

**Institute for
Volunteering
Research**

‘There’s no end to the potential’: Reviewing Volunteering in Islington

**A report for Voluntary Action Islington to inform the development
of a volunteering strategy**

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Report written for Voluntary Action Islington.

By Kim Donahue, Institute for Volunteering Research

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Volunteering extends well beyond the boundaries of the third sector into both the public and private sectors and offers a range of benefits to volunteers, local government and statutory agencies such as the NHS and the police, businesses organisations and communities. The wider purpose and impact of volunteering illustrates its potential role in community cohesion, social capital, increasing employability, sustainability, health and well being and ultimately in reducing poverty and improving neighbourhoods¹. These links to community cohesion, civic engagement, employability and increasing people's quality of life are acknowledged in both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Islington Compact.

In order to achieve its aim of increasing volunteering, the Islington Strategic Partnership (ISP) commissioned Voluntary Action Islington to coordinate a review of volunteering in the borough, and subsequently to develop a volunteering strategy. In turn, Voluntary Action Islington commissioned the Institute for Volunteering Research to conduct the review. The review considers the purpose of volunteering, what volunteering opportunities already exist, how people are informed about them, what support people receive when they take up volunteering and how the different volunteering opportunities link together and with the overall objectives in Islington's Sustainable Community Strategy. The report represents the findings of that review. A small number of volunteering strategies have been developed in other areas which can also serve as a learning tool for the development of the volunteering strategy for Islington.

Volunteering is not what you think it is

In addition to the traditional definitions and understanding of volunteering there are a number of boundary areas of volunteering, including work placements, volunteering as part of a course requirement and volunteering by people who are paid to participate, as in some types of employer-supported volunteering. These areas will force a re-examination of concepts of volunteering and volunteers and this has implications for the development of a volunteering strategy in the borough.

The official volunteering rate in Islington is 22.8 per cent for people who are engaged in regular formal volunteering. This is defined as volunteering within a group or organisation at least once a month over the previous year. This compares favourably to the London average of 20.8 per cent and the national Place Survey average of 23.2 per cent. Volunteers are involved in a wide range of organisations and provide a diversity of skills and activities which benefit organisations and communities. In addition to the traditional types of volunteering activity; there are many other ways that people help organisations such as through Time Banks, employee volunteering, universities, work experience and the public sector.

¹ Ockenden, N. (ed) (2007). *Volunteering Works: Volunteering and social policy*. London: Commission on the Future of Volunteering.

Routes into volunteering

Word of mouth remains the most effective means of volunteer recruitment but also organisations are doing much of their own recruitment and only a small proportion of respondents have noted either the Volunteer Centre or Time Bank as their route into volunteering. These services as well as www.do-it.org.uk are probably under-utilised and under-publicised. Regular volunteers are giving higher than average amounts of time to volunteering and an increasing number of volunteers are coming in through job centres or employment programmes such as A4E.

The main barriers related to volunteering are seen as economic, language barriers, lack of information about opportunities, time commitment, long waits to start and Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks.

Volunteers feel quite supported in their roles but more than half are not receiving expenses or supervision and additional training for volunteers is needed. There is wide agreement for the need for more social and networking events for volunteers, perhaps some centrally organised. There was also emphasis on the importance of involving volunteers with special needs.

Purpose and impact

The overarching purpose and impact of volunteering is centred on community cohesion and social capital, leading and managing organisations, building skills, improving employability and contributing to personal development such as increased confidence and reduced isolation. Volunteering is potentially a key component in achieving local agendas such as reducing poverty by increasing employability and fostering community cohesion, networking and linkages.

Supporting volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations

A need was identified to foster a climate of sharing information, referrals and volunteers; as volunteers need not operate within organisational boundaries. There is also a need to reduce the competitive environment and foster partnership and cooperation in relation to volunteering. Volunteer support gaps include; volunteer career progression both within organisations and in general, training, referrals system, signposting, monitoring and evaluating volunteer experiences and contributions.

There is wide agreement that volunteering efforts are not well linked in the borough and the need for a central point of contact regarding volunteering, or a 'one stop shop'. There is also a perceived need to do a better job of using and publicising the networks that are in place including the local, sub-regional, regional and national networks and forums.

