



**MAKE A DIFFERENCE:
AN OUTLINE
VOLUNTEERING
STRATEGY FOR THE UK:**

**SUMMARY OF THE REPORT
PUBLISHED ON 6 JUNE 1995**

Introduction

The Make A Difference Team was established in October 1994. The Make A Difference initiative was launched by the Government in March of that year and advocates an integrated approach to increasing individual involvement in the community. It calls on those in the business, voluntary and public sectors to work together to develop effective local voluntary action.

2. The Team comprises senior representatives of the volunteering, public and private sectors. A full list of the Team members is on page 4.
3. The terms of reference required the Team members, in particular, to:
 - develop and agree a UK strategy for volunteering in consultation with others; the strategy will include both the use of the media to raise awareness of volunteering and the scope for developing a national network of local information points;
 - develop and communicate the vision of Make a Difference in support of the strategy;
 - determine targets specific to Make a Difference and agree a programme of action to achieve these; and
 - put into action the principles behind Make a Difference within the organisations and networks of its members.

4. The Team produced a report, entitled "Make a Difference: An Outline Volunteering Strategy For the UK" which was published on 6 June. The report is aimed at those organisations within the public, private and voluntary sectors with an interest in volunteering and at all those individuals who currently are or in the future may become volunteers.

Definition of Volunteering

5. The Team has adopted this definition of volunteering.

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community; the environment; or individuals outside one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

Vision of Volunteering

6. The Team sees the long term objective as achieving their vision for volunteering:
 - first, of a society in which the right of all citizens to engage in voluntary or community action is unequivocally recognised and valued as an essential part of living democracy; and
 - second, of a society in which citizens choose to exercise that right because:
 - they want to be active participants;
 - out of a sense of shared responsibility;

- because they want to help others;
- in order to seek change; and
- to have a share in their community.

The benefits to them, to their community and to society as a whole are incalculable.

Widespread Consultation

7. The Team began work on the Outline Strategy in October 1994, and completed the report seven months later. It consulted widely during this period. The Team received over 300 responses to a written consultation exercise from voluntary organisations, local authorities, private companies and other interested parties. It set up two Sub-groups, and a Standing Media Advisory Group and a range of reference groups of organisations with specific interests eg local authorities.

8. To realise the Team's vision, the report covered the following key themes:

- encouraging and enabling people to become and remain volunteers;
- maximising the involvement of volunteers and the impact of volunteering;
- improving the organisation and infrastructure of volunteering;
- communicating the importance, effectiveness and value of volunteering.

Recommendations

9. The report makes a wide range of recommendations for policy makers in local and national government, the voluntary sector, the media and business, both immediate and long-term, which offer practical ways forward. They are set out in full from page 5 on.

10. The recommendations form a balanced programme of action. Key among them are the following:

- Government should facilitate the establishment, at a local level with appropriate regional or national support, of effective mechanisms to promote and develop volunteering. This approach should be followed throughout the UK but initial priority should be given to those areas where these functions do not exist at present or exist in part only (Recommendation R53);
- Government should consider the existing mechanisms for the promotion and encouragement of volunteering at national level within the four countries of the UK, and how they might be developed. This consideration should focus on:
 - the provision of strategic leadership;
 - policy and planning;
 - the identification and dissemination of good practice; and
 - mechanisms for funding volunteering.

In this process Government should work in consultation with volunteering agencies and the wider voluntary, community and public sectors (Recommendation R56);

- Government should explore the value of a nation-wide media campaign to promote volunteering to appropriate target groups (Recommendation R68);
- the Make A Difference Development Programme should be extended with a new focus on the development of youth volunteering (Recommendation R2);
- older people should be targeted more effectively in volunteer recruitment (Recommendation R14).

11. This summary has been produced by the Home Office. Additional copies of this summary or copies of the full report can be obtained from:

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Recommendations

Objective (a):

To encourage more people to participate in volunteering, especially those from groups in the population whose potential is insufficiently tapped.

R1 High priority should be given to the development of youth volunteering. The Team should identify opportunities for developing and encouraging youth volunteering and take this forward with the involvement of those responsible for education and employment policy and with particular regard to the differences and needs of the four countries of the UK. A report on this further work should be produced by June 1996.

