



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Making it work together

Active Communities

Supporting Active Communities in Scotland

SUPPORTING ACTIVE COMMUNITIES IN SCOTLAND

**A DRAFT STRATEGY FOR
VOLUNTEERING AND
COMMUNITY ACTION**

A Report by the Scottish Active Communities Working Group



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Responses to this consultation should be sent by 1 May 2000 to:

Mrs Ann Cormican
Voluntary Issues Unit
The Scottish Executive
Room 234
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Tel 0131 - 244 3530
Fax 0131 - 244 2659
Email ann.cormican@scotland.gov.uk

**by Jackie Baillie MSP,
Deputy Minister for Communities**

The Scottish Executive has a strong commitment to supporting volunteering and encouraging community action. We have this commitment because we believe that volunteering and community action have an important part to play in promoting active citizenship. If we can promote the concept of active citizens, contributing to their local community as well as to the wider society, then we will secure better Government policies and more responsive public services because people have had an active role in fashioning them.

Scottish Ministers are committed to tackling the problems of poverty, disadvantage, and social exclusion that exist in Scotland today. If we are to succeed, it will be because ordinary Scots take up the challenge. Involvement through individual acts of volunteering or through collective community action can help make this happen.

We set up the Scottish Active Communities Working Group, under the leadership of Laurie Naumann, to develop a strategy for the active community in Scotland. This draft Strategy is the outcome of their work. We are grateful to Laurie Naumann and the Working Group members for their time and efforts and for the timeous delivery of the draft Strategy.

We have a commitment to full consultation with the voluntary sector, with organisations who engage volunteers and with community groups. Our Compact with the voluntary sector enshrines that commitment. We therefore invite comments and look forward to hearing your views on the Strategy and on its implementation.

Jackie Baillie

Much has happened in Scotland since I was invited early in 1999 by Sam Galbraith, then the Minister for Health and the Arts in The Scottish Office, to chair the Scottish Giving Age Working Group. We have seen the election of the Scottish Parliament and the creation of the Scottish Executive. A Minister for Communities has been appointed to the Scottish Cabinet. The Group's name has been updated and there was a complete turnover in the secretariat staff. Despite these changes, the committed and hard working team appointed by Sam Galbraith has not been deflected from addressing the original wide-ranging programme of work he set. We commend the draft strategy we have produced to Scottish Ministers.

It has been an enjoyable and challenging experience working with the very busy experts on the Group. We have tried hard to bring together all the pertinent expertise from each of the enthusiastic members, representing the country's voluntary, public and private sector interests.

Especially challenging for all of us has been steering a Scottish line within an important UK policy context. We feel that we have drafted proposals that are complementary to those produced by Lord Norman Warner's UK Working Group. We would, however, particularly wish to endorse his recommendations on the giving of money, which we have not addressed separately for Scotland.

Our proposals take account of all the relevant policy developments and the existing infrastructure north of the Border. Under each of our four key objectives, a series of action points has been proposed. These can now be debated in the forthcoming and crucial public consultation to which Scottish Ministers have already committed themselves.

I very much hope that what we are offering will be welcomed and appreciated as a tool to help achieve an even more active community in Scotland. At the same time, Working Group members are looking forward to hearing how the proposed strategy can be further improved to be of practical assistance in meeting the Government's overall objective for an inclusive society.

In addition to thanking Jackie Baillie, the Deputy Minister for Communities, for her continuing support, and each of the Working Group members for their individual and collective contributions, I would like to thank all the staff in the Voluntary Issues Unit of the Scottish Executive, and especially Stephen Marwick, for all their hard work and forbearance of the demands we have made upon them over the past nine months.

Laurie M Naumann
Chair

4th January 2000

"We need nothing less than a step change in public involvement in the community. Let those of us who believe in the power of community reclaim the idea of doing good and wear it as a badge of pride."

Tony Blair, January 1999

Background

1. The Active Community initiative was launched by the Prime Minister in January 1999. It sets out to promote the value of community involvement and to encourage more people to become involved as volunteers and in community action. Equally, it aims to support public, private and voluntary agencies so that they recognise the important contribution that active communities make towards planning, policy making and service delivery.
2. The draft strategy is designed to take forward the Active Community initiative in Scotland in the medium to long term. It has been prepared by a Scottish Working Group, appointed by Scottish Ministers, chaired by Laurie Naumann, and supported by the Scottish Executive Voluntary Issues Unit (see Annex 1 for the list of members and remit). It complements a UK-wide strategic framework prepared by a Home Office-appointed Working Group chaired by Lord Norman Warner, which reported to Government in September 1999.

