

Valuing Our Community

A Strategy for Volunteering and Giving Time for the Benefit of the Community

Lewisham

2012 - 2017



CONTENTS

Introduction	2	Definition of Social Action	12
Outcomes and learning from previous strategy	3 - 5	Spectrum of Time Giving	13 - 14
Context	6	Benefits of Volunteering	15
National	6	Needs of Organisations	16
Regional	6-8	Corporate Giving	16
Principles of Volunteering	7	Volunteering Consortium	16
Olympic & Paralympic Games	8	Recognising Volunteers.....	17
Local	9	Priorities	18
Synergy with other local Strategies ...	9	Developing Volunteering Communities	19 - 20
Changing Face of Volunteering	10	Priorities Action Plan	21 - 26
Profile of Volunteers	10	Delivery	27
Motivations	11	Measuring Progress	27
Volunteering Verses Social Action	11	Partners	28
Definition of volunteering	12		

Introduction

This is the second cross sector volunteering strategy for Lewisham. The previous strategy recognised that volunteering plays a pivotal role in the way that communities work and the vast array of benefits to organisations, communities and for those who volunteer.

One of the greatest strengths of the previous strategy was that it was planned and delivered by partners from a range of sectors through The Volunteering Strategy Steering Group, which reports to the Stronger Communities Partnership of the LSP.

This is a timely opportunity for Lewisham to review its work with volunteering and plan for the coming 5 years. We now have a coalition Government that highlights the importance of volunteers in creating a 'Civic Society', preparing a new strategy at this time gives us the opportunity to shape this agenda for Lewisham.

We recognise that there are many ways to give time for the benefit of the community, some of which are mentioned later, however, for the purpose of this strategy we use the word 'volunteer' in a broad sense, meaning those who give time freely for the benefit of

others within the community. We also recognise that there are many 'communities' that make the London Borough of Lewisham a vibrant and diverse borough, for the purposes of this strategy we are using the word 'community' within a broader understanding, that being the citizens of Lewisham, unless otherwise stated.

This new Volunteering Strategy for Lewisham will build on the successes of the previous strategy, identify where volunteering may have changed, clarify Lewisham's position within the national and regional contexts whilst keeping a focus on local priorities. It is important too to clearly define volunteering and identify other community activities that work alongside volunteering in order to deliver a holistic package of active citizenship.

Responsibility for delivering and monitoring the work of this strategy sits with the Volunteering Strategy Steering Group which is co-ordinated by Volunteer Centre Lewisham and consists of representatives across the sectors including: Health, Metropolitan Police; Voluntary and Community Sector, and reports to the Stronger Communities Partnership and the Lewisham Strategic Partnership.

Outcomes and learning from previous strategy

The Lewisham Volunteering Strategy 2006-2011 was developed following a substantial consultation with a range of partners and stakeholders, volunteer involving organisations and the general public, including those who volunteer their time and those who do not.

The learning from this consultation must not be lost and this 2nd Lewisham Volunteering Strategy will harness the learning from the original consultation, more recent consultations the findings of the Lewisham Volunteering Impact Assessment (2011) and the experience of partners.

The original strategy culminated in five key objectives:

1. To Increase volunteering through appropriate matching of volunteers and opportunities
2. To increase awareness of the benefits and value of volunteering & community to both individuals & organisation
3. To ensure that Lewisham's diverse communities participate with and are reflected in community engagement and volunteering opportunities.
4. To create an environment that encourages greater participation in community and civic life
5. To build capacity and infrastructure to ensure good volunteering practice, networking and collaboration

Under each of these objectives sat an action plan that closely linked to both national and local strategies such as Compact, ChangeUp and Local Area Agreements. However the strength of the plan was that its key focus was to deliver activities to enhance local volunteering and this was achieved through a range of partners including:

- Volunteer Centre Lewisham
- Lewisham Council and its directorates
- South London & Maudesley NHS Trust
- Metropolitan Police (Lewisham)
- Voluntary Action Lewisham
- Lewisham Health Care
- Lewisham Primary Care Trust
- Lewisham Timebank Steering Group

The Volunteering Strategy 2007 - 2012 saw a number of notable achievements including (but not exclusively)

Within Objective 1

Develop employee volunteering schemes across the public and private sectors

Volunteer Centre Lewisham worked closely with London Borough of Lewisham to develop and launch the council's Employee Volunteering Scheme, this allows employees of LBL 2 days a year out of their contracted hours to volunteer in Lewisham. To promote the scheme 14 managers took part in a one day challenge to completely redecorate a local scout hall.

