



## **Consultation response – potential volunteer strategy**

### **A response from the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) for the Children’s Workforce Development Council**

**July 2008**

#### **Introduction**

1. The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England. A diverse network of over 170 national voluntary youth organisations and regional and local youth networks, NCVYS has been working since 1936 to raise the profile of youth work, share good practice and influence policy that has an impact on young people and the organisations that support them.
2. The NCVYS network reflects the diverse range of voluntary organisations working with young people at community, local, regional and national level. Most of our members offer opportunities to engage in challenging activities or develop creative talents. They also support young people to become active in their communities and offer opportunities for their voice to be heard. Some offer interventions to prevent or tackle specific issues such as homelessness or offending behaviour. Others offer counselling, advice, guidance and information. All contribute to young people’s personal and social development; some also engage with spiritual development.
3. NCVYS has welcomed the opportunity to provide the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) with responses from the voluntary and community youth sector, to help inform their decision to launch a volunteer strategy. NCVYS strongly encourages the creation of a volunteer strategy, in particular as volunteers are the largest number of workers within our sector, an estimated 500,000 across England alone. The needs of volunteers are diverse and are often not provided with priority or fully recognised by some Sector Skills Councils. Therefore any support CWDC can provide would be warmly welcomed.
4. For more information on any element of this paper, please contact NCVYS’s workforce development officer, Nichola Brown, email [nichola@ncvys.org.uk](mailto:nichola@ncvys.org.uk)

## Key Recommendations

5. To follow are the key recommendations from NCVYS, based on the consultation outcome and knowledge of the sector. An explanation of the consultation process and responses to the questions posed, will follow on after this section.
  - a. CWDC should not set minimum standards for anyone who volunteers with children, young people and families. Regulation already exists in relation to Criminal Records Bureau checks and the forthcoming Independent Safeguarding Authority Scheme. Setting further minimum standards or requirements may deter and alienate volunteers.
  - b. Instead, volunteers should be encouraged and supported to take up training and development opportunities (on a voluntary basis). Therefore it is suggested that CWDC can help in a number of ways:
    - to support the funding and promotion of ‘working with children and young people’ courses at levels 1 & 2, which are based on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge. This **core offer** of training to volunteers should cover the basics of what will equip a volunteer with the knowledge to undertake their volunteering role e.g. first aid, child protection, risk assessment, children and young people development;
    - for those volunteers under the age of 25, voluntary organisations should be encouraged and supported to provide an additional training module, which introduces young volunteers to the different roles and work available across the children’s workforce. This will help young people to explore whether the children’s workforce is a viable career option and hopefully lead to an increased number of young people entering the workforce. CWDC should work closely with v to help support this initiative. This module could also be of interest to some adult volunteers, especially those who under take volunteering as a way of gaining an insight in to the children’s workforce career area;
    - to support the co-ordination of training at a national, regional and local level facilitated by the most appropriate infrastructure body (ideally via the Workforce Strategy Partners Programme). Activity at a local level would include promoting training availability from the third and statutory sectors, setting up a database of training providers and brokering partnership arrangements e.g. sharing of training places and facilities. Some funding should be made available via the government’s youth workforce reform programme (third sector capacity building strand). However, we need to consider the co-ordination of training available to volunteers (and paid staff) who work not just with young people, but children and families too;
    - for CWDC to continue to support NCVYS’s proposal for a volunteer accreditation scheme, in which the CWN’s Youth Workforce Programme Board has agreed to support a feasibility and scoping study; and

- it is clear from the responses received to the consultation questions, that some consultees need information, support, resources and development opportunities with regards to the effective management of volunteers. But in fact much of this provision already exists e.g. from Volunteering England. Therefore CWDC and national infrastructure organisations need to work closely together to promote further this support and that from other sources e.g. UK Workforce Hub. In addition, it would be useful for children's national infrastructure organisations to obtain and promote case studies from their members with regards to the effective engagement, support and development of volunteers.

## Consultation process

6. NCVYS received five consultation questions from the CWDC around its decision to launch a volunteer strategy:

**Question 1:** What should an ideal future volunteer children, young people and families workforce look like?

**Question 2:** Should there be minimum standards for anyone who volunteers with children, young people and families, and if so what should those standards be?

**Question 3:** What role can volunteering play both as an entry route into the children, young people and families workforce and in helping people move within the workforce?

