

# The Volunteering Action Plan

## ... An Update

As part of the National Youth Work Strategy the Scottish Government made a commitment to work with the voluntary sector to develop an Action Plan for Volunteering - recognising and valuing volunteers within the sector. The Volunteering Action Plan aims to attract more volunteers to the youth work sector and to improve support and development opportunities for youth work volunteers.

Youth Scotland, working with YouthLink Scotland and Volunteer Development Scotland, will deliver the Action Plan improving the recruitment, induction and progression of volunteers working with young people, and supporting the development of young volunteers.

### The Volunteering Action Plan, What's Happened So Far?

The Volunteering Action Plan was officially launched by Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years, at Youth Scotland's Moving Forward Conference in November 2007.

#### Volunteer Life Cycle:

The Volunteer Life Cycle, identified in the Action Plan, emphasises the importance of recognising and valuing the impact of volunteers through strong recruitment and induction procedures, regular and relevant training, and opportunities for volunteer progression and development. Existing resources, models and training used by the voluntary youth sector have been identified and classified using the stages of the Volunteer Life Cycle, this information will form a web-based directory.

Information-gathering and café consultation events took place in November and December in Edinburgh, the Scottish Borders, Inverness and the Western Isles where information about resources and models was collected, and discussions about the value and issues of sharing resources and increased joint working were held. Consultation with key local support agencies - Volunteer Centres, Community Learning and Development services, and local Youth Work Associations - took place in January through online surveys.

#### Youth Development Model:

The Youth Development model looks at supporting young people to develop and progress as volunteers. Interviews with youth work organisations, local authorities, educational bodies, and businesses have highlighted existing models of youth volunteering, methods of supporting and promoting youth volunteering that are currently being used, and information about how young people's volunteering is being recognised and accredited. Contacts for a new Awards Network have been identified and the first network meeting will take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

#### Progression:

This area of the Action Plan looks at sustaining volunteering through mentoring. Evidence suggests there are both informal and structured models of mentoring already being used within the sector but more information needs to be collected about those involved and models that are working well, and more needs to be done to explore how the existing models can be developed.



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### Summary of Initial Findings...

Some of the initial findings from the consultations and surveys suggest there is a real desire to share resources and training and to find opportunities for joint working across the sector.

There are, however, challenges to overcome when sharing resources and some of the key challenges identified include: the copyright and ownership of resources and implications of sharing on cost and funding; that although there are lots of generic resources and training often 'one size' does not fit all situations: and that resources often do not stand-alone but need background expertise and input of trainers.

The responses also suggest there is good support available locally for groups and the main local support agencies acknowledged in the consultations were: the local Youth Work Associations, the Volunteer Centres, the CVS's and the Local Authorities. Some of the respondents felt the support offered by national uniformed organisations to their local groups could be of benefit to the wider youth work sector, and there were calls for better engagement between local groups.

### The Volunteering Action Plan, What Happens Next?

Now a range of information and views have been collected, feedback will be provided to those who have been involved through events, online information and newsletter updates.

Work on completing the short-term outputs will continue, this includes:

- producing a 'Guide to Volunteering in Youth Work' in booklet, poster and web format
- producing a web-based directory of resources, models and training
- developing a Youth Development Model, an Awards Network, and a guide to various Awards
- making recommendations for ways forward, for example, finding ways to encourage sharing and transferability of resources

Future work will also include raising awareness of what is available nationally and locally and making it accessible, useful and used by local voluntary youth work organisations and groups; and shaping the application and use of the national training grants programme by providing good resource guidance, highlighting current gaps and needs areas, and facilitating the sharing of resources and training across youth work organisations. Efforts will also be made to rollout the Café Consultation model to a wider group of local authority areas as a process for triggering shared practices within the youth work sector; and to develop a consortium approach to providing access to local training.

**For information about future developments and feedback events contact Youth Scotland on 0131 554 2561 or email [office@youthscotland.org.uk](mailto:office@youthscotland.org.uk). To download a copy of the Volunteering Action Plan visit the Youth Scotland website [www.youthscotland.org.uk](http://www.youthscotland.org.uk).**

