimes and returners are welcomed rather than criticised. The volunteer chooses which activities to do from a wide range of available tasks. It is easy to say 'no thanks' if you don't want to do something. This is volunteering 'buffet style'.
- A strong ally or champion in the setting who believes that people with support needs have a right to be involved.
- Previous experience with volunteers or a problem-solving attitude that acknowledges and tackles difficulties as they arise.
- The volunteer is invited to training events, parties and other occasions where people from the place meet together.
- Travel and child-care expenses are reimbursed. Tea and coffee is provided and perhaps a meal.

Browsing possibilities

Edinburgh has found that many people prefer to visit their website where opportunities are listed. In addition to the website, the public are invited to visit the office and browse through the files of vacancies at their leisure.

Cambridge Volunteer Bureau have placed all their information about volunteering opportunities on their website.

Database of volunteering opportunities

This is the database format used in Edinburgh for collecting details of volunteering opportunities.

<i>Contact details</i>	<i>Selection process (info sessions/Police checks/references/interview/trial period)</i>
<i>Description of work</i>	<i>Accessibility</i>
<i>Aims and activities of the organisation</i>	<i>Expenses paid?</i>
<i>Requirements – essential and desirable</i>	<i>Are your volunteers covered by insurance for the activities they undertake?</i>
<i>How many volunteers do you need?</i>	<i>Date of request and date the request expires (the date you need the job done by)</i>
<i>Induction and training</i>	<i>Support and supervision</i>
<i>Time of day, day of week and duration required, – can the work be done at evenings and weekends?</i>	

Suitable volunteering opportunities

At one of the seminars run as part of our project, participants set out what constitutes a good volunteering opportunity. This included opportunities which:

- Provide a wide range of choice so that the person can select the activity that appeals to them*
- Fit well with the person's preferences for time, day, location and type of work*
- Provide a wide band of opportunities, so the volunteer can have a bad day without being obliged to leave*
- Fit well with the person's abilities and interests*
- Are accessible – physically, intellectually and emotionally*
- Ensure that training is provided and that supports can fade as the person becomes established in the volunteering role*
- Allow volunteers to miss a day or two, or arrive late sometimes*
- Provide lots of choice about what activities to undertake*
- Provide opportunities for people to do nothing sometimes.*

Matching people and volunteering activities

It is vital to ensure that each volunteer is matched with an activity which suits him or her and which also suits the organisation they are working with. An important part of the Supported Volunteering scheme is to ensure that this match is achieved.

Finding a suitable activity

There are many ways in which people can get to know about volunteering opportunities. Supported Volunteering agencies use a variety of means of letting people know what is available at any time. These include:

- lists, available in the agency office;
- use of a website to publicise volunteering opportunities;
- having a register of organisations and the types of volunteering opportunities on offer;
- making presentations to prospective volunteers;
- circulating a scrapbook of photographs and stories.

Offering choices

Once someone has indicated that they are interested in volunteering, the next step is to offer them a choice of opportunities and help them to decide if any meet their own requirements.

- Match the person and the opportunity
- Use clear language
- Make sure that the volunteer is fully aware of the expectations of the voluntary work – especially where this includes reliability or other demands.
- Make sure it is the person who chooses what they want to do – promote choice and self-determination. Build confidence at every opportunity.
- Get a good understanding of the person's capacities and limitations.

Read yourself.

Wear Valley Volunteer Development Agency have developed a 'volunteer workbook' that invites potential volunteers to work through a series of questions to help them identify skills and interests and select suitable voluntary work.

Trial period

A volunteer in Cambridge says that it is important to be able to try out a few places as the first one might not be right for you.

Single events

These can provide a valid opportunity to volunteer for people who are not able to participate over a period of time or who want a series of 'tasters' of different kinds of volunteering. In Cambridge, a group collected seeds for the National Wild Flower Collection. In Cambridge a group meet to mail out a newsletter for a local charity – people can turn up just for one occasion if they like. Members of the Leicester scheme carried out a sponsored walk. Others volunteer on children's playschemes and sports clubs during school holidays.

