



**Youth**Partnership

# ***QUESTIONNAIRE***

## ***“VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES”***

### ***UNITED KINGDOM***



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European Commission



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## **1. Types of voluntary activities existing in the country for young people**

England: 2008 survey of volunteering (Helping Out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving) found that 57 per cent of young people aged 16-24 interviewed were regular or occasional volunteers.

Scotland: approx 33 per cent of young people aged 16-24 (200,000 young people) aged 16-24 volunteer each year.

“Over 185,000 young people are actively engaged with voluntary youth organisations across Scotland”.

Profile of 7 national voluntary youth organisations: Youth Scotland (5 Nov 08)

## **2. Which kind of voluntary service exist in your country and how many young people engage in them per year, in totals and by gender.**

Over 268,000 young people aged 16-24 took part in the government's volunteering programme Millennium Volunteers (a part-time programme providing recognition for young people completing 100 or 200 hours' volunteering) between 1999 and 2007. Around 45,500 young people were actively volunteering on the MV programme on 31 December 2006.

The Youth Work Strategy Moving Forward: A Strategy for improving young people's chances through youth work was adopted by the Scottish Government which has led to significant changes in how the sector operates. It aimed to build capacity in the sector through a range of measures which would ensure that all young people were able to benefit from youth work opportunities. Measures included a Volunteering Action Plan developed with the voluntary youth sector and delivered primarily by Youth Scotland; Community Planning Pilots led by Youthlink, designed to improve and encourage young people and youth organisation involvement; and a new focus on evaluation training for youth workers. It also committed to ensuring that the sector were involved more fully in influencing and developing Government policy at an early stage.

## **3. Financial and legal status of voluntary activities**

England: the baseline budget for Millennium Volunteers for 2006-07 was £15m (€21m). During 2006-07 the government allocated nearly £26m to the national youth volunteering organisation v (including £7.5m provided on a match funded basis with the private sector. For the financial year 2007-08, just over £47m is allocated to v, including the transfer of the £15m MV funding. The Higher Education Active Community Fund provides £15m to support coordination of volunteering in higher education institutions.

The Cabinet Office funds five organisations, in addition to v, specifically to promote volunteering by young people, with total funding of approx £1.4m in 2007-08.

Wales: The Welsh Government Assembly announced funding of £800,000 to support youth volunteering, particularly by disadvantaged young people, in November 2007.

Scotland: £16.9m allocated to Project Scotland between 2004-2007.

Northern Ireland: the Department of Education NI has allocated a total of £670,000 to support the Millennium Volunteers programme in 2008/9 and 2009/10 including €1.07m to support the Millennium Volunteers programme between 2008-11.

No specific legal status, although full-time volunteers who meet certain requirements are excluded from the Minimum Wage Act.

#### **4. Main actors of voluntary activities of young people on national, regional and local level in your country**

Volunteering is the responsibility of the devolved administrations.

England: The government department responsible for voluntary activities is the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office makes strategic grants to a number of organisations promoting youth volunteering, including the national youth volunteering organisation 'v', YouthNet, Youth Action Network, the National Youth Agency, British Youth Council, and the Citizenship Foundation. Other government departments support specific aspects of voluntary activities, including the DCSF (in relation to peer mentoring and volunteering in schools and volunteering in further and higher education), the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Culture, Arts and the Media, and the Department of Health.

The Millennium Volunteers programme was overseen in England by the Department for Education and Skills (now DCSF) until March 2007, when it was transferred to v, which was set up in 2006 to provide a national framework for youth volunteering and increase the number of young people undertaking voluntary activities.

In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales the MV programme has been devolved to the national volunteering organisations listed below.

In Scotland, Youth Scotland Youth Scotland is the largest non-uniformed youth organisation in Scotland and one of the key providers of information, training, advice and support to part time and voluntary youth workers.

Youth Scotland aims to enable young people throughout Scotland to maximise their full potential through the provision of quality educational and social opportunities.

Youth Scotland has a membership of 584 affiliated and 174 participating youth groups and works in partnership with a network of area associations and local authorities to support youth workers to deliver safe and inspiring leisure opportunities to young people throughout Scotland. (<http://www.youthscotland.org.uk/home.htm>)

There are four national volunteering organisations (all receiving government funding): Volunteering England, Volunteer Development Scotland, Wales Council for Voluntary Action, and Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency, each of which supports local and regional volunteering organisations in their respective country. National organisations supporting young people's volunteering include Student Volunteering England (which merged with Volunteering England in July 2007), Student Volunteering Scotland, Youth Action Network and Changemakers. A range of organisations offer young people full-time volunteering opportunities, with CSV (Community Service Volunteers) as the largest provider. Part-time opportunities are offered by a wide range of local public, voluntary and community, youth and faith organisations. There is also a network of over 400 volunteer centers throughout the UK, many of which seek to involve young people in voluntary activities.

#### **5. What is the social protection of young volunteers in your country and are voluntary activities compatible with social benefits?**

Individual programmes and projects have their own arrangements (due to no national standard) for payment of expenses, living allowances for full-time volunteers, insurance, end of service awards etc.

Unemployed young people are able to participate in voluntary activities providing they meet certain conditions. These include 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 and plans in the country on volunteering (national, regional, local)?**

The national youth volunteering organisation v launched a national youth volunteering programme, v involved, for England in November 2007, for implementation from April 2008. The UK-wide Millennium Volunteers programme was set up by government in 1999 to promote and support part-time volunteering by young people aged 16-24. It now forms the basis of v's part-time youth volunteering programme in England, but continues as MV in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In Scotland, Project Scotland is a government-funded programmes offering full-time volunteering opportunities to young people. The DCSF launched a two-year national peer mentoring pilot in 2006 involving 180 schools in England, and now funds a national peer mentoring programme engaging 400 schools in England. Its Active Citizens in Schools scheme encourages 11-15 year olds to volunteer in and through schools.