Policy Context

3. The draft strategy has not been prepared in isolation. The Working Group is concerned to ensure links between this strategy and others that are being developed in Scotland to strengthen community capacity. We have sought, in particular, to relate our proposals to other initiatives concerned with social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship.
4. The Working Group met during a period of rapid development in policies to promote a socially inclusive and participative society, which emphasise the centrality of citizen participation as a strategy for change. Volunteering-involving and community organisations extensively contribute to or provide services that address issues of exclusion. Equally, for many people, the act of voluntary participation is a route to greater social inclusion and influence in community affairs. Indeed volunteering and community action may be viewed as a barometer of a healthy, inclusive and democratic society.
5. Volunteering and community action may also have direct learning and economic benefits for participants. They acquire skills, knowledge

and confidence that may be transferred to personal needs or to the employment market. Voluntary action as a whole may contribute in a variety of ways to local economic development. Policies for life-long learning and the social economy have therefore formed an equally important context for the Working Group's deliberations.

6. It was clear to the Working Group that there may be barriers to volunteering or becoming involved in the local community, not just in terms of getting involved in the first place, but also of feeling and being effective once participating. There may have been stereotypes attached to involvement, which, while unfounded, may have discouraged people from becoming active. There are certainly barriers of time and money and sometimes people feel that they may not have skills to offer. It is clear that government, at all levels, has a role to play in lifting the barriers to volunteering and community action and in supporting, indeed empowering, individuals and community groups to play as effective a part as possible.

7. The Active Communities Initiative forms part of a wider concern not only to build a more open society and to extend opportunities for participative democracy, but also to strengthen the social economy and to build a more caring, socially just and inclusive society.

8. The Working Group recognises that, along with the giving of time, the giving of money is a vital way in which many people make a contribution to their communities and to society. Research shows that in Scotland more people continue to give more in donations to voluntary organisations than elsewhere in the UK. This is a feature of Scottish culture that we should celebrate and encourage. These donations continue to be the mainstay of voluntary sector income. In addition, the Treasury has recently announced changes to the ways in which people can make tax-efficient donations. The Working Group welcomes this announcement and recommends that a further and complementary initiative be taken by the Scottish Executive, the voluntary sector and other relevant partners to promote planned giving of money.

Scottish Context

9. Within Scotland, co-operative values run deep. We are in very many ways a caring society. The collective responsibility of society manifested in our public services, our voluntary organisations and through corporate social responsibility is well established. But it is a rapidly changing society and economy, with a legacy of often severe deprivation and exclusion, which has left many people behind, for example alienated young people, homeless people, those on low incomes and older people.

10. The establishment of the Scottish Parliament has also highlighted public concern about the nature of our democracy. Scots have been

engaging in grassroots and civic participation for many years. Many Scots already engage voluntarily in community activities and single issue concerns and we give generously by way of our time and money to charities both here and overseas. We have strong foundations upon which to build but much still to do.

11. A democratic and caring society needs people to play an active role as individuals volunteering their time for the benefit of others and as members of community organisations that come together for the common good. Both can make a vital contribution to the way we plan, prioritise and improve our public services. Our public services are not designed to meet all our needs or to tackle all our problems. The costs would be prohibitive and many people do not want the State to play such a direct role in our lives. Over many aspects of the quality of community life - caring for our health, the environment, for older people, children or people with disabilities - we have a personal and collective responsibility too.

Definitions

12. The Working Group has used the following terms and definitions:

- **Community** – either geographical e.g. people who live in a particular neighbourhood, village or town, or a group of people who have something in common e.g. a minority ethnic community.
- **Community action** - the commitment by a group of people of time and energy for the benefit of the community. This is also undertaken free and by choice and without personal financial gain.
- **Voluntary sector** - the diverse not-for-profit or “third” sector.
- **Volunteering** – the commitment by individuals of time and energy for the benefit of the community. It is undertaken freely and by choice and without personal financial gain.