Matching the person to the activity

'The voluntary job has to have the right kind of connection with your past. I spent a lifetime in education and training so the right voluntary work for me is as a trainer in computing.'

'I used to work as a personal assistant in an office, so I like things to be well organised. The place I volunteer is well run, so I like that'.

Anton has had mental health difficulties and wants to volunteer with people who have had drink or drugs problems, but not mental health difficulties.

Before starting

In many schemes, the support worker builds a relationship with the prospective volunteer and helps him or her to reach a decision about what opportunity best fits his or her needs and talents. Sometimes this will be done over a number of meetings. Steps that might be taken include:

- helping the prospective volunteer to draw up a shortlist of possible volunteer opportunities;
- offering trials or taster sessions;
- helping the person to complete an application form, where one is required;
- helping the person to obtain references, if these are needed;
- going to visit the place together to become familiar with the journey, the place and the people;

Many organisations will wish to interview the prospective volunteer before taking them on. The support worker should be prepared to accompany them if this is required.

Planning and agreeing support

It is the support worker's job to work with the prospective volunteer to agree what support they will require and how that support will be provided.

Good support is about helping the person to achieve a positive future rather than simply arranging a placement. The support anyone requires will vary according to the individual and the placement. Some of the supports offered in schemes we visited are listed opposite. We look at support in the next section.

Expenses

Volunteers will need to know what expenses are covered. These will usually include travel costs, but might also cover meals taken during voluntary work time, child care to enable the person to volunteer, any necessary equipment or clothing and a reasonable refreshment allowance.

Few supported volunteers are likely to have resources to fall back on, so the prompt payment of expenses is likely to be important. This may be negotiated with the organisation concerned and in some cases the Supported Volunteering agency organises a 'float' to assist people experiencing delay.

Perks

Carl said, 'I get perks for the job - I'm in the food co-op and get my little girl some grapes. I get a free dinner and as many cups of tea as I want.'

Benefits

Volunteers Plus in Cambridge do not make contact with the Benefits Agency, but expect that the volunteer will make their own arrangements. They also receive referrals from the local Disability Employment Advisers at the Job Centre.

One worker told us 'We have had the experience of potential volunteers being put off (even to the extent of getting up and walking out of the bureau) when we informed them of their responsibility to inform the Benefits Agency if they do voluntary work. Clearly people need to be aware of their responsibility - as claimants they will have signed an agreement to inform the Agency of any change in their circumstances (such as starting voluntary work). We do not want to put our work at risk (i.e. putting obstacles in the way of people volunteering, or of our meeting our targets, whatever). There may be other agencies involved with volunteers who are on benefits, e.g. social workers, health care professionals, and indeed the Benefits Agency itself. So whose job is it or should it be to remind the volunteer of this responsibility?'

The Somerset project have a standard letter that goes to a named person at the Benefits Agency to notify them of any person who has started voluntary work or supported employment. Their experience is that the Benefits Agency only take account of 'for profit' placements and disregard any volunteering in the charitable or voluntary sector.

Perks

Sometimes a volunteer will get an informal benefit or advantage from their position. For example, in Cambridge, a volunteer who checks tickets on the door of the community theatre will be given a free ticket to a subsequent performance. Volunteers who support disabled people at a gymnasium are given free membership and can use the fitness facilities at other times. Volunteers who worked over lunchtime usually received a free meal.

Benefits issues

The Supported Volunteering worker should be an expert on the impact of volunteering upon disability benefits. The rules used to set a maximum level of 16 hours per week, but this ceiling has been removed. The guidance leaflet (WK4 April 2001) says that:

- you can do anything from being a good neighbour, to work with charities or other organisations such as social services departments
- the voluntary work must not be for a close relative
- you can do as much voluntary work as you like
- you may receive expenses like fares or special clothing you need for the voluntary work without affecting your benefit
- for more information, contact your social security office.