Volunteering brokerage bodies include the Volunteer Centre, Time Bank, universities, v and the Council but there are also other organisations serving brokerage roles in Islington. There are still many volunteer-involving organisations and volunteers who are not familiar with these services or who do not see the need or value in these services. There is a need for outreach, coordination and education about the services available and their value.

There is a clear need to celebrate success stories and publicise the efforts of volunteers, which could include case studies of volunteers, conferences or regular media coverage of volunteer stories. Similarly, there is a need to tackle negative perceptions and stigma associated with volunteering and publicise its benefits. Lastly, there is a consensus that leaders need to embrace volunteering and foster understanding, especially within the Local Strategic Partnership.

Key actions

The findings from the review have seen an underlying, cross-cutting theme of the existing and potential contribution of volunteering to community cohesion. We have also shown the importance of not solely focusing on increasing volunteer numbers in Islington, but the need for a focus also on building a sustainable volunteering infrastructure in the borough that will serve to support potential and existing volunteers as well as the organisations that involve them. A sustainable volunteering infrastructure should include an emphasis not only on brokerage functions but also on supporting volunteer-involving organisations with best practice tools and approaches as well as developing key partnerships within the voluntary sector and the business and public sectors. These priorities in addition to the 'core functions' of volunteering infrastructure discussed later should be organised through a central volunteering infrastructure 'hub' which has the ability to secure long term core and project funding for these ongoing services.

Volunteering in Islington is clearly a vibrant and growing area which serves the needs of individuals, organisations, local government and the community. It has the potential to be a key driver in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy, but currently lacks the coordination and capacity that would allow it to reach this potential. Specifically this should include a centrally coordinated volunteering hub which works with all sectors, volunteer-involving organisations and potential volunteers in the borough and which has the capacity in terms of core staffing and funding to deliver the activities.

The following key actions have been developed specifically with the Volunteering Strategy in mind. They are meant to accompany the development of the strategy and serve as an aide to its implementation. More thorough explanations of the recommendations can be found in the conclusion.

- 1. Clarification and development of roles associated with volunteering infrastructure.**
 - a. Agree the key roles required for a well-rounded volunteering infrastructure.
 - b. Build the support and capacity for volunteer management best practice.
 - c. Link to local and regional efforts related to the London 2012 Olympics.
 - d. Develop better partnership arrangements between Islington-based business and the third sector and public sector.

- 2. Identify and resource a lead body for volunteering in Islington.**
 - a. Develop the role of Voluntary Action Islington as the volunteering 'hub' for Islington.
 - b. Build the capacity, reputation and quality standards of the lead volunteering body.

- c. Identify resource needs and potential sources of funding for the lead body.

3. Removing the barriers to volunteering and supporting everyone who wants to volunteer.

- a. Target and support under-represented groups to enter into volunteering.
- b. Increase support for current volunteers.
- c. Support progression routes for workless people who would like to move towards employment by improving both soft and hard employability skills through volunteering.
- d. Provide more volunteer training.

4. Increasing the understanding and championing of volunteering locally.

- a. Championing of volunteering by leaders in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- b. Increasing the understanding and benefits of volunteering by the statutory sector and other funders such as the local Council and NHS Islington.
- c. Increase dialogue between sectors about the scope of volunteering.

5. Promoting and publicising volunteering.

- a. Publicity efforts need to be joined up but targeted to specific audiences and geographic areas.
- b. Promotion activities should celebrate volunteering and tell volunteer success stories.
- c. Volunteering strategies must address negative perceptions and stigma associated with volunteering and publicise the benefits of volunteering.
- d. Improvements must be made in publicising the current resources and networks that are in place in relation to volunteering.

1. Introduction

*Volunteering is vital to creating a community spirit, it enables people to network, to participate in their community in a valuable and rewarding way.*²

Volunteering is one of the key defining characteristics of the voluntary and community sector³, and it extends well beyond the boundaries of the third sector into both the public and private sectors. Volunteering offers a range of benefits to volunteers, local government and statutory agencies such as the NHS and the police, businesses, organisations and communities⁴. The wider purpose and impact of volunteering illustrates its potential role in community cohesion, social capital, increasing employability, sustainability, health and well being and ultimately in reducing poverty and improving neighbourhoods⁵.