Within Objective 2

Celebrate and recognise the achievements of volunteers, and formally thank them.

Numerous initiatives were developed to thank volunteers. These included Volunteer Achievement Awards during Volunteers' Week and Make a Difference Awards organised through LBL which offered residents an opportunity to nominate neighbours.

Within Objective 3

Increase the number of volunteers with mental health needs

VCL and South London & Maudsley (SLaM) forged a robust, proactive partnership that provided over 500

individuals with severe and enduring mental health issues the opportunity to volunteer, by providing ongoing appropriate support both to individuals and organisations.

Within Objective 4

Develop and promote volunteering opportunities that enhance public sector services

London Borough of Lewisham created volunteering opportunities for young people including full time opportunities new opportunities were developed to volunteer within Lewisham Health Care

Within Objective 5

Groups supported to develop and improve volunteer programmes or roles using best practice

During the early part of this strategy VCL was able to offer support to organisations through Volunteer Improvement Project. The production of a clear, concise user friendly Good Practice Guide was a crucial legacy which provided information to volunteer involving organisations during a time when there was no dedicated worker to deliver on good practice.

Other Learning

Our learning has come from the targets that were not achieved such as 'Increasing the number of young people from 14 volunteering' which may have been achieved if we had created better partnerships with relevant groups, our most successful activities were often achieved by working in partnership.

This new Volunteering Strategy seeks to harness the strengths of partnerships developing new partnerships where possible and grow and diversify existing partnerships.

Case Studies

Celebrate and recognise the achievements of volunteers and formally thank them.

Volunteer Achievement Awards recognised volunteers across a range of categories including: Love Lewisham, Sport and Culture and Young People. Nominated by neighbours, relatives, friends, organisations all nominees received certificates and winners were presented with trophies.



Groups supported to develop and improve volunteer programmes or roles using best practice

With funding from Capacity Builders 56 local volunteer involving groups were supported on a one to one basis to develop their volunteering policies and procedures. 19 groups achieved either the Bronze, Silver or Gold levels of good practice as set down in London Volunteering Charter and were presented with an award that recognised their achievements.



Sydenham Gardens
Receiving Silver Award

Context

National

The coalition government has clearly stated that they "... will take action to support and encourage social responsibility; volunteering and philanthropy, and make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another."

The Big Society programme goes on to outline the plans to encourage volunteering and social action, as well as the launch of the new National Citizen Service for 16 year olds.

At the time of writing it is unclear how the Government anticipates delivering these objectives, however, what is clear is that in a time of substantial cuts there will be additional pressures on voluntary and community sector across the board. The aim appears to be to create a society that supports each other, a society where volunteering and social action are considered paramount to achieving greater independence and less dependence on the state.

As part of the national Compact agenda, the Volunteering Code of Practice was introduced under the National Compact Agreement in 2001, and remains relevant. Other codes cover community groups, consultation and policy appraisal, funding and volunteering. The

volunteering code is aimed at improving the relationship between government/local government and the voluntary and community sector as it affects volunteering.

Locally the Council and other statutory bodies are signed up to the Compact and supports the principles of the Compact. The Volunteering Strategy forms part of this Code of Practice within Lewisham Compact.

The Office for Civil Society has made up to £30 million available through Transforming Local Infrastructure grants, as part of their commitment to taking forward infrastructure. Volunteering infrastructure is recognised within this funding.

Regional

The London Volunteering Group, serviced by the London Mayor's office, was established in 2005 and seeks to increase volunteering at a regional level through partnership working amongst its current membership, including the Mayor's stakeholder and policy development teams.

In January 2009, the London Stakeholders Volunteering Forum came together with guest stakeholders to discuss the definition of volunteering.

The Compact code on Volunteering currently defines volunteering as

"any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment."