13. Volunteering and community action can take many forms from philanthropy to self-help, to campaigning and active engagement with public authorities in policy and decision-making. They are an expression of what might be termed active citizenship, whereby people become more active within their communities and society generally, a notion that entails both rights and responsibilities.

Vision for the Strategy

14. Our vision is of a society built around communities of place and of interest, in which it is known and accepted that people can and do freely engage in shared action leading to improved quality of life for themselves and others. Our mission is to create a long-term strategic framework that will make it easier for all those who wish to engage in

volunteering and community action to do so. This involves promoting and protecting engagement as a basic right of all citizens in a free and democratic society; developing the means of making it effective; and reducing the barriers to involvement, especially barriers of discrimination. Resources must be committed to ensure that it happens.

Objectives

15. This draft strategy is intended to stimulate debate on volunteering and community action in order to:

- bring about more positive attitudes at all levels towards volunteering and community action;
- locate volunteering and community action at the heart of policy and practice;
- broaden the range of people involved; and
- increase the number of people involved.

This report explores each of these objectives in turn and proposes what needs to be done and by whom.

Objective One – to bring about more positive attitudes at all levels towards volunteering and community action

Introduction

17. At the heart of this initiative lies the need to bring about more positive attitudes to volunteering and community action. This requires a broader understanding of what volunteering and community action can achieve, who can do it and why it is important.

18. Seven broad groups within the community have been identified where a change in attitude will help to make the vision a reality.

- (1) **The general public** – about what volunteering and community action involves and what they can contribute.
- (2) **Policy makers** - who determine the framework within which volunteering and community action takes place.
- (3) **The voluntary, volunteering and community sectors** – with regard to the role of volunteering and community action in planning, policy making and service delivery.
- (4) **The public sector** - with regard to the contribution that volunteers and community action can contribute not only to service delivery, but also to planning and policy making.
- (5) **The private sector** - with regard to its role in supporting volunteering and community action.
- (6) **The media** - as a catalyst for changing attitudes.
- (7) **The professions** – planning, health, social work, education, housing etc. – so that they value the contribution made by volunteering and community action to planning, policy-making and service delivery.

19. There is a range of actions needed to achieve this objective:

Action Points

Action By

To help bring about a change in public attitudes

A1: Research is needed to identify public understanding and levels of activity and to measure changes in public attitudes and involvement over time.

The Scottish Executive

A2: Volunteering and community action should be promoted through schools, colleges and community education.

All bodies involved in education.

To bring about a change of attitudes amongst policy makers

A3: Policy makers should identify a champion in an internally strategic position in their organisations who will promote an understanding of volunteering and community action amongst policy makers. In particular:

Policy makers

- A Scottish Executive Minister should champion the Active Communities Strategy within the Scottish Executive, its agencies and the Scottish Parliament.
- Public bodies should identify a named champion.
- In local authorities, the Council leader should champion the Active Community strategy.

Scottish Executive Ministers

Public sector bodies

Local authorities

A4: The Scottish Executive and its Agencies should set an example to all employers by developing and promoting employer-supported volunteering policies.

Scottish Executive and its Agencies

A5: The Department of Social Security, the Benefits Agency and the Employment Service should remove the barriers to volunteering and community action that are created by the frontline operation of the benefits system. They should continue to raise awareness amongst frontline staff and with clients about the contribution volunteering and community action can make to employability.

Department for Social Security and Department for Education and Employment

A6: The Scottish Executive should ensure that the review of charity law in Scotland takes into account that volunteer involvement can be an indicator of charitable status.

Scottish Executive

Action Points

Action By

To bring about a change of attitudes in the voluntary, volunteering and community sectors

A7: Funders should make it known that they expect evidence of a proactive approach to involving volunteers and engaging with the community in funding bids from groups and organisations in the voluntary, volunteering and community sectors.

A8: Funders should identify this as a performance indicator, to form part of the monitoring procedure.

A9: The Scottish Executive, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), National Lottery Charities Board (NLCB) and other lead bodies should produce joint guidance on funding volunteering and community action.

A10: Good practice and success stories about involving volunteers and the community should be disseminated to provide the sectors with examples of new ways of involving volunteers and working with the community and to raise awareness about the role of volunteers and of community action.

To bring about a change of attitudes in the public sector

A11: Specific guidance should be issued to all public sector agencies on their role in supporting volunteering and community action. This should build upon the Scottish Compact (which sets out the principles underpinning the relationship between the Scottish Executive and its agencies and the voluntary sector in Scotland).