Volunteer Development Scotland (2000) say that if the work is similar to your previous paid job then this may trigger a review of entitlement.

You should check to see if this guidance has been changed since April 2001.

Training for volunteering

Here is a sample programme made of ideas from several places. The sessions generally run for an hour and a half, once a week.

<i>Week 1:</i>	<i>Introductions Explaining the format for sessions – light-hearted games and homework sheets. Thinking about volunteering. What benefits can we get from voluntary work and can these benefits come from other sources? What is different about volunteering? Finding out about opportunities.</i>
<i>Week 2:</i>	<i>Identifying your skills, strengths and experience Building confidence and identifying strengths Keeping it legal – welfare benefits, minimum wage, police checks, health and safety, insurance.</i>
<i>Week 3:</i>	<i>Listening and assertiveness skills Volunteer rights and responsibilities Relaxation Why do people stop volunteering?</i>
<i>Week 4:</i>	<i>Everyone goes together to visit to 3 or 4 voluntary work settings Planning the team event for week 6 Coffee in town</i>
<i>Week 5</i>	<i>Personal action planning Getting the right support. Starting to volunteer – who is the most important person? Positive attitudes. What if things go wrong? Avoiding pitfalls</i>
<i>Week 6</i>	<i>A whole-day single-event volunteering activity for the whole group to do together, such as painting a room in a community centre</i>
<i>Follow up</i>	<i>Social event a month later or an invitation to join the ongoing support group</i>

Making it work

In this section we discuss more about ways of supporting people to be volunteers.

There is a wide range of options for supporting volunteers, from initial induction and training to longer-term intensive support.

Induction and training

Some supported volunteering schemes run induction and training programmes for their volunteers.

Induction sessions give new volunteers an opportunity to meet established volunteers and hear how they are getting on. They also give people a chance to ask questions and explore any worries they may have.

In some schemes an established volunteer helps a new starter to settle in and takes on a 'mentoring' role for the first few volunteering sessions.

For some volunteers using public transport is the hardest part of the volunteering experience. Some schemes organise an **escort** to accompany the volunteer on the journey to the activity.

A number of agencies run **training courses for volunteers**. These may be for small groups, targeted at specific people such as volunteers with a learning difficulty or separate men's and women's courses. Courses may include a focus on key skills, such as personal presentation, communication, negotiation and also the technical skills needed for specific volunteering tasks.

Training can be more specific. **Systematic instruction** can be used where a coach accompanies the volunteer into the host setting, analyses the tasks to be undertaken and steadily trains the person to carry out more and more of them until the volunteer can work independently (O'Bryan and O'Brien 1995)

Like everyone else, volunteers who need extra support are 'cost effective, but not cost free'.

Group supports

At Volunteers Plus in Cambridge, a drop in lunch is offered each month. The dates are advertised for the whole year, and two volunteers shop, prepare food and welcome volunteers as they arrive. Cambridge also runs occasional social events, perhaps three times a year, such as a party or a barbeque.

In Chelmsford, a meeting takes place in a coffee bar each month and the venue, date and time is circulated to all supported volunteers. The group is a valued source of support to some established volunteers as well as a 'shop window' for prospective volunteers to use in order to learn about the day-to-day reality of volunteering.

In Leicester, a volunteers' group run the social committee and provide a programme of group support events.

Telephone follow-up

Rachel wasn't going to attend the monthly support group as she was having a difficult few days. However, the supported volunteering worker phoned in the morning and encouraged her to make the effort. Rachel attended the meeting and found it helpful in deciding what kind of voluntary work she would try.

On a bad day, Simon calls for a twenty-minute chat with the supported volunteer worker. He says that without this he would have given up on the voluntary work.