London Stakeholders Principles of Volunteering

In response to an increasing interest in volunteering as a means to support people (back) into employment, and to provide some clarity required around the differences between volunteering and work experience, the Forum felt it necessary to establish the principles behind the term 'volunteering'.

Volunteering:

- Is mutually beneficial (to individual and organisation)
- Is independently chosen and freely given
- Is enabling and flexible where possible
- Has community or social benefit
- Offered to not for profit activities

In addition, the Forum notes the following considerations when developing a volunteering opportunity:

- Any financial benefit from the involvement of volunteers is reinvested to the community or allows a not-for-profit to continue to exist
- Organisations need to be clear where paid roles should be protected or reinstated again when affordable
- Volunteering roles should be designed with a Mutuality of Expectations statement to clarify expectations of commitment without entering into a contract which changes the role into one with employment rights
- Any other form of unpaid work or experience should not be labelled volunteering.

The Legacy of London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Two of the key objectives for the London Organising Committee for the London Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), is to raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering to both the individual and organisation and increase the number of people of all ages volunteering on a regular basis before, during and after the 2012 Games. Lewisham Cultural services alongside Volunteer Centre Lewisham and community based partners, aims to maximise the impact that the London 2012 Games will have on volunteering at a local level.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will clearly impact the whole of the UK, but we cannot escape the fact that the greatest thrust will take place in London. There are a number of local Cultural initiatives under the umbrella of the London 2012: Games, including the development of Lewisham's 2012 Volunteering Champions. This will involve recruitment and training of 75 residents aged 16 years plus aimed at providing Lewisham with a pool of trained cultural events leaders and coaches supporting Lewisham partners and events before, during and long after the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Lewisham's volunteering partners will also work in partnership to ensure London 2012 Games legacy

training and funding specifically for the development of volunteering is utilised in the most effective manner across the Borough.

Olympic and Paralympic Games

'We are committed to signing up the 70,000 volunteers needed to develop a successful Olympics in 2012.....It is a quite amazing thing when you see people getting involved from all sorts of different walks of life, and the sense of unity for the city that gives is something quite remarkable'

(Tony Blair, April 2006)

Although the Olympic and Paralympic Games will clearly impact the whole of the UK we cannot escape the fact that the greatest thrust will take place in London. There are a number of initiatives under the umbrella of 2012 and include:

- *'Pre-Games Initiatives'* - volunteering and volunteering-related initiatives linked to the London Games that will take place in the years leading up to 2012;
- *'Games-Time programme'* – recruitment, deployment and management of approximately 70,000 volunteers for and during the Games;
- *'Legacy'* – benefits or changes for individuals and/or communities created by their involvement in the volunteering programme.

It is anticipated that there will be many 'Games inspired' volunteering opportunities created in sports, arts, culture and environment. Locally, Lewisham needs to maximize this legacy.

Local

Lewisham has a robust and effective voluntary and community sector. A recent survey of local residents shows that 37% (approx 90,000) of Lewisham residents give their time for the benefit of others each year, 22% (approx 55,000) give more than 2 hours per week, 37% of volunteers do so for more than 7 hours week. Time and skills are given to: community groups and charities of which there are approximately 2000, Lewisham Health Care, Lewisham Council, Lewisham Metropolitan Police where volunteers give approximately 8000 hours per year. It is estimated that the in kind contribution to Lewisham through time and skills from volunteers, equates to over £32,000,000 per annum. This contribution strengthens local communities in many ways: those receiving services value and appreciate the time given by volunteers.

The Volunteering Strategy Steering Group reports to The Stronger Communities Partnership which is a sub group of the Lewisham Strategic Partnership and is identified within local strategies such as: Sustainable Communities

Strategy and Lewisham's Olympic prospectus 'Making the Games Count'.

It is recognised that the voluntary and community sector and volunteering will play an increasingly pivotal role within the delivery of services in Lewisham. It is crucial that local strategies and partnerships are created in a way that supports sustainable volunteering that will benefit volunteers, the organisations that engage volunteers and the communities.