**Question 4:** What are the support, management and other workforce development needs of volunteers?

**Question 5:** Do you have any ideas for any projects which CWDC could take forward, which would help to upskill/support volunteers who work with children, young people and families?

7. NCVYS asked members to respond to these questions by placing a request in its strategic policy bulletin. The bulletin is sent to all NCVYS member organisations and also to contacts within the wider voluntary and community youth sector. NCVYS received responses from four member organisations. In the future, NCVYS expects consultation response rates to be much higher as it is in the process of identifying two key workforce development contacts per member organisation, with whom we can directly communicate with.
8. Therefore, in addition to the bulletin consultation response request, NCVYS facilitated a focus group with its Workforce Development Task Group on the 23 April 2008. Furthermore, discussions were held at a NCVYS Training Providers Event on the 27 June 2008, which helped to answer question four regarding the support, management and other workforce development needs of volunteers. Full list of participants are featured in *Annex A*.
9. NCVYS has drawn upon its own extensive experience of providing voluntary youth sector support and previous consultation responses from the sector to help formulate the response. The NCVYS workforce development officer has provided additional comments in italics to that made by members.

## Responses to CWDC questions

### Question 1: What should an ideal future volunteer children, young people and families workforce look like?

- volunteers need to be safe, competent, enthusiastic and flexible;
- forward thinking;
- confident;
- are valued and that society recognises the work of volunteers;
- focused on meeting the needs of children, young people and families;
- recognises the diversity of the sector;
- the workforce is supported;
- the workforce has one vision;
- volunteers are happy and enjoy their volunteering time;
- provides engagement and affinity with children, young people and families;
- shares good practice;
- well resourced;
- inclusive and accessible;
- integrated;
- respect for individual specialisms;
- commitment; and
- embrace the values base

### Question 2: Should there be minimum standards for anyone who volunteers with children, young people and families, and if so what should those standards be?

10. One member stated there should be minimum standards that apply to the competence of volunteers. Minimum standards should relate to evidence-based practice and achievement, either in the current volunteering setting or taking into account previous skills and experience. Standards should be simple, inclusive and take care not to discourage volunteers from applying or continuing their work.
11. Another member said it would be a positive move to have a basic minimum standard of child protection, health and safety and first aid etc, so that parents are assured of their child/young person's safety. However, views are divided as one regional network stated that there should be "No set training and qualifications – this would alienate volunteers".
12. NCVYS's anecdotal evidence demonstrates that the sector continues to be split about the issue of minimum standards. In particular this issue is prevalent around the discussions for a licence to practise for youth workers<sup>1</sup>.
13. Two members commented that the minimum standard should be the requirement for volunteers to undertake CRB checks (and in the future application of the Independent Safeguarding Authority scheme). Recruitment processes should incorporate robust safeguarding assessments and screening.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information about the regulation and registration of the children and young people's workforce is available via: [www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=638](http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=638)

14. It is important that volunteers are recognised for the valuable work that they undertake. *Providing recognition and rewards to volunteers is a key feature of the NCVYS volunteer accreditation scheme proposal<sup>2</sup>.*
15. It was suggested by one member to have a core range of subjects that volunteers could work towards over time. A record of training could be made in a log book similar to the Duke of Edinburgh Award system, providing evidence and recognition of the training undertaken. However, it may prove difficult to encourage volunteers to take up further training as many volunteer out of good will and in their spare time.
16. *The use of a Duke of Edinburgh type log book has been raised by several people in relation to the NCVYS Volunteer Accreditation Scheme, as a way of recording competence and experience.*
17. Consultation respondents asked many questions around the provision of training, including how will training be paid for? Would training be available at an accessible time for volunteers, such as in the evening or via the internet? There are already examples of good practice in this area; Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services piloted a programme providing evening training over a period of weeks to coincide with volunteering time. Therefore, the volunteers did not provide any additional volunteering hours in order to undertake training. During this time, young people did not miss out as qualified youth workers were brought in temporarily to cover the activity sessions. Examples like this need to be promoted to the sector.
18. The NCVYS Workforce Development Task Group recommended that there should be a code of conduct for volunteers applied across the sector. This would promote common aspirations and encourage the third sector to provide good working principles for volunteering work and the role. *However, some organisations already produce their own codes of conduct e.g. the YMCA. Perhaps CWDC could learn from the benefits of such codes?*

**Question 3: What role can volunteering play both as an entry route into the children, young people and families' workforce and in helping people move within the workforce?**