A12: Examples of best practice should be promoted and disseminated, not only to ensure the implementation of best practice, but also to raise awareness in the public sector about the contribution made by volunteering and community action.

Funders of voluntary, volunteering and community groups

Funders of voluntary, volunteering and community groups

Scottish Executive, CoSLA, NLCB, voluntary sector lead bodies

Voluntary sector lead bodies

Scottish Executive, CoSLA, NDPBs, SCVO and VDS.

Scottish Executive, CoSLA, NDPBs, SCVO and VDS.

To bring about a change of attitudes in the private sector

A13: The adoption of the “principles of corporate investment” should be promoted across the private sector.

Scottish Business in the Community (SBiC), Quality Scotland, CBI Scotland, Chambers of Commerce in Scotland and other business organisations

A14: Scottish Business in the Community should promote volunteering and community action through its network of business support groups across Scotland.

SBiC

Media Campaign

A15: There should be a sustained media campaign, together with back up information/education packs. The campaign should:

Voluntary sector lead bodies and the Scottish Executive

- Maximise people’s response to the active community vision;
- Raise the profile of volunteering and community action;
- Present a compelling view of existing volunteering and community action;
- Appeal to values, traditions and structures in Scotland, but, where appropriate, develop common themes and message for the whole of the UK; and
- Create a link to other activities such as Millennium celebrations, International Year of Volunteering 2001, and to the Scottish Parliament.

A16: A Media Strategy Action Group should be established to help co-ordinate and manage this campaign and to develop a long term media, marketing and communications strategy for the active communities initiative, for volunteering and community action and for the voluntary sector.

Scottish Executive, broadcast and print media, volunteering and community action organisations.

A17: The Media Strategy Action Group should be allocated resources by the Scottish Executive to purchase quarterly supplement space in newspapers.

Scottish Executive

A18: The Working Group has already set up a short-term sub-group to provide a co-ordination point for work with BBC Scotland and with other media organisations. This sub- group should set the framework for the proposed longer term Media Strategy Action Group.

A19: A media forum, which brings together key media interests and chaired by a prominent and influential media figure, should be established.

Its remit would be to generate informed debate in the media about the role and extent of volunteering and community action to ensure that the media's presentation of volunteering and community action is not stereotyped or limited.

A20: There should be a review of Journalism and Media Studies courses to assess their approach to voluntary and community matters, and to inform course content.

To bring about a change in attitudes amongst the professions

A21: The pre- and in-service training of managers and staff should include material to enable them to value community partnership working and to be able to engage appropriately with volunteers and community organisations.

A22: Guidance on best practice in involving volunteers and working with communities should be provided to professional bodies and institutes to help raise awareness and improve practice.

A23: Healthcare professionals should be offered guidance and training on involving volunteers within hospital and community health services, and on supporting service users to become volunteers in the wider community.

Scottish Active Communities Working Group – Media Sub-Group

Scottish Executive, VDS, SCVO and other interested bodies.

The Higher Education Funding Council and lead voluntary bodies.

Lead training bodies for the professions

Scottish Executive, VDS, SCVO and Community Learning Scotland

Scottish Executive, VDS

Objective Two – to locate volunteering and community action at the heart of policy

Introduction

20. For active communities to be supported and sustained, the principles of volunteering and community action must be:

- encompassed consistently within all public policies;
- encouraged within private sector businesses;
- supported and demonstrated by voluntary organisations; and
- monitored and evaluated in all sectors to identify and ensure progress.

21. A range of action points has been identified:

Action Points

Action By

B1: Guidance should be issued to all these bodies and organisations to assist them in implementing the Active Community strategy within their policies.

Scottish Executive and lead voluntary sector bodies

B2: Support for volunteering and community action should be demonstrated in corporate and strategic plans.

Scottish Executive, its Agencies and NDPBs, local authorities and other public bodies

B3: Support for volunteering and community action needs to be developed across and within all of the Scottish Executive's existing policy areas and be taken account of in the development of new policies.

Scottish Executive

B4: Public bodies should develop policy statements for volunteering and for supporting community action.