Volunteer partners

Cambridge describe their Volunteer Partners arrangement: 'Sometimes it helps to have a bit of support to try something new. Some people would like to share their volunteering with another volunteer who can help where needed'. Volunteer Partners are offered good quality initial training and ongoing support.

Community Service Volunteers

CSV is a registered charity that arranges for people to become full-time volunteers. At Leicester, two CSV volunteers provide individual coaching and support to volunteers who need it.

Individual support

'I told the manager everything. Apart from her, nobody else knew about my background. I was 'escaping the label'. The manager writes a report every month and shows it to me (like all the staff I get monthly supervision). I also have a three-way progress meeting with the manager [and the volunteering project]. Each month I have a little bit more responsibility.'

Longer term support

Many agencies negotiate with the volunteer how to maintain contact and offer support over time. This may include some of the following options:

- **support groups**, where volunteers can continue to meet over time and discuss issues and problems as they arise;
- **group volunteering**, where a team of people volunteer as a group and support each other;
- **group social events** are run by some schemes. These give people a chance to meet on a social basis, but is also a valued source of support.
- **natural supports**. People in the host setting can be the best supporters of a volunteer. It is often possible to arrange for one or two people to 'befriend' and support the volunteer.
- **telephone follow-up**. Volunteers often appreciate regular contact, and some schemes arrange to telephone the supported volunteer at regular intervals to discuss progress and check on any problems. Some schemes routinely call each new supported volunteer after a few weeks to check out how they are progressing.
- **mentoring** is where someone (often an established volunteer) is linked with a new volunteer, keeps in regular touch with them and offers guidance and support. This might include visiting them in the workplace.
- **befriending** brings together a supported volunteer and someone from outside the care system, where both are interested in becoming friends.
- **buddying**. Sometimes it is possible to arrange for someone to work alongside the supported volunteer and offer support on a day-to-day basis. This might be another part time volunteer, a full time volunteer (see opposite), or an employee of the Supported Volunteering scheme, the care service or the organisation where the person volunteers.
- Many organisations involving volunteers have arrangements in place for **support and supervision** of volunteers. Sometimes this involves evaluating the volunteer's work and providing training on the job.

The wrong task

In Somerset, Keith was doing voluntary work in family homes where children had a learning disability. He was asked to bath a 16 year old girl. He said that it was against his principles, so he left.

Not enough to do

Karen volunteers at the hospital tea bar. She loves it there and would like to do more, but they have so many volunteers she is only allowed to go for two hours, once a fortnight.

Too long a wait

In Somerset, one group member said, 'You have to work up the strength to ask for a voluntary job and then wait for an opportunity to come up. The waiting was terrible.'

Asking about private things

Liz was told that she had to tell the voluntary place about her diagnosis and it made her feel, 'Why bother trying to volunteer?'

Try something else

The worker in Somerset told Karen to 'remember that if it doesn't work out, you can come back and we will try something else.'

Thinking about the whole person

VOX has adapted 'Essential Lifestyle Planning' (Smull and Harrison 1992) to develop Essential Volunteer Plans with learning disabled volunteers. By spending time with them and other people who know them well, they build a picture about the person's talents, skills, interests, and passions so that they can be matched to a volunteering activity. The information is then placed under the following headings: positive reputation; the person's talents, interests and passions; what a placement would need to know and do in order to support the person; and information that is needed in order to keep everyone safe. They are currently evaluating the approach.

Working with problems

A supported volunteering agency needs to be prepared to deal with problems that may arise. Below we outline some of the strategies described to us.

