

# The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

Key priorities for youth policies answers on  
**Voluntary Activities**



Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work.

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## **UNITED KINGDOM, 2005**

### **1 Statistics**

#### **1.1 Different types of voluntary activities that exist for young people**

	Voluntary activities	Voluntary service	Civic service
<b>Exists?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

#### **1.2 Number of young people who engage in voluntary activities**

<b>Total Number</b>	2520000 <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Female</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Male</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>

#### **1.3 Number of young people who engage in voluntary service**

<b>Total Number</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Female</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Male</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>

#### **1.4 Number of young people who engage in voluntary service abroad (excluding European Voluntary Service)**

<b>Total Number</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Female</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Male</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>

#### **1.5 Number of young people who engage in national voluntary civic service**

<b>Total Number</b>	30,000 <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Female</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Male</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>

##### **1.5.1 Number of young people who carry out their service period abroad**

<b>Total Number</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Female</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>
<b>Total Male</b>	N/A <i>persons</i>

### 1.5.2 Is the national voluntary civic service open to young people from outside the country?

Yes **No**

### 1.5.3 If yes, number of young people from outside the country participating in your national voluntary civic service

Total Number	N/A <b>persons</b>
Total Female	N/A <b>persons</b>
Total Male	N/A <b>persons</b>

### 1.6 Clarification of the statistics used

Statistics for voluntary activities relate to 16-24 year olds in England and Wales (Home Office Citizenship Surveys 2003 and 2001). The Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement found that levels of volunteering by young people across the UK were broadly comparable, although the rate in Scotland is higher at 47%. Civic service statistics refer to Millennium Volunteers programme, which has attracted 150,000 young people aged 16-24 since 1999.

## 2 Range of voluntary activities

### 2.1 Voluntary activities engaged in by young people and approximate number of people involved

	Exists?	Number
a. Community activity	Yes	N/A
b. Participation/self-governance	Yes	N/A
c. Emergency response	Yes	N/A
d. Community peacekeeping	Yes	N/A
e. Social assistance	Yes	N/A
f. Personal assistance	Yes	N/A
g. Children and youth	Yes	N/A
h. Environment	Yes	N/A
i. Human rights, advocacy and politics	Yes	N/A
j. Economic justice	Yes	N/A
k. Development aid	Yes	N/A
l. Humanitarian aid	Yes	N/A

	Exists?	Number
<b>m. Religious volunteering</b>	Yes	N/A
<b>n. Education</b>	Yes	N/A
<b>o. Arts/culture</b>	Yes	N/A
<b>p. Sports</b>	Yes	N/A
<b>q. Recreation</b>	Yes	N/A

Other voluntary activities

Peer education/mentoring; health issues; crime and community safety.

### 3 Finance

No answers available

## 4 Main Actors

### 4.1 Main actors of voluntary activities of young people

Governmental actors

The Department of Education and Skills (<http://dfes.gov.uk>) is responsible for overseeing the Millennium Volunteers Programme (<http://www.mv-online.gov.uk>) and the Young Volunteer Challenge in England, and also encourages school students' volunteering through citizenship education. The Home Office (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/index.html>) makes strategic grants to a number of organisations promoting youth volunteering, including Community Service Volunteers, YouthNet, the National Youth Agency and Student Volunteering England. All government departments are required to have volunteering policies, and departments such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (responsible for local and regional government, housing, planning, fire, regeneration, social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal), the Department for Culture, Arts and the Media, and the Department of Health support particular aspects of voluntary activities.

Non governmental actors

There are four national volunteering organisations: Volunteer England (<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/>); Volunteer Development Scotland (<http://www.vds.org.uk>); Wales Council for Voluntary Action (<http://www.wcva.org.uk>); and Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency (<http://www.volunteering-ni.org>) each of which supports local and regional volunteering organisations in their respective country. National organisations supporting young people's volunteering include Student Volunteering (<http://www.studentvol.org.uk>); <http://www.studentvolscotland.org.uk>; , Youth Action Network (<http://www.youth-action.org.uk>) and Changemakers (<http://www.changemakers.org.uk/>). A range of organisations offer young people full-time volunteering opportunities. Those which offered the largest number of full-time opportunities are CSV (Community Service Volunteers), Prince's Trust, Careforce and Raleigh. Opportunities are also offered through faith-based organisations such as Jewish Care and Methodist Association of Youth Clubs. Part-time opportunities are offered by a wide range of local public, voluntary and community and youth organisations. There is also a network of over 400



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volunteer centres throughout the UK, through which over 100,000 young people accessed volunteering opportunities in 2003.

