



Impact Report: April – December 2016

Summary

Volunteer Centre Dorset provides support at a local level for individual volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. Volunteer Centre Dorset is the only organisation whose primary focus and activities are volunteering and volunteers.

In this period, we have installed a new online volunteering system called “Volunteer Connect”, an easy to use local search mechanism for volunteers and organisations. Organisations register all their volunteering vacancies and volunteers can search using various criteria such as matching skills, qualifications and geographic area. This is now enabling us to capture more data about volunteering in Dorset and help make it easier for both individuals and organisations.

How we work with our **Five** core functions:

Strategic Development of Volunteering

Outcome: Through the activity of the Volunteer Centre and its engagement with local networks and decision makers there is a positive environment in which volunteering is flourishing.

Good Practice Development

Outcome: Through the activity of the Volunteer Centre, organisations from all sectors (involving or providing volunteers) improve or attain positive consistency in their volunteering programmes.

Developing Volunteering opportunities

Outcome: The Volunteer Centre’s development activity increases and improves the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering locally in the County of Dorset.

Voice of Volunteering

Outcome: Through the Volunteer Centre’s activities there is an increased awareness of the issues impacting on volunteering.

Brokerage

Outcome: Through the Volunteer Centre’s activities the general public and all sectors are better informed about and have access to an effective and efficient brokerage service. Matching both individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community. Volunteer Centres hold information on a comprehensive range of opportunities and offer potential volunteers support and advice matching their motivation to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Voluntary Sector Activity since installing Volunteer Connect

New registered volunteers = 715 – average 100 new volunteers per month

New volunteering opportunities = 237 – average 31 new roles advertised each month

Existing volunteering opportunities = 847

DBS Checks for volunteers = 91

Projects lead/managed by Volunteer Centre Dorset

- ✚ **Volunteer Help Scheme** – assisting older people with gardening, moving furniture, waste removal.
- ✚ **Dorset Community Credit Scheme** – supporting adults with learning disabilities to volunteer.
- ✚ **Company at Christmas** – volunteer led Christmas Day lunch and celebration for older people who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day.
- ✚ **Sunday Lunch Club** – monthly Sunday Lunches for elderly people who live alone
- ✚ **Volunteer Managers Network Forum** – Facilitate and manager quarterly meetings for volunteer managers and coordinators.
- ✚ **HMP Guys Marsh Volunteering Project** – supporting prisoners to volunteer in custody, and provide brokerage when released, enabling through the gate resettlement and rehabilitation.
- ✚ **VCS Prison Network Forum** – supporting and setting up a network for organisations working and delivering services to prisoners and ex-offenders.
- ✚ **Annual Volunteer Awards Event** – celebrating volunteer’s contribution to communities across Dorset.

Partnerships – working with individuals and groups from all sectors to ensure strong resilient supported communities.

How it works: The Volunteer Centre’s success is due to its ability to work collaboratively and in partnership with all sectors, currently we are working on the following areas:

Employee supported volunteering – working with Waitrose, Barclays, West Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council, New Look and a private hotel to provide volunteering days for employees.

POPPS – developing volunteering opportunities that alleviate loneliness, improve health outcomes for older and vulnerable people.

NCS and Princes Trust – providing talks to groups of young people participating in these schemes, developing opportunities and organising group and individual placements. **Over the last 4 months we have supported 220 young people**

Tricuro – supporting day centres with volunteer recruitment, development and management, and working to improve accessibility developing more flexible activities that help sustainability.

What are the results of these activities?

- ✓ A vibrant, thriving volunteering environment in Dorset
- ✓ People have access to volunteering throughout Dorset
- ✓ People’s health and wellbeing is improved through volunteering
- ✓ Individuals and groups have more awareness of the positive impact volunteering has on others and their communities
- ✓ There is a central accessible place of expertise of Volunteering for Dorset
- ✓ There is continuity and consistency of good practice of volunteer management and recruitment of volunteers in Dorset.
- ✓ Promotion of equality and diversity leading to increased volunteering
- ✓ Improved outcomes though volunteering for unemployed people
- ✓ There is a voice for volunteering issues in Dorset
- ✓ Information and good practice is shared across a wide network, creating better collaboration and outcomes for the sector

Joint Pilot Outcomes: Working with DCA and CAB across three key issues.