- **Anticipate problems** and design a response to them. The volunteer is usually the best person to explain the circumstances in which something might go wrong and what to do to avoid this or how to give help. A scheme can help the person to identify the early warning signs that things are going wrong and agree what action the person wants to take and wants other people to take.
- **Linked help.** A Supported Volunteering project with effective links with advocacy, advice and support services will be able to quickly refer any volunteer who has difficulties in other parts of their life to the appropriate help.
- **Liase with a support service.** For supported volunteers who are supported by a service (for example a mental health or learning difficulty service), it may be appropriate to contact the service (with the person's consent) and seek their help to resolve problems. There may be occasions when the person will agree that contact should be made with their doctor, psychiatrist or social worker.
- **Negotiate changes in the workplace.** Sometimes it will be possible to resolve problems by negotiating with the host agency – for example changing the hours or days of work or arranging for the person to move to a different location.
- **Review the voluntary work** to ensure that this is still the best option for the individual and that they still have room to develop.
- **Make contact with the family** with the person's consent to solve problems or enlist support.
- **Offer alternative voluntary work,** if the person is clearly unhappy with their current situation.
- **Take a break.** A number of supported volunteers stop from time to time. Supported Volunteering projects make it easy for people to stop and then start again.

Advisory groups

The Edinburgh Volunteer Exchange are in the process of establishing a reference group for the project to consist of volunteers, referrers and volunteer managers who will all meet together to help with the development of the community care project. They have appointed a volunteer to their management committee and are thinking about how this person will be supported to liase between the committee and other volunteers. One option is a volunteer focus group.

Chelmsford have an advisory group for the project that includes a representative from a volunteer involving organisation, a mental health support worker, a member of the management committee of the Volunteer Bureau, a representative from a health organisation and two active volunteers with support needs. The group meets four times a year to discuss issues raised by the worker, and to date this group has been very helpful and supportive.

Wear Valley Volunteer Development Agency have a Volunteer Forum that is totally volunteer led and assists the decision making process of the Bureau. The chairperson represents the group on the management committee.

Making meetings more accessible to everyone

- *Plan carefully – good participation takes time.*
- *Keep meetings short – this might mean meeting more often or slowing down the pace at which things get done.*
- *Think about the room and make sure it is neutral ground and set out in a way that helps everyone to join in as equals.*
- *Stay on the same topic, rather than jumping from one thing to another.*
- *Arrange extra support for individuals who need it – a person may wish to bring a friend or an advocate to the meeting, or have a small pre-meeting to look at the agenda and prepare contributions.*
- *Look after human needs – a personal welcome, refreshments, making sure everyone knows how to find the toilet.*
- *Use different formats – read out the agenda, use pictures as well as words, make an audiotape of the decisions, use big font in typed material.*
- *Encourage personal stories as well as ‘business conversations’.*
- *Create a friendly atmosphere – smile, don’t rush, take time to appreciate everyone’s contribution.*
- *Find a way for each person to contribute.*
- *Develop voting systems or other ways that make the decision-making process clear and inclusive.*

Running the project

This section contains advice and guidance on ways of running a supported volunteering project.

A healthy organisation

Generally for a supported volunteering project to be effective, it should have:

- clear goals
- champions in the local community who will offer support
- good connections with funding bodies and other influential people
- clear sources of funding
- Access to training and expertise on how to improve the project.

Advisory groups

Many projects establish an advisory group to help support and run the scheme. Advisory groups usually consist of local people with experience and commitment who can offer guidance and support to the project manager. Typically an advisory group will consist of one or more:

- representatives from volunteer-involving organisations
- active volunteers
- representatives from relevant support organisations, such as health or social services
- people with links to the community and organisations within it.

Advisory groups usually meet three or four times a year, although individual members might agree to be contacted should particular issues arise.

An important issue for such groups is to ensure that meetings are accessible to everyone who attends. Some guidance is given opposite.

Monitoring systems

The NAVB Quality System has a total of 26 standards covering management, development and operations.

Application forms

Chelmsford attach an equal opportunities monitoring form to their application form that covers employment status, receipt of incapacity benefit, ethnicity, gender, disability and age. In addition, they collect regular activity data showing, for example, the numbers of first-time interviews, new volunteers, people not yet placed, support meetings held, visits made to organisations, presentations made. They plan to monitor the duration of each person's volunteering.