19. Volunteering can help play a significant role as an entry route in to the children, young people and families workforce as follows:
  - volunteering provides experience in different settings and a range of skills, especially working face-to-face with children and young people;
  - *volunteering can enable people to learn about the various job roles on offer before committing themselves to education/training or a particular career path; thus leading to informed career and learning choices and hopefully increased retention once in employment;*
  - the opportunity to 'road test' this career area is particularly beneficial for young volunteers; and
  - volunteers can influence others to work with children and young people both in a paid and unpaid capacity due to sharing their good experience of volunteering with their friends and family.
20. Furthermore, volunteering provides a great opportunity for people to get involved in the work of organisations. The Children's Society highlighted that it wants to encourage larger numbers of young people to volunteer in different

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<sup>2</sup> [www.ncvys.org.uk](http://www.ncvys.org.uk) >>policy >> policy statements

areas of its work, as a potential route for them to enter the workforce and shape the future of the organisation. Therefore, routes into volunteering need to remain clear, simple and inclusive, so that young people or families are not put off by bureaucracy or over-demanding entry requirements.

#### **Question 4: What are the support, management and other workforce development needs of volunteers?**

21. There needs to be greater numbers of good volunteers and better infrastructure to support and develop their skills. Those who manage volunteers also need better support and resources.
22. Many volunteers need flexible volunteering time arrangements to fit around other work, study or family commitments. Organisations that recruit volunteers need to adopt flexible practices to help accommodate them.
23. Volunteers need a support structure that enables them to work safely and to report concerns quickly and without fear of criticism.
24. From a skills and developmental perspective, volunteers bring a range of skills and experience to their work, but many have never worked with children and young people before so may need specific practice-related skills training and support. Using buddies or mentors to support volunteers has worked well for the Children's Society and plays an important part in building their skills and confidence. Another member commented that mentoring programmes can provide valuable support for new volunteers, enabling people to have a contact point, support and guidance from experienced volunteers or paid staff.
25. If a set of minimum standards were required, there would then need to be an organised and planned approach of support, guidance training and funding.
26. Volunteers need to be provided with training opportunities that are flexible and in different formats in order to meet needs e.g. provided on an evening, at weekends or modular-based. Training also needs to meet different learning styles. Short courses are attractive to volunteers as they allow training and development without long-term commitment.
27. Further issues/comments around training for volunteers include:
  - child care should be offered to enable volunteers to attend training courses;
  - need to offer a broad range of ways in which volunteers can engage in training e.g. web-based, distance learning, and on the job learning;
  - the value of the training course needs to be demonstrated to volunteers. For example, if it is seen as benefiting young people, it is always easier to sell;
  - courses need to be at different levels to reflect the different educational abilities of volunteers *e.g. some may have literacy and numeracy problems*;
  - training bursaries would be beneficial;
  - provide organisations/service providers with training budgets;
  - Common Core of Skills and Knowledge training – provide a training pack so that national voluntary youth organisations and infrastructure organisations can deliver courses on the common core (and train trainers to deliver the training);
  - respect the contributions of third sector training delivery – usually provided at weekends and delivered by individuals in their free time; and

- e-learning materials to accommodate those volunteers who would use it, although bear in mind that some volunteers may find e-learning difficult *and may require additional support (it is a new concept for some)*.
28. Training needs identified by participants at the NCVYS Training Providers Event on the 27 June 2008, included: understanding the role of volunteers; line management training; and children and young people development is needed by a wide range of occupational groups.
  29. There may be a need to refine the existing skills of volunteers to enable them to fulfil their volunteering role. This need does not have to be met by training but by other methods e.g. observation of practice.
  30. Volunteering England produces a vast range of information resources, tools and e-learning programmes e.g. volunteer management. CWDC should therefore work with Volunteering England to promote this support to the sector (*Volunteering England is signposted from the NCVYS workforce development web pages*)
  31. Organisations need to be empowered to support volunteers. This may require capacity building, which brings funding and resource implications.
  32. Barriers to volunteering are constantly debated within the voluntary and community sector. A mandatory licence to practise would be an issue for the Scout Association and Duke of Edinburgh Award.
  33. There is also an issue with accreditation. Individuals might want to acquire knowledge and skills and not have to worry about putting together portfolios etc – take up has been an issue with some accreditation schemes in the past. The reason for low take-up may have been about how the schemes have been advertised and lack of experimentation.
  34. Organisations need to be very honest about what expectations there are on volunteers e.g. need to undertake an induction course. Organisations should provide as much information as possible about what the volunteering role will entail and the type of work they will be doing. The Duke of Edinburgh Award<sup>3</sup> has web pages which shows individuals the different volunteering options they can undertake and therefore what to expect when helping young people to achieve the award.
  35. Support structures for volunteers are important at a local level to provide a network of contacts, information, signposting and training. However this requires capacity building for infrastructure and other network organisations.
  36. Good practice standards should be applied when recruiting, supporting and developing volunteers e.g. checklists, role descriptions, induction. *Information is available from Volunteering England e.g. Good Practice Bank.*<sup>4</sup>
  37. There should be consistent support for volunteers across the voluntary sector.
  38. Volunteers need to know what their boundaries are and expectations. *This needs to be clearly explained to them in their induction programme. Take-up of CWDC's induction standards needs to be improved across the voluntary youth sector (the NCVYS WSPP national pilot project mapping exercise results*