1.1 Background

Islington is a borough of diversity – diverse communities, people and groups living side by side. Despite its assets, it is also a deprived borough and struggles with issues related to poverty, isolation and exclusion. Its 2009 population is estimated at 195,489 and, according to National Health Service (NHS) Islington, is expected to increase⁶. The NHS also reports that 74 per cent of the population of the borough is White while the remaining Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups mainly identify as Black African, Black Caribbean, Black other or Bangladeshi, respectively. Additionally, Islington residents are younger than average for London, with almost half of the population aged between 20 and 39 years old. A high number of residents (compared to the rest of London) describe themselves as having some type of disability, with 8 per cent of the working age population receiving incapacity benefit. It is estimated that 5-10 per cent of the population are refugees. Islington is the eighth most deprived local authority area in the country and the fourth most deprived borough in London⁷. The following recent statistics give a snapshot of the borough's situation⁸:

- The borough has a lower than average number of adults who are economically active, with 7.9 per cent of the economically active population unemployed.
- Almost half of Islington's children are raised in families dependent on benefits (much higher than national averages).

² Quote from a stakeholder interview.

³ Billis, D. And Harris, M. (eds), (1996). *Voluntary Agencies: Challenges of Organisation and Management*. London: Macmillan.

⁴ Ockenden, N. (ed) (2007). *Volunteering Works: Volunteering and social policy*. London: Commission on the Future of Volunteering.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ NHS Islington (2009). *Health in Islington: the facts - update 2009*. NHS Islington's Public Health Intelligence Team.

⁷ All of the information reported in this paragraph is from the above NHS Islington factsheet.

⁸ The statistics from this section are taken from the above NHS factsheet and the Islington Strategic Partnership's Borough Profile 2008.

- Levels of mental illness are significantly higher than elsewhere in London and the UK.
- Levels of drug misuse are among the worst in the country.
- The number of residents with no qualifications is much higher than both the London and national averages.
- Half of all the accommodation in the borough is social housing, much higher than averages in London and nationally.

The local strategic partnership, known as the Islington Strategic Partnership (ISP), hopes to tackle these issues and to bring about sustainable improvements to the quality of life for local people. The ISP brings together the main statutory service providers in the borough including the council, the NHS, and police, along with representatives of the third sector and the private sector. It aims to create a community where people of all ages and from different backgrounds have a chance to reach their potential.

The ISP has recognised the potential of volunteering to help meet its aims, as indicated in its adoption of local area agreement (LAA) national indicator six (NI6). NI6 is one of the 198 indicators forming the local authority performance framework, or national indicator set. It has been adopted by ISP as one of its priority indicators. It aims to measure and increase the levels of volunteering within a local authority area, specifically the proportion of individuals undertaking regular formal volunteering. Islington has set its target as increasing the number of people involved in formal volunteering in the borough from 22.8 per cent to 26.1 per cent by 2011.

1.2 Research aims

In order to achieve its aim of increasing volunteering, the ISP commissioned Voluntary Action Islington to coordinate a review of volunteering in the borough, and subsequently to develop a volunteering strategy. In turn, Voluntary Action Islington commissioned the Institute for Volunteering Research to conduct the review. The review considers the purpose of volunteering, what volunteering opportunities already exist, how people are informed about them, what support people receive when they take up volunteering and how the different volunteering opportunities link together and with the overall objectives in Islington's Sustainable Community Strategy. The report represents the findings of that review.

The overall aim of the review was to scope existing volunteering opportunities in Islington and to consider how new opportunities could be developed and how the profile of volunteering could be raised and championed locally. The work also considered links between existing organisations, particularly Time Banks and the Volunteer Centre and the role of volunteering in supporting Islington's wider Sustainable Community Strategy. The specific objectives of the research were to:

- Recommend how volunteer brokerage facilities in the borough could be strengthened in order to increase the overall levels of volunteering and improve the experience of using a brokerage service;
- Understand how people under-represented in volunteering (including disabled people, older people, young people, people from BAME communities,

refugees and asylum seekers, ex-offenders and previous substance mis-users) can be targeted and supported to get involved;

- Recommend how volunteering/time banking opportunities can be delivered that are directly linked to improving people's employability skills with progression routes for workless people who would like to move towards employment;
- Recommend how to build on the success of involving different communities in volunteering particularly through small groups;
- Recommend how to develop and actively promote employee volunteering in the public and private sectors;
- Identify and recommend successful models of support for volunteers and for organisations involving volunteers;
- Identify how to take advantage of opportunities presented by the 2012 Olympics and
- Recommend how to achieve a more coordinated approach to volunteering and its promotion in the borough.