R2 The Make a Difference Development Programme¹ should be extended with a new focus on the development of youth volunteering. Possible activities for support include targeted youth recruitment strategies; training or support programmes for young volunteers; the development of information points; projects which develop ways of accrediting youth volunteering; projects encouraging the involvement of disadvantaged young people; and innovative volunteering projects which involve

young people in their design.

R3 Consideration should be given to ways of promoting and supporting volunteering through the education systems in each of the four countries of the UK.

(a) In England, the Office of Standards for Education should include reference in its inspection guidelines to the role of the school in the community and, in particular, to community activities undertaken by pupils;

the Further Education Funding Council should explore the possibility of encouraging students to volunteer and of that activity being supported through units of additionality²;

the Higher Education Funding Council should make funding available to support students in volunteer work.

(b) In Wales, the recommendations in (a) should be taken forward under the auspices of the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, the Further Education Funding Council for Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

(c) In Scotland, the recommendations in (a) should be taken forward by

1. The Make a Difference Development Programme is a grant scheme financed by the Government which has funded 27 partnership projects throughout the UK which seek to develop new ways of including more people in voluntary activity.

2. A unit of additionality is financial assistance offered by the Further Education Funding Council to colleges to meet the additional learning needs of a targeted individual.

HM Inspectorate of Schools, the Scottish Office Education Department and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council.

(d) In Northern Ireland, the recommendations in (a) should be taken forward by the Northern Ireland Education and Training Inspectorate, the Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards and the Northern Ireland Department of Education.

(e) The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals should consider how their various institutions can further encourage the development of volunteering.

R4 The relevant Education Departments in the constituent parts of the UK should include national voluntary youth organisations and programmes which encourage volunteering by young people as a high priority for funding programmes.

R5 In selecting youth organisations to be awarded Youth Work Development Grants the National Youth Agency in England should consider targeting voluntary organisations involving young people as volunteers.

R6 The National Record of Achievement should include a separately identified record of a young person's volunteering achievements

and community involvement.

R7 The Millennium Commission should give priority to a programme of bursary and grant assistance to help enable young people to volunteer.

R8 Government should closely monitor and evaluate the development of formal accreditation of youth volunteering.

R9 Government should monitor and evaluate existing pilot systems of certification to ensure that they recognise the number of hours volunteered by an individual.

R10 Funders should require organisations to demonstrate an effective policy for involving volunteers from a cross-section of society but appropriate to the nature of the organisation to be funded.

R11 Organisations which seek volunteers should develop recruitment policies which embrace all sections of the community within the target group of that organisation - for instance, youth groups should not be required to target older people but should reach as wide a range of young people as possible.

R12 People with disabilities, people of all ages and people from a wide range of ethnic origins should feature in publicity materials promoting volunteering.

R13 Organisations which involve volunteers should endeavour to make proper provision (including, where necessary, financial provision) to recruit volunteers with disabilities and special needs. Funders should take this into account when awarding grants.

R14 Older people should be targeted more effectively in volunteer recruitment.

R15 Those who recruit volunteers should not set age limits unless there is a strong and clear case for doing so. Judgements should always be made on the capabilities of individuals.

R16 Employers should offer assistance with volunteering to employees who are soon to retire and to those former staff who are now pensioners, through:

- providing information on volunteering opportunities on pre-retirement courses; and
- active assistance with placement.

R17 Occupational pension schemes should be vehicles for the provision of information about volunteering for older volunteers and where possible utilise their networks as a means to promote volunteering.

R18 Volunteer development agencies and organisations which involve volunteers should develop group volunteering. This has proved to be an effective way of involving older people.

R19 Organisations wishing to recruit volunteers should ensure that ethnic minority communities are encouraged to participate, with publicity material translated into appropriate languages.

R20 Mainstream involvers of volunteers should be consciously pluralistic in their recruitment of volunteers and seek to involve people from ethnic minorities at all levels.

R21 Agencies involved in encouraging and developing employer-supported volunteering should establish local networks to increase the number of people involved in the community by forging local partnerships between employers and volunteering development agencies to enhance their collaboration to identify quality volunteering opportunities.

Organisations seeking volunteers should also be encouraged to approach employers directly.