<sup>3</sup> [www.theaward.org/participants/index.php?ids=48,119&id=53](http://www.theaward.org/participants/index.php?ids=48,119&id=53)

<sup>4</sup> [www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/goodpracticebank](http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/goodpracticebank)

*provided us with an indication that use of induction standards could be increased e.g. of the 22 respondents only 32% currently use the standards).*

39. Within volunteer-led organisations, the managers, who are volunteers themselves, require support such as management training. Local infrastructure organisations can play a part in this by providing training, support and guidance to managers.
40. Provide extra support mechanisms for smaller charities.
41. There should be regular reviews/supervision with volunteers.
42. The volunteer workforce is very diverse and therefore has different needs. *There are different types of volunteers e.g. young volunteers, parent volunteers, 50-year-old-plus volunteers, career volunteer (using volunteering as a way of gaining experience/insight in to career area), the working full-time volunteer. All these different groups of volunteers have varying needs that must be taken in to account when developing a support strategy.*

**Question 5: Do you have any ideas for any projects which CWDC could take forward, which would help to upskill/support volunteers who work with children, young people and families?**

43. Young Devon has supplied an example of a volunteering project taking place across the Devon children's trust. Further details can be found in in *Annex B*.
44. The NCVYS Workforce Development Task Group suggested that consultancy support would be useful to help support organisations to upskill volunteers. *However, the NCVYS website<sup>5</sup> gives examples of projects that already exist to promote/provide consultancy support to the sector. CWDC/NCVYS could work together to increase promotion of existing consultancy support services.*
45. *An emerging grassroots need is for volunteers, and paid staff, to be provided with an 'introduction to working with children and young people' course at levels 1 and 2. This provides a basic training course which covers induction, child protection and general work with children and young people. This need has been identified by Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency, Young Suffolk and Salford Youth Nexus (CVS), but NCVYS is sure that the need is far more widespread than this. It is recommended that CWDC overviews all the workforce surveys completed by the Workforce Strategy Partners Programme (WSPP) contract holders to then assess nationally what the common trends/needs/issues are for supporting volunteers.*
46. *The Christian faith sector offers a course called 'what every volunteer youth worker should know'<sup>6</sup> Please note that this course is under review and will be mapped to the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge.*
47. *Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA), runs an 'introduction to work with children and young people' course over a nine week period (initially for two hours a week but in the future this will extend to three hours per week). 19 individuals completed the course (16 of which are volunteers). The course is*

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<sup>5</sup> [www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=309#business](http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=309#business)

<sup>6</sup> [www.youthwork.co.uk/training/volunteerscourse/](http://www.youthwork.co.uk/training/volunteerscourse/)

*optional. MVDA is about to pilot an introduction to working with children and young people course specifically for young volunteers.*