Synergy with other local strategies

Lewisham is a pro-active, forward thinking borough, where partners from across the sectors work together in order to achieve greater opportunities for people who live, work, study or spend leisure time in the borough. As such, local strategies have a number of threads that link them together, and volunteering is highlighted in many of the key local strategies including (but not exclusively):

- Children and Young People's Plan
- Health and Well Being Board
- Making the Games Count Lewisham's Prospectus for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Game
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Timebank Development Strategy
- Youth Task Force

Changing Face of Volunteering in Lewisham

Profile of Volunteers

The following information shows some of the statistical comparison on volunteers registering through Volunteer Centre Lewisham during 2006-07 and 2010-11. The percentages in table a) are based only on the number of individuals completing monitoring forms at the time of registration with Volunteer Centre Lewisham. This table shows areas of change, most notably the increase in number of people coming forward to volunteer but also those who are not in employment.

a)

Monitoring area	Lewisham demographic	*2006 - 2007	*2010 - 2011	** National statistics
Registered to volunteer		2242	4769	
Male	***52%	30%	33%	38%
Female	***48%	70%	67%	42%
Not working	****31%	28%	38%	35%
Identified as BME	40%	78%	77%	34%
Considered themselves to have a disability	*** 15%	11%	5%	42%

Source VCL Database **Institute for voluntary research * 2001 Census **** JCP*

The Volunteering Impact Assessment carried out in 2011, which shows some variation in these statistics. For example substantially more men give time than register with VCL. Also VCL has a higher percentage of registrations from BME communities, this is because of having dedicated projects to increase participation with these communities

b)

Monitoring area	2011
Percentage of people volunteering	36%
Male	43%
Female	57%
Not working	41%
Identified as BME or not white	43%
Considered themselves to have a disability	22%

Using this information will inform priorities of the strategy and the annual action plans.

Motivations

Volunteering profile has changed dramatically over recent years. 'Helping out' survey carried out by Institute for Volunteering Research 2007 identified that:

- 53% of people who are engaged in formal volunteering do so 'to improve things and help people'
- 55% of people were not working

There is little doubt that the number of people offering their time in order to gain employment skills has increased, during 2009-2010 20% of people who registered with VCL were unemployed.

As the recession began to bite 2008-2009 there was an increase in the number of people coming forward to volunteer, during January to March 2009 there was a 266% surge in registrations at Volunteer Centre Lewisham, this levelled out to a little over 100% increase over the year. There continues to be an increase in the number of people coming forward to volunteer each year.

Individuals facing redundancy find that volunteering offers a positive experience, one where they are able to continue to utilize their skills and experience, learn new skills and change direction in their career, and the impact on maintain good mental health is critical.

These highly skilled volunteers pose a number of challenges for volunteer involving organisations.

- Organisations may find it difficult to develop roles where higher skill levels are needed
- Fear and conflict can arise should paid staff feel that volunteers are replacing paid staff
- Volunteers with specific skills may move on to paid employment quickly

Volunteering Verses social Action

The Big Society identifies volunteering and social action and essential tools in tackling the social, economic and political challenges in the UK today. But, as of yet there is no distinction between the two.

"We will take action to support and encourage social responsibility, volunteering and philanthropy, and make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another....."

..... encourage volunteering and involvement in social action, including launching a national day to celebrate and encourage social action, and make regular community service an element of civil service staff appraisals."

Definition of Volunteering

There are several definitions of volunteering, Volunteering England quotes the Compact Code of Good Practice in Volunteering, that volunteering is

“... an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives”

Lewisham believes that this is relevant to adopt as a local definition.

Definition of Social Action

There are very few up to date definitions of social action. Broadly speaking social action can be defined as:

Communities, organisations and individuals working together to improve their lives and shape their future.

There is a spectrum of time giving activities that support and involve the community that are unpaid and freely given. These range from volunteering within its purest sense (giving time unpaid for the benefit of others), through to time given as work experience and what the government calls ‘enforced volunteering’.