The Halton scheme includes data on the support needs of volunteers.

The Cambridge project collects a wide range of information, including the organisation that referred them. They also monitor the number of people seen, and the number of telephone enquiries dealt with.

Postal survey

Staffordshire Moorlands CVS sent out a follow-up survey including pictures, tick boxes and room for text. Some of their questions include Are you still doing voluntary work? What do you like most about this voluntary work? What do you like least about this voluntary work? What do you get out of doing voluntary work? Is there any more training that we could arrange for you that would make your voluntary work more satisfying? Have you got any advice for someone thinking of doing voluntary work?

User Consultation and monitoring

'Go For It 'is a supported volunteering project for people with learning disabilities run by Bede House Association in London, and is Lottery funded. There has been external monitoring built in from the start and volunteer involvement is central to this. Regular six monthly meetings bring together staff and volunteers to review strategy and the service. Each month all volunteers, with staff support, complete an evaluation form that identifies what they have achieved in the past month and sets goals for next month. Regular feedback is also invited from the placement.

Strategy meetings

Some schemes organise meetings for volunteers to talk together about their voluntary work and how the supported volunteering project should develop. This can form a useful basis for deciding the future direction of the scheme.

Funding

Finding and maintaining funding is a major preoccupation with most schemes. The sources of funding that we encountered in our project included grants from:

- the National Lottery
- local councils, including social services
- a wide range of charitable trusts
- NHS trusts, including Primary Care Trusts,

While it takes several years to build a big network of really effective opportunities for volunteers who need extra support, most projects were on short-term and insecure funding. We hope that the modernisation of day services will release resources to strengthen Supported Volunteering projects.

Monitoring and continuous improvement

Schemes should have ways of monitoring progress and using this information to decide how they will develop. Feedback from volunteers and volunteer sites will be an important element of any monitoring system. It will be important for those running the scheme to keep in close touch with volunteers and the organisations they work in. On a more formal level, it may make sense to collect and review some standard information about the status of the scheme. Funding bodies may require monitoring information.

Some examples of information collected by schemes are shown opposite.

Transforming the organisation

Employing a specialist worker is not enough. Everyone in the organisation needs to continuously develop their skills so that people who need extra support find their place in the community.

Appendix 1: Useful contacts

Projects marked with a * were partners in the *Able Volunteers* programme.

*Chelmsford Agency for Volunteering, Bank Chambers, New Street, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1BA

Community Care Project, Edinburgh Volunteer Exchange, 77-79 Easter Road, Edinburgh EH7 5PW.

CSV, 237 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NJ

Go for It, 351 Southwark Park Road, London SE16 2JW

*Halton Voluntary Action, Brook Chambers, High Street, Runcorn WA7 1JH.

Imagine, 25 Hope Street, Liverpool L1 9BQ.

Institute of Career Guidance, 27a Lower High Street, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1TA.

*Instituto Integracion en la Comunidad, Universidad de Salamanca, Avda. De la Merced 109-131, 37005 Salamanca, Spain.

Mind to Volunteer Project, The Volunteer Centre, 18-20 Countess Street, Saltcoats, North Ayrshire KA21 5HW.

National Association of Volunteer Bureaux, New Oxford House, 16 Waterloo Street, Birmingham B2 5UG

National Centre for Volunteering and the *Institute for Volunteering Research, Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL.

Staffordshire Moorlands CVS, Bank House, 20 Edward Street Leek, Staffs ST13 5DS.

*The Supported Employment Bureau, College House, Broadway Park, Barclay Street, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5YA.

*TSE, Merseburger Strasse 52, 06110 Halle/Saale, Germany.

*VALUES Project, Leicester Volunteer Centre, 4th Floor, Market Centre Offices, 11 Market Place, The Jetty, Leicestershire LE1 5GG.