## 5 Legal basis/legislation for voluntary activities in general and for young people in particular

### 5.1 Legal status of volunteers

No specific legal status, although volunteers who meet certain requirements are excluded from some legislation such as Minimum Wage Act. The government is currently looking at ways to clarify the legal status of volunteers in response to a series of court cases taken out by volunteers over unfair dismissal. Possible solutions proposed include the introduction of a volunteer law that clarifies the legal rights of volunteers and volunteering organisation.

### 5.2 Taxation/tax exemptions for volunteers and volunteer organisations

None at present.

### 5.3 Existence of social protection of volunteers

No national standards or arrangements. Individual programmes and projects have own arrangements for payment of expenses, living allowances for full-time volunteers, insurance, end of service awards etc.

### 5.4 Legal situation of unemployed young people participating in voluntary activities

Unemployed young people are able to participate in voluntary activities providing they meet certain conditions. These include young people taking reasonable steps to find work, only receiving expenses actually incurred, and being able to attend interviews or take up employment within a given amount of time.

## 6 Programmes

### 6.1 Programmes and plans on volunteering (national, regional, local)

National level: Millennium Volunteers - MV -(for young people aged 16 to 24): part-time volunteering programme which provides certificates to young people who complete 100 or 200 hours' voluntary work within a year. There are currently over 200 MV projects throughout the UK. Young Volunteer Challenge (England) and Project Scotland are government-funded programmes offering full-time volunteering opportunities to young people. Local: wide range of local initiatives, often developed by young people themselves. Many national voluntary youth organisations, such as the Scout Association, Girlguiding and the National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs, include a volunteering element in their programmes. Award programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Trident and the Youth Achievement Awards also promote and



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recognise young people's volunteering. Local authority youth services also encourage volunteering by young people, often as part of their wider citizenship or participation programmes. A wide range of other organisations also support young people's volunteering, including youth organisations, schools and colleges as part of citizenship programmes, student community action groups in further and higher education institutions and volunteer centres, and public organisations such as health services, regeneration programmes and housing organisations.

## 7 Relationship between different types of voluntary services

### 7.1 Relationship between military service, civilian service, civic service and voluntary service

There is no compulsory military service or civilian service in the UK. Involvement in programmes such as Millennium Volunteers is optional.

### 7.2 Perspectives for the creation of a voluntary civic service in countries where it does not exist

Recent proposals from the Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement recommend a major expansion and rebranding of the government-funded Millennium Volunteers programme.

## 8 Development of voluntary activities, including standards/instruments aiming at securing and enhancing quality in voluntary activities

### 8.1 Recent (this year) developments in the area of voluntary activities

The Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement, which reported in March 2005, aims to achieve a 'step change in diversity, quality and quantity' of youth volunteering in the UK through the development of a national volunteering framework. It recommends the setting up of a national implementation body, bringing together young people, the voluntary and community sector, government and the private sector to commission the delivery of the framework. This will have two key elements: a web-based portal for young people's volunteering, and a network of local professionals who will consolidate and enhance youth volunteering opportunities in their local area. The implementation body will also be responsible for campaigns to increase young people's awareness and understanding of volunteering and voluntary activities. The Government is expected to respond to the Commission's recommendations by the end of June 2005.

### 8.2 What are the trends concerning the range of voluntary activities?

Increasing ~~Decreasing~~ **Stable**

Explanation

The Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement, which reported on the development of



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a national volunteering strategy in March 2005, sets a target of increasing the number of young people volunteering with a formal organisation by 1 million by 2010. It proposes creating new opportunities at three levels: up to 300,000 new 'taster' activities - short-term, group-based, task-centred activities designed to provide initial experience of voluntary activities; 80,00 new part-time local opportunities; and up to 12,000 full-time placements and projects. In May 2005 the Government committed itself to allocating £45 million (66 million euro) to be matched by £50 million (74 million euro) from private and public sources over 3 years to develop a national framework for youth action and engagement.

### **8.3 Description of quality standards used in voluntary activities**

Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for all organisations which involve volunteers in their work. Investing in Volunteers is not youth specific, but the Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement recommended that it should be adopted as quality standards for young people's voluntary activities with the addition of a new module relating to young people. The Youth Action Network has developed standards for its member organisations, local organisations which promote young people led voluntary activities.

### **8.4 Description of measures to improve the quality of voluntary activities for young people**

The government funds various national organisations to improve the quality of voluntary activities available to young people. These include Youth Action Network, national Student Volunteering organisations and The National Youth Agency. Their activities include training for young people and those coordinating young people's voluntary activities, identifying and sharing good practice, and information for practitioners.