R22 Employers should nominate an individual on the board or at very senior management level to oversee the effective involvement of employees in their local communities.

R23 Employers and local volunteering agencies should nominate local contact points, within employing organisations, to promote the exchange of information about volunteering opportunities and

training between employees and community groups in need of assistance.

Objective (b):

To make it easier for people to participate in volunteering.

R24 Wherever possible volunteers should receive and should be encouraged to claim adequate expenses.

R25 Funders and purchasers of services, when funding a service, should be prepared to incorporate financial provision for the costs of involving volunteers.

R26 Volunteering opportunities should be sufficiently adaptable to reflect the individual needs and commitments of volunteers (for instance, to maximise the contribution of the increasing numbers of part-time workers and newly retired people).

R27 New models of volunteering should be developed and publicised, such as models which enable people to volunteer from home or as family groups.

R28 The Benefits Agencies and Employment Services should ensure that regulations relating to volunteering are consistently and sensitively applied.

R29 Any extra requirements laid on for volunteers, for example to declare their voluntary work, should be

minimised and made as clear, easy and unthreatening as possible.

R30 Organisations which involve volunteers should develop contacts with local benefit offices to ensure a higher level of mutual understanding.

R31 A review should be undertaken to examine whether any change is necessary to benefits regulations, so as to ensure that volunteering does not adversely affect people's entitlement to benefit.

R32 Government should consider - and introduce - mechanisms for considering the impact on volunteering of new legislation and regulations.

R33 The Home Office should issue a series of "Think Volunteering" leaflets to policy-makers in relevant government departments, tailored to the particular policy area.

R34 Where appropriate, volunteer development agencies should help organisations which involve volunteers to ensure the highest standards in their deployment and management. This can be achieved through:

- disseminating best practice;
- developing and making available appropriate training in the support and management of volunteers;
- establishing clear managerial responsibility for an organisation's volunteer programme.

R35 Organisations which involve volunteers should find out why volunteers leave - through clear monitoring and evaluation of volunteer programmes. This may provide useful lessons for the future involvement and management of volunteers.

Objective (c):

To involve volunteers more purposefully and more imaginatively in the life of UK society, whether through formal volunteering or through the informal response of each community to its own needs.

R36 Organisations which involve volunteers should consider how to take a more innovative and strategic view of the contribution of volunteers including their role as managers, trustees and policy makers.

R37 Government departments, local authorities and appropriate public sector organisations should produce and publish annual policies for involving volunteers. The first plans should be in place by the end of March 1997, with measurable targets for extending the involvement of volunteers.

R38 Government departments should monitor the development of plans in services for which they are responsible.

R39 Government departments and other funders in the public sector

should ensure, when drawing up grant conditions and tenders, that the contribution of volunteers to the delivery of services is encouraged.

R40 The voluntary and public sectors should be encouraged to maximise the deployment of volunteers, and put in place policies to support this.

R41 Under the Citizen's Charter Government should give consideration to setting-up a charter mark scheme which recognises the promotion and involvement of volunteers.

R42 Distributors of funds from the National Lottery should give a high priority to applications which encourage and develop volunteering, or involve volunteers.

R43 Government departments should utilise appropriate funding mechanisms to support the involvement of volunteers in their policies and programmes. The Voluntary Services Unit of the Home Office should issue guidance on how this might be taken forward and Government departments should report to the Ministerial Group on the Voluntary Sector on their achievements in this field. Account should be taken of the different funding mechanisms in place within the constituent parts of the UK and the recommendation R56.

R44 The Ministerial group's name should be changed to the Ministerial Group on Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector to acknowledge the importance of volunteering.

R45 A new volunteering awards scheme should be launched which recognises and rewards organisations which have shown excellence and innovation in involving volunteers. The award should be UK wide but should include individual awards for the constituent parts of the UK. They should also build on those schemes which already exist. The judges should include representatives of the volunteering, public and private sectors. The first awards should take place during 1996, with initial funding from Government and a target to involve private sector funding by year two.

Objective (d):

To encourage more effective use of the contribution of individual volunteers, for the benefit of volunteers themselves and the recipients of voluntary action.

R46 Volunteer development agencies and appropriate Government departments should disseminate good practice relating to the deployment of volunteers.