Scottish Executive, its Agencies and NDPBs, local authorities and other public bodies

B5: A Scottish Executive/Active Community Forum should be set up to oversee the monitoring of progress on the strategy and to address specific issues as they arise. The Scottish Executive/Voluntary Sector Forum, which monitors the operations of the Scottish Compact, provides a useful model.

Scottish Executive and Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS)

B6: An annual report should be submitted to the Scottish Parliament from the Scottish Executive on progress made in supporting volunteering and community action across the Executive's responsibilities.

Scottish Executive/Active Community Forum

B7: The Scottish Parliament Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee should be invited to scrutinise the impact of Scottish Executive policy on volunteering and community action.

Scottish Parliament

B8: Account should be taken of the impact of legislation on volunteering and community action, with proposals being "proofed"

Scottish Parliament

Action Points

Action By

B9: The principles of the Active Communities Strategy should be integrated into key areas of local government activity in order to build on and develop existing support for volunteering and community action.

Local authorities

B10: Each local authority should ensure that it has a volunteering policy statement and ensure the policy statements are implemented across all areas of the authority's work.

Local authorities, VDS and local volunteering organisations

B11: Policies for supporting employer-supported volunteering should be promoted and located more clearly in the corporate community investment framework.

Scottish Business in the Community, VDS and LVDAs

B12: The private sector should make use of legal and fiscal incentives created by the Scottish Executive and UK Government to support the Active Communities Strategy.

The private sector

B13: Business quality standards should include a recognition of the importance of supporting volunteering and community action.

Quality Scotland and Investors in People

B14: Voluntary organisations – and in particular lead bodies – should include a commitment to developing volunteering and community action in their mission statements and business or action plans; and set targets for monitoring their performance.

The voluntary sector

B15: Voluntary organisations – and in particular lead bodies – should explicitly recognise the potential for involvement of volunteers in their organisations and for work with the community. They should also make a commitment to good practice and the necessary investment of resources.

The voluntary sector

Objective Three – to broaden the range of people involved in volunteering and community action

Introduction

22. The Active Community initiative should promote social inclusion by identifying and removing barriers to involvement in volunteering and community action experienced by individuals and groups. It should assist non-participants within local communities to become more active as volunteers and to engage in community action. It should challenge all those who can influence increased participation. Opportunities for involvement should be expanded by building on existing models of best practice. The need for fresh approaches, as well as new and different styles of participation, should be recognised.

23. People who may experience difficulties in getting involved in volunteering and community action and who may have extra support needs include:

- people who are socially isolated;
- housebound people;
- people from remote rural communities;
- people who are unemployed or on low incomes;
- people from minority ethnic communities;
- people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments or learning disabilities;
- people with mental health problems;
- younger people; and
- older people.

The above should be viewed as a representative, rather than definitive, list.

24. A range of different kinds of action is required to broaden the mix of people involved in volunteering and community action:

Action Points

Action By

C1: Public bodies should publish strategies and set targets for supporting excluded people and communities to get involved in volunteering and community action. These strategies should include:

- action to identify and tackle barriers to involvement;
- a commitment to partnership working with organisations that represent excluded groups; and
- the provision of funding to volunteering and community organisations to involve excluded groups.

C2: Funders of volunteer-involving organisations should acknowledge the cost implications of involving volunteers with different support needs and that the act of volunteering is in itself a positive outcome.

C3: Strong infrastructures of local volunteering development agencies (LVDAs), councils for voluntary service (CsVS) and local community development agencies are necessary and should be adequately funded and maintained to support excluded communities and individuals in developing new volunteering and community opportunities.

C4: Volunteer-involving organisations and community groups should be supported to develop and implement best practice in working with volunteers and supporting community action, in particular, the development of equal opportunities, volunteering policies and appropriate support mechanisms.

C5: Examples of best practice and guidance in supporting volunteering and community action by people with extra support needs should be disseminated

C6: Partnerships should be developed with black and minority led organisations to support volunteering and community action.

Scottish Executive, local authorities, other public bodies and funders

Funders

Scottish Executive, local authorities, SCVO, VDS and Community Learning Scotland

VDS, LVDAs, CsVS and community development agencies

VDS, SCVO, LVDAs, community development agencies and specialist organisations which represent people with extra support needs

VDS, SCVO LVDAs and the Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Scotland (BEMIS)

Action Points

Action By

C7: Volunteer-involving and community organisations should set targets for engaging excluded people and communities.