The key challenge of the review lies in answering how to make a shift occur to raise the profile, understanding and priority of volunteering in Islington.

This report reviews volunteering in the following areas:

- Faith-based volunteering
- Physical activity and sports related volunteering
- Private sector – employer-sponsored volunteering
- Pro bono legal volunteering
- Volunteering in small, medium and large third sector (voluntary) groups
- Student and youth volunteering
- Tenant and resident association
- Time banking
- Volunteering among new migrant groups and refugees
- Volunteering among older and retired people
- Volunteering within Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
- Volunteering within the public sector such as through Islington Council, schools, the police, the NHS (hospitals)

The review has not looked at international or residential volunteering as the main focus was on local community based volunteering. The above list is in no way meant to be a reflection of all the types of volunteering available but rather has served as a focus for our research attention. For example, many equality strands are not specifically mentioned nor are various sub sectors such as volunteering in the arts or environment.

1.3 Methodology

The research was qualitative and included 19 interviews with key stakeholders (a list can be found in Appendix D), an online survey for volunteers and representatives from volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs), a consultation and background and desk-based research. The project was informed by a Review Group consisting of representatives from volunteer-involving organisations, the public sector, volunteer managers, and staff and volunteers from the Volunteer Centre.

The online survey was hosted by Survey Monkey and was publicised via email and websites from project partners. The survey was live for more than three weeks - from 21 October until 16 November 2009. A total of 220 people started the survey and 164 completed it. The survey was completed by individuals (38% of respondents) and VIO representatives (59% of respondents). A demographic snapshot of survey respondents can be found in Appendix B. Most of the charts in the report are from the findings of the online survey and where possible the total number of respondents is represented as 'N'.

The quotes used throughout the report are taken from interviews and the online survey. All participants were given information about the research and its intended use and were given the opportunity to ask questions. Participants were also assured of anonymity and therefore the quotes are simply attributed to an interview or the survey. Interview and survey questions can be found in Appendix C and E. A glossary of key terms and abbreviations can be found in Appendix F.

2. Contextualising Volunteering

Key messages:

- Volunteering has clear links to building community cohesion, civic engagement, employability and increasing people's quality of life. This is acknowledged in both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Islington Compact.
- The merger of the Volunteer Centre with IVAC to create Voluntary Action Islington presents an opportunity to create a stronger local volunteering infrastructure which has the potential to act as a central hub for volunteering in Islington for all sectors.
- A small number of volunteering strategies have been developed in other areas which can serve as a learning tool for the development of the volunteering strategy for Islington.

2.1 Islington Compact and the Sustainable Community Strategy

The *Islington Compact* is a local agreement between the third sector and the public sector which spells out how the two will work together. The relationship between the sectors has an impact on the third sector's ability to grow and develop. The Islington Compact provides a framework for strengthening relations and establishes how work will be approached in eight areas of common interest:

- equality, diversity and cohesion;
- community involvement;
- volunteering;
- infrastructure support;
- funding and commissioning;
- premises;
- information sharing and
- Compact awareness and problem solving.

The Compact is forward looking and focuses on how to deliver the priorities in Islington's *Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)*. These include:

- improving people's employment prospects and the prosperity of the area;
- improving educational attainment and learning;
- tackling health inequalities and improving health;
- improving safety and people's feelings of safety;
- improving the quality of the environment and tackling climate change;
- improving the quality of housing;
- building stronger, sustainable communities.

The ISP developed the SCS with an "overall vision of creating a stronger, more sustainable community in which everyone will have access to excellent services and can realise their potential."⁹ It has three key objectives:

⁹ Islington Strategic Partnership (2008). *Our Vision for 2020 – the Islington we want to be, Islington's Sustainable Community Strategy*. London.

- Reducing poverty;
- Improving access for all;
- Realising everyone's potential.