- 48. At Young Suffolk, the aim of their course is for volunteers to be provided with training that is absolutely necessary for their volunteering role, e.g. first aid, risk assessment, children and young people development. It is important that the training is linked closely to practical work and activities and that the volunteers do not provide additional volunteering time to complete the training (similar to Worcestershire CVYS's aim).*
- 49. NCVYS recommends that a core offer for volunteers is the provision of these 'introduction to working with children and young people courses' (take-up to be promoted voluntarily). All courses should be based on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge. Courses should be available at levels 1 and 2, after which the volunteers and paid workers should be introduced to specialisms e.g. youth work, play work or youth justice. This meets the government's aim, within the youth workforce reform programme, to provide a common platform for skills and training. The course provides volunteers with the foundation and core knowledge to work with children and young people, and instils them with confidence.*
- 50. In addition, it is recommended that young people under the age of 25 are provided with an additional optional module which explores the different roles that are available across the children's workforce. Links should be made with v, and the v-involved teams, to work in partnership to support young volunteers and support their career pathways.*
- 51. NCVYS has identified a need for training to both volunteers and paid staff to be co-ordinated at a local, regional and national level, facilitated by the most appropriate infrastructure body. It looks highly likely that at a local level some funding may be forthcoming to support the local co-ordination of training via the CWN's Youth Workforce Reform Programme. However, we need to consider the support not just of the youth workforce but the rest of the children's voluntary sector.*
- 52. The recommendations for further national co-ordination of training support for the voluntary youth sector has been made in the NCVYS WSPP national pilot evaluation report (recently submitted to CWDC)*
- 53. Co-ordination of training includes: the provision of a database of training providers; brokerage of partnerships between training providers; an assessment of training gaps; and at a local level training information collation includes the provision of not just that provided by the voluntary sector but from the local authority too.*
- 54. NCVYS requested that the government supports a feasibility and scoping study in to the volunteer accreditation scheme idea, which has been approved by the CWN's Youth Workforce Reform Programme Board. This is on the condition that the feasibility study looks at applying the scheme across the youth sector not just for youth work.*
- 55. At the feasibility stage, the scheme will look further at what should be the priority for the scheme – accreditation of competence/evidence of skills or demonstration of training hours achieved. The investigation in to what training evidence should be presented in order to achieve accreditation, will include research in to a wide range of courses already available at both a national and local level (and so will include the current provision of 'working with children and*

young people courses'). A copy of the proposal submitted to the DCSF is available via the NCVYS website<sup>7</sup>. In addition Appendix C details the collation of feedback received at the 15 July Training Priorities of the Voluntary Youth Sector Focus Group event.

56. It is recommended that projects be established to support the NEET (not in employment, education or training) group to enter the sector through volunteering and career pathways (*a successful project in operates at Young Devon*).
57. Additional ideas for any projects which CWDC could take forward, which would help to upskill/support volunteers who work with children, young people and families include:
  - facility to share practice and information (web blogs);
  - increase the profile of the volunteering workforce with the public;
  - collate tools and resources in one place;
  - volunteers don't have time to leave the place of volunteering. Learn from youth volunteering visiting accreditation scheme;
  - build resources for Volunteer Managers (preferably internet based or for local implementation, not necessarily training courses that take Managers out of their jobs); *Volunteering England provides an e-based volunteer manager learning course.*

## General comments received

58. A think tank of three sub-groups should be set up in order to assist CWDC to steer the volunteer strategy. The three groups should be made up of representatives from voluntary organisations that all have experience of working directly with volunteers: 1)organisations who work with children 2)organisations who work with young people and 3)organisations who work with families.
59. Be careful in the use of language when communicating with volunteers, particularly when communicating with the faith sector.
60. The skills required for working with children, young people and families are quite different e.g. working with a two year old is different to working with a teenager or a family, which makes it a difficult task to then offer common training and support measures.
61. CWDC needs to set the strategic direction for volunteer support first then look at which projects can meet that strategy. In particular, funding will need to be available.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=270](http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=270)

## **Annex A – Consultation Responses**

### **Consultation responses received from:**

The Children's Society  
East Midlands Voluntary Youth (Regional Network)  
National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs  
Young Devon

### **NCVYS Workforce Development Task Group - focus group attendees:**

Jump Charity  
The Scout Association  
YMCA George Williams College  
Young Lives  
Young Suffolk (Ormiston Children & Families Trust)  
Young Christian Workers  
Youth Federation

### **Participants at the NCVYS Training Providers Event, 27 June 2008:**

ABC Awards  
AFASIC  
ALOVE UK Salvation Army  
Brathay Hall Trust  
Clubs for Young People  
Duke of Edinburgh Award  
Frontier Youth Trust  
Hope UK  
KIDS  
London Youth  
Sefton CVS  
Sports Leaders UK  
St John's Ambulance  
The Lifetrain Trust  
The Scout Association  
UK Workforce Hub  
UK Youth  
Youth Access