Volunteer-involving and community organisations

C8: Volunteer-involving and community organisations should build on and extend existing work that has successfully engaged people from excluded or under-represented groups. In particular they should build on the experience from the Active Community demonstration projects (see Annex 2) and work on supporting volunteers with specific needs,

Volunteer-involving and community organisations

C9: Further opportunities for volunteering by young people should be created by extending and developing the Millennium Volunteers programme and by more effective dissemination of the experience of past projects that have successfully engaged young people or developed good practice.

Scottish Executive, volunteer-involving and community organisations

C10: While recognising that technology can exclude people who are unable to use it, priority should be given to using information and communication technology flexibly to involve people from excluded groups in volunteering and in community action.

Volunteer-involving and community organisations

C11: New and imaginative ways in which individuals can be supported in volunteering and community action should be developed, for example through “buddying”, group or family involvement, and peer-led initiatives, and through links with support workers e.g. in housing.

Volunteer-involving and community organisations

C12: Healthcare providers should develop links with LVDAs and volunteer involving organisations to obtain advice, information and guidance on issues concerning voluntary work and its appropriateness for clients with extra support needs, and to identify relevant opportunities.

Health Trusts

Objective Four – to increase the number of people involved in volunteering and community action

Introduction

25. Inspiring greater numbers of people to be involved in volunteering and community action is a key aim of this initiative. It should sustain current, and develop new, volunteering and community action by providing information and opportunities and by sharing best practice. The target groups are:

- everyone!
- existing volunteers and community activists;
- people who are ready to volunteer or to be active in their community but just need some encouragement;
- specific groups of excluded volunteers (see objective 3); and
- those motivated to be involved in specific activities - in particular activities which communities define for themselves.

26. A range of activities has been identified:

D1: A baseline survey is required to provide information against which to measure the success of the Active Communities initiative. The survey should:

- Establish the numbers of people involved in volunteering and community action;
- Establish the extent, range and nature of public involvement in the community;
- Provide information about public attitudes to such involvement; and
- Devise indicators and measures against which to measure change in volunteering and community action.

D2: The network of local volunteering development agencies (LVDAs), community development agencies and other public access points (including Youth Enquiry Service points) should be supported and strengthened. In particular this involves:

- Mapping the current provision of such agencies and filling the gaps;
- Investing in information technology to network LVDAs and community development agencies to support and develop volunteering and community action; and
- Supporting these organisations to invest in training and development for their staff.

D3: LVDAs, Youth Enquiry Service points and other public access points should be supported to improve the collection and dissemination of information about opportunities for volunteering and community action.

D4: Funding should be provided to volunteer-involving and community organisations to:

- promote innovation;
- provide new opportunities for volunteering and community action; and
- pilot new ways of promoting volunteering and community action.

Scottish Executive

Scottish Executive, local authorities and other funders

Scottish Executive, local authorities and other funders

Scottish Executive, local authorities and other funders

Action Points

Action By

D5: The importance of implementing best practice in order to recruit and retain volunteers and to develop and maintain community action should be recognised.

D6: Funding should be provided to volunteering and community organisations to support and encourage best practice.

D7: Volunteer-involving groups and local communities should be supported to engage with the media and resource materials should be developed to help them to do so.

D8: Volunteer-involving and community groups should:

- Identify new and flexible ways of involving volunteers to help deliver organisations' objectives;
- Offer as wide a choice of opportunities for involvement as possible to attract potential volunteers;
- Develop new opportunities for young people including (but not only) Millennium Volunteers;
- Use the media campaign (see objective 1) to promote volunteering and community action drawing on other promotional activity such as Volunteers Week, Whitbread Volunteer Awards, International Year of the Volunteer in 2001;
- Use high profile events and celebrities to help raise the profile of volunteering and community action; and
- Work with the media to promote volunteering and community action.

D9: VDS and local volunteering development agencies (LVDAs) and community development agencies should promote and encourage best practice by:

- Developing and disseminating information and guidance on quality standards;

Volunteering and community organisations

Scottish Executive, local authorities and other funders

Scottish Executive, local authorities and other funders, and sector lead bodies

Volunteer-involving organisations and community groups

VDS, LVDAs, and community development agencies

Action Points

Action By

- Developing and disseminating information and guidance on support and safety for volunteers;
- Developing further occupational standards and accredited training, e.g. for LVDA staff, to assist with the on-going improvement in the quality of volunteer management;
- Supporting the further development of opportunities for the accreditation of volunteer work and volunteer training;
- Encouraging organisations to have a volunteer policy;
- Sharing best practice and learning from other organisations.