Clearly volunteering has a role to play in helping to deliver the priorities of the SCS and is key in both realising the potential of residents and in building stronger communities and neighbourhoods.

The Compact aims to foster understanding between sectors, make clear commitments about what each partner will do and to “build the capacity of the third sector to enable local people to take part in activities together, to deliver local services and to ensure that the voices of Islington’s diverse communities influence local decision making.”¹⁰

The Compact shared principles in relation to volunteering are as follows:

- **Choice:** Volunteering must be a choice free from any form of coercion or compulsion.
- **Diversity:** Volunteering must be open to everyone and to all abilities.
- **Reciprocity:** Volunteers should not be out of pocket and should receive travel and subsistence expenses as well as training.
- **Recognition:** The contribution and value of the work of volunteers should be recognised publicly.

Increasingly the third sector is an important partner for the public sector in the drive to improve public services and bolster local democracy. The local public sector sees the third sector and indeed volunteers playing a greater role in identifying service needs, designing solutions and delivering services. Compact partners acknowledge the value of volunteering, captured in the following statement:

*Volunteering in all of its forms is the hallmark of a healthy functioning and caring local civil society. It is also a key investment that strengthens social and community networks, develops levels of civic engagement and makes an important contribution to the local economy and the development and delivery of services. In an increasingly polarised and diverse borough, volunteering offers a way for people to engage with each other, improve understanding and develop social cohesion at a local level.*¹¹

The Compact aims specifically related to volunteering are to: “increase the amount and range of volunteering in Islington and to ensure that an effective infrastructure is able to support this.”¹² All partners to the Compact have agreed to:

- Increase access to volunteering from all sections of the community.
- Support volunteers who have additional needs.
- Improve and develop flexible volunteering and involvement opportunities.

¹⁰ Islington Strategic Partnership (2009, p.4). *Islington Compact: A partnership agreement about how the statutory sector and third sector will work together*. London.

¹¹ Ibid, p.16.

¹² Ibid, p.17.

- Ensure that the impact on volunteering of policies and procedures are taken into account.
- Encourage and support staff to volunteer locally.
- Promote volunteering in the borough.
- Gather and publish data on levels of local volunteering.
- Increase staff awareness of the contribution and role of volunteers in the borough.
- Advertise volunteering opportunities through Voluntary Action Islington.

Public sector partners have specifically agreed to support the existence and development of a 'specialist local volunteering infrastructure' through funding and other means, although the specifics of how this will manifest itself is unclear. 'Infrastructure' is further defined in the next section. An Infrastructure Development Strategy for the third sector has been agreed by Islington Change Up and Compact Consortium and endorsed by the ISP.

Both of these key documents have implications and links to volunteering efforts and strategies in Islington. The support for volunteering and strategy development must work within the framework of these documents and together form a cohesive plan for achieving the joint goals. At the same time, partners must trust that the agreements set in place will be honoured.

2.2 Local infrastructure related to volunteering

The purpose of volunteering infrastructure is to ensure that front-line VIOs have the capacity, resources and support necessary to engage with current and potential volunteers from all sectors of the community¹³. Volunteering infrastructure refers to the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, coordinate, represent and promote front-line organisations to help them deliver their aims more effectively, thus enabling them to create more effective volunteering programmes¹⁴. Organisations that make up volunteering infrastructure include volunteer centres and other brokerage agencies such as time banks and universities.

Voluntary Action Islington is Islington's umbrella agency for the voluntary sector and a main provider of support for local volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs). Voluntary Action Islington was formerly known as Islington Voluntary Action Council, or IVAC, and changed its name in December 2009 to coincide with a relocation and merger with the Islington Volunteer Centre (as of April 2009). This is seen to present an opportunity for volunteering in the borough to be addressed more consistently and to be better linked with overall capacity building efforts. It is also acknowledged that it will inevitably lead to some challenges. The challenge for Voluntary Action Islington may well be to ensure that some of the key functions and roles of the

¹³ Adapted from Penberthy, C. and Forster, A. (2004). *Building on Success, a Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England 2004-2014*. Volunteering England, London.