We recognise that there is a continuum of time giving which could look like this:



Volunteering	Personal Development	Social Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering in charities and community groups • Volunteering within statutory bodies e.g. LBL, Health, Schools • Volunteering within Metropolitan police • Faith groups • Management Committee • School Governors • Timebanking • Timecredits • Community fora • Corporate Volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Experience • National Citizens Service (16 Year Olds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Payback (probation Services) • Enforced Volunteering (Work Programme)

We also recognise that there are other activities that sometimes directly benefits communities that may not fully be paid employment but do involve remuneration and therefore are not identified as volunteering, these include: apprenticeships, internships and secondment.

This strategy is concerned with valuing communities through time giving that increases 'neighbourliness' and engages a wider range of people in sustaining communities within the borough. For practical purposes we are using the term 'volunteer' to include the full spectrum of time giving.

It is recognised that people give time, support communities and benefit others in many different ways:

Volunteering

The traditional term of volunteering through a charity or community group.

Time Banking

A method of giving time, banking time and exchanging skills.

Time Credits

Time givers are thanked through time credits, which may be exchanged for services.

Faith Groups

The 2011 Volunteering Impact Assessment identified that vast numbers of people give time through faith groups, helping with services, back office assistance and community activity. However, they often do not see themselves as 'volunteers'.

Sports clubs

Sports clubs exist due to the time given by parents and people interested in sport. Not short of 'volunteers' the processes often simply need formalising

Management Committees/Trustees

Charities are run by volunteers, Management Committees, Directors and Trustees. It is vital that Lewisham increases the skills within Management Committees in order to create sustainable community organisations.

School Governors

Many people join school governor panels within a voluntary capacity, planning and monitoring the activities within the school.

Community Fora

Local people involved in planning and setting priorities for wards within the borough, this might include ward assemblies and tenants and resident associations, young citizens panel, amongst others.

Young Citizens Panel

Young people aged 11-18 who give their time to decision making and planning in Lewisham on matters such as: crime, safety and leisure amongst others.

Benefits of Volunteering

This strategy arises from the recognition of the positive impact that volunteering has on individuals, organisations, communities and the anticipation of the role of volunteering within the coalition government's policy Big Society.

Benefits to the Individual

- Greater understanding of other communities and groups
- Personal development, e.g. self-confidence, improved mental health, physically active, healthier, stronger
- New friends, new skills, new life opportunities (e.g. learning, employment and personal development)
- Structure and meaning to day-to-day life (where this is lacking)
- Sense of pride, belonging and having 'made a difference'
- Opportunity to act as an ambassador within own community

Benefits to Voluntary and Community Groups and Public Sector Services

- Greater understanding of service users needs, and communities and groups who might benefit
- Greater capacity to deliver services in line with organisations aims and objectives
- Greater flexibility

- Ability to enhance and add value to services and activities
- Bigger 'reach' into community
- Provision of services which are not possible or not funded otherwise, e.g. befriending and chaperone services

Benefits to the Community

- Greater understanding of communities, reduction in tensions and crime rates
- Lower unemployment and higher participation rates
- Increase in good health (physical and mental), less stress on the NHS
- Increased engagement and representation of views and communities at decision-making levels

Benefits to Private Sector

- Improved links with community sector
- Enhanced corporate responsibility achievements
- Motivated workforce
- Improved skills development

Needs of Organisations

Organisations in Lewisham are ever evolving. In order for Lewisham clubs, voluntary and community sector and statutory sector groups and organisations to be able to respond to national, regional and local agendas, developing and consolidating experience of civic engagement and responding to the Localism Bill, and engaging in decision making processes, it is crucial that they develop an imbed good practice in volunteering and adhere to quality standards that will enable them to continue to improve and grow. There are a number of methods that can be used in order to measure this improvement including: Greater London Volunteering's Experts in Volunteering Charter (which is a 3 stage development tool) and Investors in Volunteers, as well as industry specific quality marks that includes volunteers.

There needs to be a range of mechanisms set up in order to meet the needs of organisations to enable them to achieve and maintain good practice. Small, unfunded organisations have a very different capacity and aims to large well funded ones. Methods of engagement should include: fora; group training; one to one support; email and internet support.

Corporate Giving, Volunteering and Corporate Social Responsibility

Lewisham needs to develop a corporate volunteering action plan, which will attract skills and finances to clubs, groups and organisations.