## **Annex B – Example of an existing volunteer project, supplied by Young Devon**

### **Volunteering across Devon Children’s Trust – Project brief**

#### **Aims**

1. To establish volunteering as a valued part of the workforce across the Children’s trust
2. To develop a consistent and quality approach to volunteer workforce development

#### **Objectives**

- To share knowledge about what provision exists for volunteers
- To survey organisations and individuals about their experience of volunteering – with a particular emphasis on difficult to reach groups and career development
- To analyse the recruitment, training, retention and progression opportunities that exist
- To understand the barriers that may be preventing volunteering becoming a route into the workforce
- To scope out the economic opportunities and threats to volunteering - both from the organisational and individuals perspective

A small working group (Comprising of DCC, PCT, Health provider Trust, LSC, DWP & some voluntary organisations) has been drawn together to steer this project forwards.

#### **Key milestones**

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Steering group to meet                        | February 08 |
| 2. Survey developed and distributed across Trust | April 08    |
| 3. Results analysed and reported                 | June 08     |
| 4. Recommendations submitted to Trust            | September   |
| 08   |             |

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## Appendix C – Volunteer Accreditation Scheme

NCVYS and CWDC held a focus group event on the 15 July 2008 'Training Priorities of the Voluntary Youth Sector'. The event was to support CWDC in their third sector capacity building strand work of the CWN's Youth Workforce Reform Programme. The afternoon of the event was dedicated to discussion work around key questions in relation to the Volunteer Accreditation Scheme. To follow is the collation of the feedback:

### Question 1:

**Can the scheme be applied to all volunteers who work with young people, not just youth workers? If not, why?**

- Yes, across all front line delivery occupations (but aimed at different levels). It may work better for those orgs with paid staff, as volunteer orgs would need more infrastructure support;
- It would help to embed common core of skills and knowledge;
- People who volunteer don't always see themselves as 'youth' workers, so the scheme should be about volunteers in general;
- How will this fit in with the new safeguarding rules that will come into force next year?
- Should be broader than youth work;
- Re-introduce a 'youth in the community' perspective?
- Clarity is needed of who is in the youth workforce – terminology issues;
- Should be used to open up employment options / opportunities;
- Youth work volunteers and volunteers who work with young people – need to agree a commonly accepted definition;
- Widening the scope could make it unwieldy to administer;
- Safeguarding issue had brought agencies, volunteers and staff together;
- Default position should be as many people as possible attaining the standard;
- There is an issue with inclusiveness, does this scheme create divisions between volunteers and paid staff, how could it be integrated with a licence to practice or something for paid staff... a joint scheme for all levels of worker would be good;
- Needs to apply to part time workers as well;
- Portability is important;
- It should include all those who work with children/young people.

**OVERALL:** General support for wide application of the scheme, recognising that there may be challenges applying it to different constituencies across the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector.

## Question 2:

**One of the features of the scheme is to accredit volunteers competence/existing skills (which could be achieved by observation). Who has got the capacity to do this? Who should take on this role? How can this be achieved?**

- Biggest challenge for the scouts is accrediting prior knowledge and learning;
- In real terms it's not possible to accredit volunteers as there wouldn't be enough people to do the accreditation;
- Could it be done by collecting evidence – for example the Duke of Edinburgh Award booklet that you have to fill in and collect evidence;
- Something to consider is that voluntary organisations often say that they don't want people from the statutory sector coming into their organisations to assess them;
- Would accreditation need to be done by an external body e.g. an awarding body?
- If it is competence assessment, then it should be linked to occupational standards;
- Role of LA's to make training accessible and maybe to play a role in accreditation;
- Needs a national body but much could be done at local level with support from local authorities;
- If owned by the VCS there needs to be a local administrating body – in some areas this could be difficult;
- Give NCVYS an appropriate sum to administer and license the scheme to local bodies or to a national youth organisation;
- The scheme would ideally look at competences and be accredited but this is time consuming and difficult;
- Could there be some form of online assessment linked to a skills passport type idea;
- It needs to have different levels for people at different positions and with different experience;
- It needs to include CRB etc;
- Could Young People be involved in assessment in some way?
- It shouldn't be just a tick box exercise;
- Needs to be administrated by an independent organisation. The 'card' would need to be portable across the country, so that it means the same thing in all areas;

**OVERALL:** there are reservations and questions about how to accredit workers. Some of these are because it is not yet confirmed whether competence or training should be the criterion for awards.