¹⁴ Adapted from Islington Strategic Partnership (2009). *Islington Compact: A partnership agreement about how the statutory sector and third sector will work together* and Penberthy, C. and Forster, A. (2004). *Building on Success, a Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England 2004-2014*. Volunteering England, London.

Islington Volunteer Centre (IVC) are adequately resourced and able to act as a central hub for volunteering in the borough.

The third sector (meaning voluntary, community and faith based groups) in Islington is large and diverse and is still the main arena where volunteering happens at the moment. It includes groups with international, national and local remits and groups of all sizes and types. There are 1,763 documented third sector organisations in the borough, almost three times the national number of organisations per capita¹⁵. There are likely to be many more groups than this, as the Third Sector Survey from which these figures are taken reflects only groups which are incorporated and regulated organisations, potentially missing the smaller community based groups which may not be incorporated or registered charities. It should be noted however that the third sector is not the only arena for volunteering and both the local public and private sectors are increasing efforts to involve volunteers.

2.3 Strategies related to volunteering

Although only a minority of local authorities in the UK currently have a volunteering strategy in place, many are developing them, often in association with supporting the achievement of volunteering targets in LAAs. Currently plans relating to volunteering are often included in more general 'sustainable community' or 'health and social care' strategies as well as in specific strategies for youth or older people. Such sustainable community or sector-specific strategies are often precursors to a full volunteering strategy.

In London, plans for the 2012 Olympic Games are affecting the development of local authorities' policies and strategies. For example, London Borough of Greenwich's corporate plan 2008-2011 includes a commitment to establish a volunteering strategy as part of the Olympic Legacy planning development¹⁶. In the London Borough of Southwark, the local strategic partnership's ten year plan 'Southwark 2016: Sustainable Community Strategy' includes a commitment 'to increase the number of people who volunteer or who are active in their community'. As part of this, a three-year plan 'Encouraging Informed, Active and Responsible Citizens' was developed between 2005 and 2008, channelling funding to an active citizen work stream at Southwark Volunteer Centre. However, Southwark does not yet have a Volunteering Strategy in place.

A background research note was produced as part of this review, summarising a number of publicly available volunteering strategies from London and the rest of England, and is available in Appendix A. The strategies discussed here are underpinned by a set of common values related to volunteering, which equate to those set out in national and local Compact Codes of Good Practice on Volunteering discussed above. In addition the strategies are informed by a set of assumptions, which can be summarised as:

¹⁵ Office of the Third Sector, 2009, National Survey of Third Sector Organisations, conducted by Ipsos MORI, London.

¹⁶ Greenwich Council, 2008

- Recognition that volunteering is high on policy agendas at national and increasingly also at regional and local levels, therefore local strategic partnerships must take it seriously too.
- Recognition that volunteering takes place not just in the voluntary and community sectors but also the public sector and with local employers through employer-supported volunteering, partnerships and indeed through the involvement of volunteers in some private sector organisations.
- Recognition that there is room for improvement in the delivery of volunteering in each local area, with particular concerns in many strategies about uncoordinated approaches and lack of cross-sector partnership working.
- Understanding that volunteer management and infrastructure needs to be adequately resourced: that volunteering does not come for free, but that the benefits can outweigh the costs.
- Recognition (in more recently produced strategies) that the recession presents both challenges and opportunities for volunteering.

The volunteering strategies reviewed tend to be structured into between three and five main sections (variously called 'building blocks', 'priority areas' or 'overarching objectives') with a number of more specific objectives listed under each. The most common objectives fall under three main headings:

- Increasing the number of volunteers
- Raising the profile and local awareness of volunteering
- Improving the quality of the volunteering experience

The strategies from other local authorities, and the learning from this review of them, can provide useful insights and templates for the development of Islington's Volunteering Strategy.

3. Defining and Understanding Volunteering

Key messages:

- In addition to the traditional definitions and understanding of volunteering there are a number of boundary areas of volunteering, including work placements, volunteering as part of a course requirement and volunteering by people who are paid to participate, as in some types of employer-supported volunteering. These areas will force a re-examination of concepts of volunteering and volunteers and this has implications for the development of a volunteering strategy in the borough.
- The official volunteering rate in Islington is 22.8 per cent for people who are engaged in regular formal volunteering. This is defined as volunteering within a group or organisation at least once a month over the previous year¹⁷. This compares favourably to the London average of 20.8 per cent and the national Place Survey average of 23.2 per cent.
- Volunteers are involved in a wide range of organisations and provide a diversity of skills and activities which benefit organisations and communities.
- In addition to the traditional types of volunteering activity; there are many other ways that people help organisations such as through Time Banks, employee volunteering, universities, work experience and the public sector.