Businesses recognise the value of volunteering as a means of meeting their corporate social responsibility agenda, Lewisham recognises the value of engaging these skills in order to develop policies, procedures, business plans, strengthen infrastructure and deliver community activities. Engaging in CSR programmes would provide a mutually beneficial exchange.

Volunteering Consortium

The Volunteering Strategy Steering Group will seek to develop a Volunteering Consortium, in order to attract addition resources, share expertise, develop volunteering activities according to local priorities.

Recognising Volunteering

The 2011 Lewisham Volunteering Impact Assessment identified that volunteers give approximately 200,000 hours per week of service to benefit communities within Lewisham, which brings with it a financial contribution of over £32,000,000 per year.

Volunteers should be shown appreciation for their contributions by the organisation/s that they give time in and by the borough. There are many ways that Clubs, groups and organisations can thank and recognise their volunteers including participation activities such as Volunteers Week, providing references, training and time credits.

The Volunteering Strategy Steering Group will identify methods to celebrate and recognise local people who give time.



Make a Difference Awards 2011

Priorities

1. Develop a robust volunteering infrastructure within volunteer involving organisations that supports good practice to create a thriving time giving community

There needs to be an increase in the skills and knowledge across the sectors to ensure that volunteering is a positive experience for all concerned.

2. Increase the range and diversity of volunteering opportunities

People give time in many ways, not only by volunteering through the structures of registered charities. Lewisham recognises other forms of time giving including: Timebanking; Time credits; active faith groups and involvement in local fora such as Local Assemblies.

3. Increase volunteering resources across the sectors

An area of continued misunderstanding is the belief that volunteering is free. This is far from the truth as organisations involving volunteers must invest finances, human resources and premises in order to benefit from the time, skills, passions and good will of volunteers.

Lewisham needs to develop an understanding within VIOs of the resource implications including budgeting and fundraising for the real costs of including volunteers.

4. Policy Response and Campaigning

Volunteering and time giving must be represented at decision making fora locally, regionally nationally, including sector specific for a such as Volunteering England, Time Bank UK, Sport England.

5. Increase the numbers of people volunteering & expand access to volunteering for groups at risk of exclusion

Lewisham will continue to create mechanisms to engage people from all communities in volunteering and time giving.

6. Improve the skills base of the volunteering pool

It is vital to match volunteers with specific skills into roles that benefit them and the organisations, but also to develop the skills of existing volunteers and the organisations.

Developing Volunteering Communities

This Volunteering Strategy seeks to make volunteering available to everyone who lives, works, studies and spends leisure time in Lewisham. We see volunteering as having a pivotal role in improving neighbourliness and engaging a wider range of people in sustaining our communities. It recognises that whilst volunteering is time given freely it also benefits those giving time in a number of ways including reducing isolation and improving employment skills.

People who volunteer come from all walks of life and from all backgrounds. Lewisham recognises that in order to properly engage people from particular communities in volunteering we need to create dedicated activities. Where we currently achieve representative outcomes we need to strive to maintain these successes.

Young volunteers.

There are over 30,000 people aged 14-25 in Lewisham. Young people already play an active role in volunteering in the borough including being members of the Young Citizens Panel. It has been identified that embedding the principle and habit of volunteering at an early age is an effective way of establishing a life time of volunteering, and helps young people improve their life chances through the development of transferable social and work skills. The Mayors Youth Task Force (Lewisham) has identified that volunteering is one priority area for young people. Engaging young people is beneficial to both the young people and the community. Young volunteers are able to develop skills, increase confidence get life and employment experiences, and the volunteering exchange creates a mutuality of respect between young people and the rest of the community.

Retired people as volunteers.

With over 34,000 people over the age of 60 in Lewisham, there is a vast pool of skills, experience and time that retired people and those over 60 can bring to communities and organisations in Lewisham, yet volunteers over the age of 60 are disproportionately under represented. Volunteering not only offers opportunities for organisations to tap into an experienced skills bank but also increases social networks and reduces isolation amongst older people.

Unemployed people as volunteers.

The 2011 Volunteering Impact Assessment for Lewisham showed that 41% of people who volunteer are

unemployed, compared to a borough average of 17%. Volunteering is recognised widely as an opportunity to gain new skills and experience as a route into employment, and when asked volunteers declared that they hope to get work skills through volunteering.