*Volunteers Plus, 4A Gonville Place, Cambridge CB1 1LY

VOX, Slade House, Horspath Driftway, Headington, Oxford OX3 7JH.

Wear Valley Volunteer Development Agency, Unit 4 - Crook Business Centre, New Road, Crook, County Durham DL15 8QE

Appendix 2: About the Able Volunteers Project

Lead Agency. The National Development Team ran a project called *Able Volunteers* between January and November 2001.

Funding. The project was part-funded through the European Commission *Preparatory measures to promote social inclusion - co-operation with Charitable Associations and Development of the Civil Dialogue*.

What is the need? A recent study by the UK Institute of Volunteering Research found that people with disabilities were under-represented in both formal and informal voluntary activity. A ten-nation study of volunteering across Europe conducted between 1993 and 1995 made no reference to the contribution of people with disabilities.

What kind of volunteering is included? Some agencies have given attention to supporting non-disabled citizens to enter health and social care settings as volunteers or, alternatively, supporting disabled people to serve as volunteers within the health and social care environment. In contrast to these two activities, *Able Volunteers* examined how to support people with disabilities so that they contribute to the wider community.

Aim of the project. The project examined six sites that have supported people with either a learning difficulty or a mental health problem to become volunteers in the wider community. The project identified the key success factors of these programmes and reviewed relevant literature in order to suggest applications.

Method. (1) Six sites in the UK were identified that have a track record of supporting people with either a mental health problem or a learning disability to become volunteers in the wider community. (2) At least five volunteers and two staff associated with each site were interviewed in depth and supporting policy and practice documents was reviewed. (3) Three seminars were held with representatives from these sites and colleagues from Germany and Spain. (4) Nearly 100 people attended the final conference. A variety of publications and conference presentations have disseminated findings from the study.

About the NDT. The Secretary of State for Health established the NDT in 1976 and in 1992 it became an independent, not-for-profit development agency. The focus is on stimulating new opportunities and inclusion in ordinary life for all people with learning disabilities. The NDT directly involves people with disabilities in all activities – on our Board of Management, as consultants, as core staff, policy advisers and trainers.

Appendix 3: Volunteering by people with extra support needs

By Stephen Howlett, Institute of Volunteering Research

There appears to be little or no rigorous research on the benefits of volunteering for people who have extra support needs. But there is research into benefits in general and also good practice guides that may be helpful.

The health benefits of volunteering.

In their book *The Healing Power of Doing Good – The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*, Allan Luks (with Peggy Lane) found that regularly helping others correlated with good physical and emotional health. The significance of volunteering in facilitating people to be associated with others was a factor identified in promoting good health.

Much of the work done into volunteering and health has been in the context of older volunteers. The findings are interesting, for example Hulbert and Chase (1991), and Lackner and Koeck (1980) suggest that volunteers show higher life satisfaction. Hulbert and Chase also note older volunteers are less lonely and increase friendship through volunteering. Research in this area also shows volunteers gaining more social skills, new roles and better social resources (Newman, Vasudev and Baum 1983; Seville 1985).

Most of the arguments about benefits of volunteering seem to be taken as read when it comes to the practice of involving people who need extra support as volunteers. The writing in this area is confined to good practice guides; but most of these lack real depth, with little analysis of some of the wider issues of volunteer involvement. Some guides are based on local research, and as such their recommendations for action are worth considering.

The points that arise from the available guides can be grouped into

- support for the volunteer
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- support for staff
- how to make involving volunteers with extra support needs attractive to organisations.

These can all be set within the wider ideas and best practice of volunteer management. Reviewing two of these guides one commentator noted that the issues raised could, and should, be applied to all volunteers. There are 'how to' guides for managers about involving volunteers – but the thinking around volunteers who need that bit extra is missing. However, a lot of what is said for 'ordinary volunteers' could be usefully applied in the context of the current project.