### Question 3:

**What should be the priority for the scheme – accreditation of competence/evidence of skills or demonstration of training hours achieved?**

- There are young people who want a career in youth work and they would be interested in something like this;
- It would have to be a demonstration of training hours, if the infrastructure for accreditation couldn't be put in place;
- Training should be accredited, the number of hours of reflection practice should be recorded and there should be some observation / written statements;
- An idea is to have a book with sections where people could tick off training when they have done it and present evidence e.g. a certificate, this would be a mix between a portfolio and a Duke of Edinburgh Award book;
- Probably a mix of both;
- Needs to incorporate elements of common induction standards, but essential to include competencies and experience;
- General agreement that training hours would be the best method of accreditation;
- Training attended is fine for some people at some levels, but there needs to be some identification of application/competencies;
- There is a big issue with ensuring standards; while everyone may recognise the Scouts etc would everyone have confidence in training delivered by a small organisation?
- Is this about the quality of the worker or is it about driving up quality/practice within clubs especially those that are run totally by volunteers.

**OVERALL:** There is divided opinion on whether training or competence should be the criterion for awards. This question needs to be investigated further at the feasibility stage.

### Question 4:

**We are hoping that a scoping and feasibility study will be funded. Who should we approach for buy-in? e.g. local authorities. In what order? What should be the scope of the study?**

- Local authorities – executive directors of children's services;
- NYA;
- Current volunteers;
- Young people in schools as a career pathway;
- 14 – 19 Gateway;
- Links with baccalureat?? (platinum awards);

- Jobcentres (should be talked about there as an opportunity to get into work);
- Main target groups need to be identified. Needs to be consultation with all groups from large to the smallest of organisations;
- Order for approaching groups – 1 = Volunteers; 2 = Volunteer centres/forums and large and small volunteer organisations; 3 = Training providers; 4 = Local authorities; 5 = children and young people
- Key people that have a dual role in local authorities and the VCS e.g. some council youth officers or VCS network personnel (CVYS's) or CVS;
- Talk to ISA;
- Could be a tool to help build partnership between LAs and VCS where it doesn't exist;
- The scoping stage should cover - What ; Who is it for; Method of delivery; Cost;
- Others areas to look at in the scoping study are – Duke of Edinburgh Award; Who will accredit it; Look at existing training that already out there; should it be done to the common lowest denominator (Yes, but a minimum level as agreed);

**OVERALL:** There are many suggestions of who could support the scheme as well as who the target audience should be for gaining the award. If we define the criteria for awards at the feasibility stage, it will clarify the scope and partners to approach

#### **Any other comments?**

- Need to be careful when designing a scheme like this for example what happened when CRB checks were brought in – the sector lost a lot of volunteers as they didn't want to have to go through the process of getting a check. We don't want to make this scheme compulsory;
- The scheme should have a high profile 'public face' like the Duke of Edinburgh Award;
- Who supplies the accreditation – NQF?;
- It shouldn't be just another 'connexions card';
- The idea of rewarding volunteers who gain accreditation is a good idea, but we need to be careful that we don't lose the essence of volunteering;
- Sufficient numbers would need to take this up;
- Need to have very clear reasons for people to sign up to this;
- Create a matrix of learning against which existing training programme could be mapped. End up with an overall picture;
- Need to decide minimum number of cardholders to make it appealing to individuals and to potential founders of the scheme;
- Could be part of the common induction standards initiative;
- If the youth work profession is to be raised in profile/respect should those who are not professionally qualified be able to call themselves youth workers?
- The scheme should be a positive about celebrating people's achievements, it should be something to be proud of and not something that is a chore;
- There needs to be a way of taking the card away if people fail to be eligible;
- It should be a broad scheme so that anyone can get it, it should be simple, it should have a good reputation and carry 'currency';
- It could be a scheme of two levels – a basic level that says you have done basic safeguarding training etc and an advanced level as with the basic but more hours of training and maybe include formal qualifications;

- Should it be piloted first in some areas?

**Mark Freeman's (Workforce Hub) comments/notes.**

There was a relatively heated discussion about volunteer led-clubs etc and the fact that these should not be in existence as they often do not conform to all the standards that a statutory club might, this was linked to the issue of when a youth worker should be called a youth worker. It was seen by some that the scheme could be used to help close the community clubs as in the future people would not leave kids if all the staff did not have the right licence.

I think there is a wider issue here linked to volunteering and the new safeguarding paper, I am not sure that it is a workforce hub issue, but it is one that I think should be of concern to the sector.

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