R47 Government and volunteer development agencies should

consider how training materials for volunteering managers can best be developed. A timetable for identifying the scope and content of requirements and an implementation framework should be developed by the end of 1995.

R48 Government and volunteering development agencies should put in place a set of policy guidelines which seek to encourage the acceptance of volunteers by paid workers.

R49 Appropriate professional bodies (such as those dealing with medicine and law) should incorporate an appreciation of the contribution of volunteers as part of professional training.

R50 The contractual obligations of professionals and other paid staff should, as appropriate, include working with volunteers.

R51 Government should examine the issue of accrediting and validating voluntary activity, in partnership with the appropriate accreditation bodies and volunteer development agencies throughout the UK. In particular the following themes should be considered:

- how the systems of vocational qualification (National Vocational Qualifications and Scottish National Vocational Qualifications) might be used to develop qualifications for

volunteers and volunteer managers;

- the cost and accessibility of vocational qualifications;
- the value of national quality standards;
- how inexpensive and accessible training packages might be developed and made available to smaller voluntary and community groups.

R52 Government's ongoing work on deregulation should include consideration of the regulatory requirements which have an impact on local community action.

Objective (e):

To improve the organisation and infrastructure of volunteering.

R53 Government should facilitate the establishment, at a local level with appropriate regional or national support, of effective mechanisms to promote and develop volunteering. This approach should be followed throughout the UK but initial priority should be given to those areas where these functions do not exist at present or exist in part only.

R54 As a part of this development, the Government should recognise the need for a secure funding package to enable the delivery at local level of the following functions:

- identification and dissemination of examples of best practice;

- promotion of the awareness and practice of volunteering in their localities to individuals, groups and volunteer engagers - to include advocacy and campaigning where appropriate;

- collection and dissemination of information on volunteering;

- recruitment and referral of volunteers to agencies and matching them to tasks and roles;

- arrangements for supporting and training volunteers and volunteer engagers;

- development of new opportunities and projects involving volunteers;

- arrangements for liaison with other agencies and for encouraging community involvement;

- development, monitoring and evaluation of strategies and methods for informing people about volunteering.

R55 The setting-up of appropriate effective local mechanisms should be by means of sub-contracting or tendering for carrying out this work in defined geographical areas. A potential operator will need to demonstrate its understanding of volunteering needs in its area, how it would assist volunteers to find the volunteering opportunities which they seek, and what arrangements it would put in place to ensure co-ordination

among the various local agencies involved in the promotion and development of volunteering.

R56 Government should consider the existing mechanisms for the promotion and encouragement of volunteering at national level within the four countries of the UK, and how they might be developed. This consideration should focus on:

- the provision of strategic leadership;
- policy and planning;
- the identification and dissemination of good practice; and
- mechanisms for funding volunteering.

In this process Government should work in consultation with volunteering agencies and the wider voluntary, community and public sectors.

R57 Government should review, in the light of this outline strategy, the level and targeting of funding to support volunteering.

R58 The Government should support outreach work by trained individuals. Such individuals - ranging from local authority funded community development workers to community consultants³ - can be highly effective catalysts for community action.

R59 Local volunteer development agencies should maintain registers of potential volunteers with professional

expertise in such areas as law, management, accountancy and IT who would be willing to make their expertise available to small local community groups.

R60 Funders should develop strategies for targeting financial resources towards the support and facilitation of voluntary collective action by such means as the setting-up of small grant funds.

R61 Communities should be offered assistance to carry out surveys of local needs which might be met through volunteer action but it is important that resources are made available to follow up work to avoid raising false expectations.

R62 In order to identify strengths and weaknesses and to improve co-ordination, a review of the information infrastructure in the different parts of the UK should be conducted. Responsibility for this recommendation will depend on the outcome of the review of strategic leadership in the volunteering sector - recommendation R56.

R63 Volunteering agencies should cooperate and exchange information more freely, in order to maximise the value of resources and address deficiencies in the information infrastructure.