The Group's remit was:

To advise Scottish Ministers on the development and implementation of the Active Communities strategy in Scotland, by bringing together a range of expertise from across the sectors and by providing a link to related initiatives in Scotland, to action by the UK Working Group, and to activities in Wales and Northern Ireland.

A Note on Language

When this initiative was first launched it was known as the Giving Age, and this working group was called the Scottish Giving Age Working Group. However, the Active Communities Initiative is felt to be a more inclusive and positive term. It is also the term used in the rest of the UK.

Membership

Laurie Naumann,	Chair
Alan Barr,	Scottish Community Development Centre
Liz Burns,	Volunteer Development Scotland
Sandra Carter,	Unemployed Voluntary Action Fund
Harriet Eadie,	Volunteer Bureaux Scotland
Jon Harris,	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Chris Higgins,	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Rob Hughes,	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
Margaret Kinsella,	Greater Glasgow Health Board
Charlie McConnell,	Community Learning Scotland (from 30 July)
Jennifer McCulloch,	Scottish Business in the Community
Louise McCulloch,	National Lottery Charities Board (until 26 May)
Lucy McTernan,	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (from 3 November)
Dorothy Neoh,	NCH Action for Children - San Jai Chinese Project
Stephen Shields,	National Lottery Charities Board - Awards For All (from 30 July)
Martin Sime,	Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (until 1 October)
Claire Stevens,	Community Service Volunteers Scotland

Secretariat:

Elizabeth Carmichael,	Scottish Executive Voluntary Issues Unit (until 3 September)
Steven Marwick,	Voluntary Issues Unit
Gavin Barrie,	Voluntary Issues Unit (from 1 October)

The Scottish Executive has funded six projects to provide lessons for the future on how best to involve people from particular excluded groups in volunteering and community action, and what the barriers are to involvement. The knowledge gained from these projects will contribute to the forward plan for the Active Communities initiative.

The projects will report by the end of March 2000 and are as follows:

1. Minority Ethnic Volunteering – Dundee International Women’s Centre

The project aims to:

- recruit a panel of volunteers to explore volunteering activity among minority ethnic communities in Dundee;
- investigate barriers to volunteering;
- and investigate factors that might help in increasing motivation of people from minority ethnic communities to volunteer.

2. Rural Volunteering – Voluntary Action Lewis

The projects aims to:

- recruit a panel of volunteers to undertake a background audit of volunteering in two areas in the islands – one “at the edge” and one in a more populated area;
- to identify example of good practice in recruitment and retention of volunteers;
- identify differences in perceptions and experiences amongst islanders; and
- identify barriers and motivations to volunteering in the two different rural areas.

3. North Aberdeenshire Volunteer Network

The projects aims to:

- work in the Boddam area of North Aberdeenshire where there appears to be less volunteering than elsewhere;
- recruit a panel of volunteers;
- identify who volunteers and where and when; and
- identify ways to overcome barriers to involvement.

4. Physical Disability Volunteering - Gordon Volunteer Centre and Gordon Disability Action

The project aims to:

- recruit a panel or working group of volunteers (including those with physical disabilities); and
- identify barriers and motivations to volunteering and community involvement among people with physical disabilities.

5. Central Co-ordinator - Volunteer Development Scotland/John Ithell

The project aims to:

- work with the “themed” demonstration projects (listed above) to assist them with planning and delivering their projects, including panel recruitment; and
- write a final report, drawing together, for the benefit of other organisation, the good practice lessons about how best to help people from minority ethnic communities, rural communities and people with physical disabilities get involved in their communities that are demonstrated in the projects.

6. Older People Volunteering - Community Service Volunteers (CSV) Scotland

This project is slightly different from the demonstration projects in that it has a more national basis. CSV will use its Retired and Senior Volunteering Projects (RSVP) in Renfrewshire, Lothian and Glasgow to help develop a strategic framework that looks at ways of increasing the numbers of volunteers in the 50+ age group and how to involve older volunteers from excluded groups and to promote the message of active citizenship.