VCD were commissioned to support Community Transport at volunteer recruitment, scheme development and highlight gaps. Activities to date have been:

Activity	Outcomes
Met with Community Transport Coordinators, including DCC officers, sharing data and agreeing actions to improve awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHIP outcomes for residents • Improved knowledge and collaboration increased awareness.
Promoted Volunteering vacancies through Volunteer connect and newsletter. Sent out information via our Twitter feed and Facebook, with direct contact with 617 followers Promoted opportunities through weekly special opportunities on VCD website. Displayed vacancies on notice boards in main office and at events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHIP outcomes for residents • Increase number of volunteers for community transport schemes. • Increased awareness of local issues • Increased knowledge of volunteering opportunities available • Improve the wellbeing for those engaged in community transport • Reduce isolation for vulnerable people
Carried out 23 DBS checks for newly recruited volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHIP outcomes for residents • Vulnerable people, volunteers and organisations are trained, safeguarded
Developing model that combines all existing networks/structures that improve communication, awareness and community transport services across Dorset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHIP outcomes for residents • Combining and sharing information gives residents improved access to community transport and increased opportunities.

The key learning from this work is that there is a perception that Dorset has major transport issues, in reality there are a high number of Community Transport Projects but operates differently in different areas, leading to confusion and lack of knowledge by combining information and working collaboratively with all transport schemes and developing the existing schemes transport isolation issues can be reduced significantly. Working with DCC, DCA and CAB who have the skills, knowledge and reach Dorset residents should have better access to transport.

Example – working with DCA, the Volunteer Centre advised and supported a group supporting disabled people with safeguarding issues, together we were able to provide a comprehensive package of information, support and guidelines to ensure the organisation operated with legal requirements, had the appropriate volunteer recruitment policies and procedures in place. That they understood the importance of good volunteer management and support and the regulations around safeguarding and DBS checks.

Outcome – the group reviewed its policies, developed new recruitment practices, held internal training sessions for all trustees, attended DCA’s training and registered with VCD and have now recruited new volunteers and trustees.

Value of Volunteering in Dorset

Measuring the monetary value of volunteering is complex and organisations across the UK calculate this differently but the Volunteer Centre has estimated that those that registered in this period and volunteer via the Volunteer Centre is equal to **£2,600,000**. This is based on the average wage and does not include any additional support such as transport, services, venues etc. and does not include the value of support, advice and training given to the volunteer involving organisations so in reality it would be much more than this. **For every £1 invested in the Volunteer Centre there is a minimum of £43 return.**

Social Value of Volunteering

A thriving voluntary sector is vital for thriving communities, people's lives improve socially, economically and physically. Volunteering helps people gain confidence, skills, improves social skills, provides stability, friendship, learning, sharing and for some a new outlook on life.

The benefits of volunteering not only help individuals but whole communities:

Case Studies: Two case studies illustrate the positive impact VCD have on organisations and individuals

The Problem	The Solution	Outcomes
<p>27 year old volunteer with extreme anxiety and depression, referred to VCD by CMHT. Obese and very self-conscious.</p> <p>Unemployed since leaving college. Initially unable to volunteer independently, use public transport or communicate with others especially in a group setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matched with a volunteer buddy, initially for one to one meetings. • Gradually visit different volunteer involving organisations looking at appropriate roles linking skills, interests and suitability of physical surroundings. • Agreed a role with organisation and start date. • Provide volunteer support until volunteer felt comfortable attending independently • Provide continued support as agreed with individual 	<p>Safe/Healthy/ Independent/Prosperous: improved confidence and increased self-esteem led to improved mood, reduced anxiety attacks.</p> <p>Having increased confidence led to the volunteer making decisions to improve his personal health, he joined a weight loss group and has lost 6 stone.</p> <p>Is more physically active and independently seeking other volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Is happy to work with others and in small groups.</p> <p>Attends group activities and social events.</p> <p>Now attends employment support services and is work ready.</p>
<p>New large project with large lottery funding, but with no structure for volunteer recruitment and management.</p> <p>Also in need of volunteers at different times of development of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held an initial meeting to understand the needs of the organisation. • Provided advice and guidance on volunteer recruitment, management and good practice. • Agreed a plan of action of volunteering recruitment. 	<p>Prosperous: this will be a large tourist attraction for Dorset increasing tourism, employment, volunteer engagement and additional income into Dorset.</p> <p>Healthy/Independent: Volunteering improves physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Quote, <i>"I'm not sure where the time has gone since we met, but the plans for Shire Hall are</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VCD ran a promotional campaign using all media sources.• Recruited and signposted volunteers.	<p><i>progressing well. The newsletter article and coverage of the start of the building work in the local press and social media has meant we now have 10+ volunteers approach us.</i></p> <p><i>Thanks</i></p> <p><i>Best wishes</i></p> <p><i>Anne”</i></p>
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