R64 Organisations wishing to promote

³ Community Consultants is an initiative by the organisation Community Matters. It involves the consultants giving basic training to individuals to assist them to act as local consultants to community organisations which require technical advice on their responsibilities.

volunteering or recruit volunteers should maximise the dissemination of information about volunteering through:

- enhancing the role of alternative networks - such as religious communities, local councils in rural areas and advice centres;
- utilising a wide range of accessible information points, formal or informal - such as banks, GP surgeries, Job Centres, careers offices, libraries and shops;
- recognising the special needs of particular target groups - for instance, to reach large numbers of young people organisations will need to use such means as educational institutions, information technology, the youth service and, in England, Information Shops.

R65 Volunteer involvers should define more clearly the roles intended for volunteers.

R66 Major involvers of volunteers should develop good onward referral mechanisms so that those with surplus volunteers or those unsuited to their needs can help those in need and ensure that volunteers' potential is not wasted. Volunteer development agencies should provide support for this - perhaps acting as a clearing house in this respect.

R67 Where no local volunteer development agency (or alternative

forum for volunteering interests) exists, involvers of volunteers in a local area should form coalitions to promote co-operation; facilitate the exchange of information about volunteering; and liaise with employers wishing to become involved in the community.

Objective (f):

To communicate and thus promote the importance, effectiveness and value of volunteering.

R68 Government should explore the value of a nationwide media campaign to promote volunteering to appropriate target groups. The following elements should be considered as part of a campaign:

- detailed research into attitudes towards and motivations for volunteering; research should be segmented to reflect geographical variations and the views of specific target audiences;
- the involvement of media professionals in developing fresh and relevant new images of volunteering around themes of helping and giving time;
- a pilot campaign in an appropriate region or locality to test out approaches and develop supporting partnerships;
- measures to develop coordination and cooperation between

organisations which deploy volunteers to ensure that the media are provided with a timetable for key volunteering events around which publicity can be focused.

R69 Subject to the success of the pilot campaign and the availability of resources, the campaign should be replicated in other regions or translated onto a national scale. Within an overall strategy framework and a common set of themes there should be sufficient flexibility to reflect regional and national variations throughout the UK.

Objective (g):

To secure greater recognition and appreciation for the contribution of volunteers to society.

R70 There should be greater publicity for the achievements of volunteers:

- there should be celebration of the winners of the various volunteer awards;
- volunteers should be rewarded through the Honours system;
- employers should feature their employees' community involvement in Annual Reports and in-house magazines;
- celebrities who volunteer should be invited to publicise their voluntary activity and, at the same time, be

promoted as 'alternative' role models;

- magazines should be encouraged to carry human interest and life-style features on volunteering;
- volunteering organisations should work with the non-news media eg script-writers and programme planners so that volunteering can be included in story lines or features in magazines.

Objective (h):

To construct and communicate more positive images of volunteers and volunteering.

R71 Professional journals should be provided with material highlighting examples of the innovative and effective involvement of volunteers, with endorsement from leaders of the profession. In-house publications of health authorities, local authorities and trade unions should be provided with similar material; and innovation and excellence in the involvement of volunteers should be recognised by extending existing award schemes to and by local authorities.

R72 Media companies should encourage and develop employer-supported volunteering to raise the profile of volunteering among media professionals.

Objective: (i)*To mobilise more people to volunteer.*

R73 Volunteers Week should be developed with a more active focus to secure greater media coverage and a higher public profile.

R74 Consideration should be given to running a media event on the theme of giving time, rather than money, in alternate years to Comic Relief/Red Nose Day.

R75 Public service broadcasting should be encouraged to feature local and national volunteering opportunities. This could build on the example of Ceefax (BBC TV's information service) which already carries forty pages of information about volunteering.

R76 For each target group, involvers of volunteers should focus on key 'influencers' (such as the special interest press and particular radio programmes) to promote opportunities likely to be of interest to the target audience.

R77 Those organisations which involve volunteers should ensure that local agencies which promote volunteering are provided with information about volunteering opportunities.

R78 Publicity and recruitment material should be translated and made available in a wide range of languages.

R79 Volunteer involvers should exploit links with new technology - eg the Internet - to communicate opportunities to volunteer.

R80 Local partnerships between organisations which promote volunteering or deploy volunteers should be established with the media.

R81 Volunteer development agencies in partnership with the media and, where possible, the business community should produce practical advice and examples of likely costs for use by anyone wishing to promote volunteering or recruit volunteers.