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. These operate locally within a national framework. Award programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Trident and the Youth Achievement Awards also promote and recognise young people's volunteering. Youth services in all four countries encourage volunteering by young people, often as part of wider citizenship or participation programmes. A wide range of other organisations also support young people's volunteering, including schools, further and higher education institutions, volunteer centres, and public services such as health services, regeneration programmes and housing organisations. In some areas, young people have developed youth-led volunteering projects, and promoting youth-led volunteering is seen as an important aspect of v's work.

Through funding provided by the Scottish Government the Volunteering Action Plan partnership between Youth Scotland, Youthlink Scotland and Volunteer Development Scotland has completed the development of the new publication "*Amazing things*".

It is designed to aid Youth Work organisations, schools, colleges, universities, employers and the wider community to better understand the variety of Awards available to young people in Scotland to recognise their achievements.

It is a comprehensive guide to youth sector awards including nominated awards such as the Young Scot and Diana awards. In 2008 Youth Scotland secured the credit rating and levelling of the Youth Achievement Awards against the SCQF from level 4 (bronze award) – 7 (platinum) ensuring that every young person receiving a YAA gets SCQF credit points.

In Northern Ireland, the Department of Social Development is developing a volunteering strategy which, it is envisaged will incorporate a youth volunteering dimension

## **7. Does a strategy (plan) or specific measures for the development of voluntary activities of young people exist in your country?**

The UK has seen a focus on youth volunteering in recent years, particularly through the Millennium Volunteers scheme. v was created in 2006 in order to implement the recommendations of the Russell

Commission on Youth Action and Engagement, though creating an infrastructure for youth volunteering and supporting the development of new volunteering opportunities.

**8. Please, describe which obstacles to volunteering of young people do still exist in your country and which measures are taken to remove them?**

Research undertaken for the Russell Commission 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. Research carried out for v into factors preventing young people from volunteering identified lack of time as the main obstacle, followed by lack of information about how to get involved, and young people feeling that they did not have anything to offer. Transport, childcare and peer pressure were also identified as barriers to involvement.

**9. How are voluntary activities of young people promoted in your country, particularly among young people with fewer opportunities?**

Arrangements for facilitating and supporting young people's voluntary engagement vary widely in different geographical areas, resulting in a 'postcode lottery' of provision. The National Youth Volunteering Programme seeks to rectify this by ensuring that each local authority area in England has a team of youth volunteering specialists in place. In Scotland, all volunteer centres have a youth development worker, and the Welsh Assembly Government announced plans to employ youth volunteer advisers in every local authority. In addition to specialist provision, young people's voluntary engagement is facilitated by voluntary and statutory youth organisations, local authority departments and voluntary and community groups, but again the nature of this support varies widely.

England's national youth volunteering programme, vinvolved, was officially launched on 19 November 2007, with the announcement of £75m (€105m) worth of grants to support a major expansion of volunteering by young people aged 16 to 25 from April 2008. The Welsh Assembly announced specific funding to support organisations in developing new volunteering opportunities for young people in November 2007. In Northern Ireland, the education minister promised to enhance youth volunteering in May 2007.

There are a number of organisations offering information on volunteering opportunities, including vinspired (a young people's website set up by v), YouthNet Timebank and Worldwide Volunteering. The Russell Commission proposed the development of a national portal on youth volunteering for young people and practitioners.

Volunteers Week (1-7 June each year) and CSV Make a Difference Day (October) are the major annual promotional campaigns for volunteers. Both target people of all ages, but MADD includes a specific focus on young people. There are also a range of awards which provide recognition for young people's achievement through voluntary activities. These include The Philip Lawrence Awards; Common Purpose CHANGEit Awards; and the Young Achievers Awards. The National Youth Agency publishes a twice-yearly magazine, youthaction, which promotes and celebrates young people's voluntary activities.

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, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and disabled young people. The National Youth Volunteering Programme 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.

The Northern Ireland Youth Awards, which is targeted at youth organizations, has a “volunteering” category which assists in promoting the importance of youth volunteering.

**10. Explain how voluntary activities of young people are recognised in your country. Name certificates and other measures used for that purpose.**

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 PhD). 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 National Youth Agency publication the National Framework of Awards in Non-Formal Educational Settings.

**11. Which co-operations, networks and exchange programmes do exist in your country for supporting voluntary activities of young people?**

Youth Action Network (YAN) is a membership organization delivering specialist capacity building services to the youth volunteering sector in England. It has a particular focus on involving young people in developing their own volunteering projects locally, and also has its own projects giving young people the opportunity to volunteer at a national level. YAN works to increase the quality and quantity of Youth Action projects available to young people and offer capacity building, training, networking opportunities, grants, partnerships and events to its members and others to do this.

16/12/2008

**12 Do collective volunteering projects exist in your country?**

The government is working with the London 2012 Organizing Committee to look at ways of young people participating as volunteers and address the question of how citizenship developments can be built into the Olympic volunteering programme.

**13 Recent survey or research carried out on the topic of voluntary activities?**

The Department for Local Government and Communities' Citizenship Survey (carried out every two years) includes information on formal and informal volunteering. Initial findings from the 2007 survey were published in October 2007.

The Cabinet Office (Office of the Third Sector) published Helping Out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving in 2007, based on interviews with people aged 16 and over previously interviewed for the Citizenship Survey.