Volunteers from black and minority ethnic communities.

Lewisham has a rich ethnic and cultural community, BME communities make up 40.5% of the population of the borough. Research has shown that 43% of the borough's volunteers are from BME backgrounds, although 77% of Volunteer Centre Lewisham's registrations are from BME communities. Engaging volunteers from BME communities results in a stronger more cohesive community, and increases the level of understanding and representation within organisations.

Disabled People as Volunteers.

The 2001 census suggests that 15.6% of the population of Lewisham are disabled, recent research shows that 22% of volunteers are disabled. Volunteering can increase a sense of well-being, improve physical and mental health. Volunteering is a positive activity that engages disabled people in activities that allow them to be part of the community not just service recipients.

Ex-offenders as Volunteers

Almost a quarter of adults in the UK have a criminal record. The majority of the convictions are for single

minor offences and the ex-offenders pose no threat to children, young people or vulnerable people. Engaging ex-offenders widens the pool of available volunteers, and offers the individual an opportunity for rehabilitation, training and work experience, opening doors to employment and a to contribute to society.

Geographically

Volunteering provides an ideal platform for people to be actively engaged in their local area. Lewisham has 18 wards with very differing levels of volunteering. Volunteering locally within charities and community groups, Timebank and community fora brings skills, experience, knowledge, reduces isolation, increases social networks and neighbourliness and social cohesion.

Priorities and Action Plan

Develop a robust volunteering infrastructure within volunteer involving organisations that supports good practice to create a thriving time giving community			
Activity	Outcome	Responsibility	Measure of achievement
Develop a framework on which achievements can be measured	Value and achievements have clear value, including statistical analysis and anecdotal information	Volunteering Strategy Steering Group	Workable framework developed
Provision of ongoing support for groups on good practice and volunteering infrastructure	Volunteer involving organisations adopt and implement good practice standards recognised within the appropriate national bodies	VCL Timebank Steering Group Lewisham Sport and Leisure	Groups involving volunteers working to a good practice framework
Implementation of awards in good practice and promotion of the Volunteering Charter	Volunteer involving organisations working to a framework of good practice, planning a process of improvement	VCL	Lewisham organisations achieving 'silver' standard of the Volunteering Charter
Development of a Volunteer Co-ordinator programme	Volunteer involving organisations access Volunteer Manager support according to need.	VCL	Lewisham organisations have specialist support, and budget for support
Sports clubs supported to develop	Sports clubs have	Lewisham Sport and	Sports clubs achieving

structured volunteering programme	policies and procedures in place with properly supported volunteers	Leisure VCL	Club Mark and other appropriate quality standards
Increase the numbers engaging with the Volunteer Co-ordinators Forum	Improved networking and sharing of good practice in volunteering	VCL VAL	Volunteer Co-ordinators Forum well attended by a diverse range of representatives

Increase volunteering resources across the sectors			
Activity	Outcome	Responsibility	Measure of achievement
Develop Volunteering Consortium as a platform to setting up partnerships and apply for funding	Stronger base to draw in funding	Volunteering Strategy Steering Group	Strong, effective consortium
Create a volunteering hub, including a range of time giving activities	A one stop shop for volunteers to access a range of different time giving opportunities Stronger base to attract funding	Volunteering Strategy Steering Group VCL	The development of a co-ordinated approach to volunteering and time giving across the borough

Increase the range and diversity of volunteering opportunities			
Activity	Outcome	Responsibility	Measure of achievement
Engage with environmental projects to create volunteering opportunities	Wider range of opportunities available to meet the interests of the community	LBL VCL	Increased numbers of local people involved in local environmental projects
Building on the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic games, increase the number of people volunteering within sport, culture and events	Sports clubs increase capacity and skills through engaging volunteers Broader engagement in cultural activities including borough wide events such as Peoples Day	LBL VCL	Local people will have engaged in volunteering activities initiated by the Games
Increase the activities/exchanges within local Timebanks	Lewisham residents better engaged in activities that strengthen communities	Timebank Steering Group	Number of local residents engaged in timebanking and exchange volunteering
Promote Time Credits as a means for residents to engage in time giving and community activity	An increase in the number of flexible opportunities	Spice Timebank Steering Group LBL	Local residents engaged in giving time for time credits
Increase the number of volunteering opportunities available within statutory sector	Volunteer roles are more diverse	LBL Lewisham Health Care SLaM	