Existing good practice guides

First, a note about definition. A lot of the good practice guides have a very wide definition of 'extra support needs'. This often includes volunteers for whom English is a second language (Starkey 1994; MacKinnon 1991).

Starkey (1994) in her study in Cambridge addresses the question 'why should we take on volunteers with extra support needs'. Her answer draws on the right of every member of the community to give their time and skills without discrimination. This is equated with the duty of voluntary and statutory organisations to follow good practice in the recruitment and involvement of volunteers and to implement Equal Opportunities policies. There is a growing sense in the voluntary sector that the issue is not limited to the rather passive enactment of equal opportunities, but a more active approach that recognises that organisations can benefit from diversity; that their staff and volunteers need to reflect the communities in which they work.

While this is a step in the right direction, research on particular projects shows how this is likely to fail. Starkey's work showed that although organisations showed a good understanding of the variety of extra support needs potential volunteers may have, a fifth did not and saw support only in terms of the visible and obvious such as physical impairments.

Fully 50 per cent of the sample cited lack of staff time to supervise and support volunteers without detracting from services as a constraint. This was echoed elsewhere along with concerns that volunteers needed to be flexible and 'fragile' volunteers would not be up to the job, that volunteers would find it difficult to get on with other staff and that opportunities existing in the organisation are unsuitable (Baker 1998; Mackinnon 1991).

Practice guides emphasise the strengths of having a post that can facilitate the placement of volunteers with extra support needs. Such posts help to overcome many of the barriers for volunteers and organisations. The over-riding impact of having this sort of post is as a reference and support point. Anecdotal evidence gathered from Volunteer Bureaux (VBs) who offer this support role shows that time is a critical factor – time to get to know volunteers, to build trust and to ensure that they are able to express what they want from the volunteering experience. As such this role appears to answer two needs of all volunteers – to ensure that volunteers get what they want from the experience and to have support. It also addresses fears of organisations that they are not equipped to involve volunteers with extra support needs alone.

There are also lessons that can be learnt using existing good practice for all volunteers. There are *how to manage* volunteer handbooks easily available, but they rarely, if ever include advice about volunteers with extra support needs. But some of the general principles, if acted upon, would help in involving volunteers with learning difficulties. McCurley and Lynch (1998) note the importance of planning in the design of a volunteer programme. They also point out that it is essential to involve all levels of staff throughout the volunteer programme design process, including assessing the level of experience of staff working with volunteers, attitudes to where and how volunteers can be involved and additional programme elements such as staff training. Along with this the authors identify the overall organisational climate as key to successfully involving any volunteers. They maintain that evidence of a good organisational climate includes:

- A clear sense of individual roles with respect for the roles of others
 - A willingness to sacrifice for a goal
-
-

- Trust
- Tolerance and acceptance
- Open and honest communication
- Group identity: 'we're in this together'
- Inclusion, not exclusion
- Mutual support and independence

All of these will support the involvement of volunteers and all are important for the inclusion of volunteers with extra support needs. The appreciation of the need for staff involvement in planning, recognition of training requirements and acknowledgement of the importance of the organisational climate could help organisations overcome many of the difficulties they feel they may have with involving volunteers with extra support needs.

Volunteer management

The management of volunteers, and what constitutes good practice is an area of growing interest. The recruitment and retention of volunteers can benefit from having somebody in an organisation who understands how to attract volunteers, and how to ensure that volunteers gain the maximum benefit from their involvement. Existing good practice points organisations towards more formal procedures around interviewing potential volunteers, around having volunteer agreements and methods of supervision.

It must be recognised that the level of formality depends upon the organisation and its volunteers: while management systems can be a good idea, they can also deter volunteers who do not see their role as involving supervisions and so forth. This needs particular care when involving volunteers who need extra support. It is most important that bringing in more formal systems for volunteer management does not reduce the flexibility needed when involving a diverse range of volunteers.

Useful reading

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