## **9 Removing obstacles to young people's voluntary engagement**

### **9.1 The facilitation of young people's voluntary engagement**

Arrangements for facilitating and supporting young people's voluntary engagement vary widely in different geographical areas, resulting in a 'postcode lottery' of provision. Some areas have specialist youth action or young volunteer projects. Most universities and a minority of further education colleges have student community action groups. A network of over 400 volunteer centres throughout the UK promotes and supports volunteering by people of all ages - while many of these successfully involve young people in voluntary activities, others do not either target or attract young people. Where no specialist provision exists, young people's voluntary engagement may be supported by voluntary and statutory youth organisations, local authority departments and voluntary and community groups, but again the nature of this support varies widely.

### **9.2 Recent (this year) measures to remove obstacles to young people's**



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## **volunteering**

The Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement (which reported in March 2005) made recommendations to improve young people's access to volunteering, including recommendations to remove barriers faced by specific groups, such as unemployed young people and disabled young people. However, while the government has welcomed its report and allocated funding to develop a national framework for youth action and engagement, it has not yet responded to the Commission's detailed recommendations.

### **9.3 Existing obstacles**

Research undertaken for the Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement identified a range of barriers to young people's volunteering. They included competing demands on young people's time; negative peer pressure; young people's lack of access to appropriate information on volunteering; volunteering organisations' failure to reach out to young people and to offer them appropriate opportunities; administrative issues affecting volunteering organisations, including legislation, insurance and regulation, benefit arrangements which deter unemployed young people from volunteering, and specific barriers to disabled young people's involvement.

## **10 Promotion of voluntary activities for young people**

### **10.1 Information channels and contacts for voluntary activities of young people**

There are a number of organisations offering information on volunteering opportunities, including YouthNet (<http://www.do-it.org.uk>), Timebank (<http://www.timebank.org.uk/>) and Worldwide Volunteering (<http://www.wvv.org.uk/>). The Russell Commission on Youth Action and Engagement proposed building on these to develop a national portal on youth volunteering, for young people and practitioners. At local level, the network of over 400 volunteer centres include information and support for young people, and young people make up over a quarter of their clients.

### **10.2 Promotion activities for voluntary activities**

The government has designated 2005 the Year of the Volunteer - one of its main priorities is to encourage the involvement of young people. <http://www.yearofthevolunteer.org/> Volunteers Week (1-7 June each year - <http://www.volunteersweek.org.uk/>) and CSV Make a Difference Day (October - <http://www.csv.org.uk/campaigns/make+a+difference+day/>) are the major annual promotional campaigns for volunteers. Both target people of all ages, but MADD includes a specific focus on young people. The National Youth Agency publishes a magazine promoting and celebrating young people's voluntary activities - YOUTHACTION, available at <http://www.nya.org.uk>.

### **10.3 Initiatives to promote voluntary activities among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds**



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Some government funding is available for projects which increase involvement in voluntary activities by disadvantaged groups, including young people. Many volunteer-involving organisations seek to involve young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Millennium Volunteers has been successful in engaging young people who had not previously been involved in any form of volunteering. The Young Volunteer Challenge provides young people from low income families with a grant while they undertake full-time volunteering placements for up to 9 months. The report of the Russell Commission on youth action and engagement seeks to broaden the range of young people involved in volunteering, and highlights the role of youth workers in involving young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in voluntary activities.

## 11 Recognition of voluntary activities of young people

### 11.1 Initiatives for recognition 'good practices'

A wide range of national awards accredit young people's achievements and learning in non-formal settings, including through voluntary activities. The Awards Network has mapped these awards and their components against the nine-level National Qualifications Framework, which runs from entry level to level 8 (equivalent to a doctorate). Non-formal awards have been identified as offering accreditation from entry level to level 3 (equivalent to A-level or NVQ level 3). Full details of awards schemes and contact details are contained in the publication National Framework of Awards in Non-Formal Educational Settings, available at <http://www.nya.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=90690>

### 11.2 Measures of societal recognition

At national level: Millennium Volunteers (certificates for completing 100 or 200 hours voluntary activity, and Millennium Volunteer of the Year Awards; Volunteers Week (1-7 June; CSV Make a Difference Day Awards; Spotlight Awards for young campaigners; Whitbread Young Achievers Awards; Philip Lawrence Awards (for active citizenship by groups of young people). At local level, many local authorities organise ceremonies to recognise the achievements of young people, including their achievements through voluntary activities.

## 12 Co-operations and networks, exchange of volunteers, transnational and international cooperation

No answers available

## 13 Studies & Surveys

### 13.1 Recent surveys or research on the topic of voluntary activities

Home Office Citizenship Survey 2003: People, Families and Communities:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors289.pdf> Russell Commission report and background research papers: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors289.pdf>



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