Policy Response and Campaigning			
Activity	Outcome	Responsibility	Measure of achievement
Representation at Lewisham Strategic Partnership	Volunteering recognised as an integral activity to strengthen communities	LSP VCL	Volunteering issues raised and strategic and LSP level
Increased engagement within Local Assemblies	Local people enabled to represent local need within a good practice framework	LBL	Number of people representing their local area increased
Respond to national, regional and local priorities	Volunteering and time giving locally represented at national level	VCL Timebank	Priorities responded to

Increase the numbers of people volunteering and expand access to volunteering for groups at risk of exclusion			
Activity	Outcome	Responsibility	Measure of achievement
Develop a comprehensive picture of volunteering geographically	Evidence of volunteering activity on ward by ward basis Gaps identified	Volunteering Strategy Steering Group	Report on the number of opportunities available geographically Report on the number of people volunteering geographically
Create opportunities to promote	More residents able to	Volunteering Strategy	Increase in the number

volunteering in all of it's forms	access opportunities to engage in volunteering and time giving.	Steering Group VCL Time Bank Local Assemblies Faith forum	of people engaged in the various forms of time giving
Develop systems for young people to engage in volunteering and community activity	Young people from the age of 14 better involved in the community	LBL, Children and Young Peoples Plan	Increase in number young people involved in volunteering
Support organisations to include disabled people as volunteers	Disabled people have access to a wide variety of volunteering roles Organisations have resources and are better engaged with community	VAL VCL CSU LDC	Disabled people engaged in volunteering and feel supported.
Create remote volunteering opportunities	People who have limited time or homebound are able to engage in volunteering	VCL	Increase in the number of remote volunteering opportunities

Improve the skills base of the volunteering pool			
Activity	Outcome	Responsibility	Measure of achievement
Link with corporate businesses to create volunteering opportunities that bring specific skills into the borough	Organisations have access to strategic, infrastructure and development skills	2 nd Tier Forum	Corporate volunteers engaged in supporting organisations
Create a pool of skilled volunteers to match with organisations	Organisations recruit volunteers with specific skills	VCL	Organisations identify support from particular volunteers
Provision of training for volunteers in topics such as finance, marketing, Trustee Responsibilities	Volunteers better able to support organisations. Trustees have a greater understanding of their responsibilities	VCL VAL 2 nd Tier Forum	Number of volunteers receiving training and going on to use these skills in local organisations

Delivery

The Volunteering Strategy is a strategic document and therefore identifies key priority areas as defined above. It is the role of the Volunteering Strategy Steering Group to develop an annual work plan in order to achieve the priorities. This steering group recognises that there are many organisations across the sectors already working on the objectives highlighted in this strategy, and whilst we aim to avoid duplication we realise that there will often be several organisations working towards similar goals that will not be accountable to this strategy. Where feasible the Volunteering Strategy Steering Group will encourage the development of partnerships to deliver on the priorities in order to maximise reach and resources.

Measuring Progress

The Volunteering Strategy Steering Group will meet quarterly to monitor the implementation of the strategy and develop plans to address gaps in delivery in parallel with other local strategies. Regular reports will be presented to the Stronger Communities Partnership Board and Lewisham Strategic Partnership. The groups will develop a tool for measuring success both quantitative and qualitative

Lewisham's Volunteering Strategy has been developed in consultation and partnership with a broad representative group

Involvement in the development of this strategy:

- Job Centre Plus
- Lewisham Metropolitan Police
- Lewisham Timebank Steering Group
- London Borough Lewisham
 - Community Sector Unit
 - Lewisham Sport and Leisure
 - Children and Young People
- Mayors Youth Task Force
- Stronger Communities Partnership Board
- Lewisham Health Care
- Voluntary Action Lewisham
- Volunteer Centre Lewisham

The strategy also takes into consideration the findings within the Volunteering Impact Assessment 2011