3.1 Definitions

For the purpose of this review, volunteering is defined as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment, individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives. This is a standard definition that has been in use for some time by national volunteering infrastructure bodies. This project specifically focuses on formal volunteering or activity done in conjunction with an organisation or group. Volunteering includes any type of unpaid help such as being a trustee, helping to deliver services, work to improve the environment, helping with office or admin work, starting a self help group or being a school governor. It could include work with community groups, faith organisations, public sector organisations, time banks, schools and universities or volunteering through places of work. Volunteers may not always refer to themselves as 'volunteers'; instead they may feel that they are members, founders, community workers, trustees or just people helping out as needed. VIOs are organisations in the public, private or third sectors who involve volunteers in unpaid activity to benefit the community.

It is worth noting that a set of principles of volunteering has recently been agreed by the London Stakeholders Volunteering Forum. This group comprises the ChangeUp Volunteering Subgroup and the England Volunteering Development Council (EVDC) London. In January 2009, the Forum came together with guest stakeholders to discuss the definition of volunteering. In response to an increasing interest in

¹⁷ This result is taken from Question 15 from the Place Survey, 2008, which reads: Overall, about how often over the last twelve months have you given unpaid help to any group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)?

volunteering as a means to support people into employment and a need for clarity as to the differences between volunteering and work experience, the Forum felt it necessary to establish principles behind the term 'volunteering'. They have agreed that volunteering is:

- mutually beneficial (to individuals and organisations);
- independently chosen and freely given;
- enabling and flexible wherever possible;
- a community or social benefit and
- offered to not-for-profit activities.

These principles will guide the London volunteering infrastructure in providing future support to volunteering activity. Groups who have agreed to work with the principles include Greater London Volunteering, Timebank, Independent Academic Research Studies as well as the forum. In addition, the Forum noted the following considerations when developing volunteering opportunities:

- 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.
- Any other form of unpaid work or experience should not be labelled volunteering such as mentoring schemes with large employers or public sector work experience.

Volunteering can be viewed through a number of frames. We found it helpful to think about volunteering in three broad categories:

- Full time volunteering – mainly happening with international non-governmental organisations operating overseas, residential volunteering in the UK, or individuals devoting significant amounts of time to volunteer-led groups.
- Part time volunteering – this has been the traditional focus of volunteer centres and VIOs, with many groups preferring to place volunteers in a formal and long term volunteering role.
- Short term volunteering – this type of volunteering is likely on the increase according to respondents and includes taster sessions, speed volunteering, and one-off volunteer days. It is often referred to as episodic volunteering.

Another way to look at volunteering is from the point of view of the volunteer and the volunteer journey. This model was developed by Kathy Gaskin¹⁸. Four stages of volunteering are identified and characterised as:

- The 'doubter' who is outside volunteering, and may have attitudes, characteristics or circumstances which keep them a non-volunteer.

¹⁸ Gaskin, K. (2003). *A Choice Blend: What volunteers want from organisation and management*. Institute for Volunteering Research, London.

- The 'starter' which has entered volunteering by making an enquiry or application.
- The 'doer' who has committed to being a volunteer and begun volunteering.
- The 'stayer' who persists as a long term volunteer.

Among the different ways in which volunteering is organised, evidenced within this review, we have seen a number of different models which include:

- Traditional model – this model is what people typically think of in relation to volunteering and involves a paid volunteer coordinator who is mainly involving part-time volunteers in (ideally) a long term volunteering role. The processes tend to be more formal and volunteers are treated almost as paid employees.
- Small group model – this model operates on a more informal basis and with potentially different sets of assumptions, values and motivations in relation to volunteering. Many of the groups in this model are solely volunteer run and led.
- Time bank models – there are actually seven to nine models of time banking where volunteers exchange time for credit and treats everyone equally in terms of what they have to offer. The concept of co-production is very closely associated with these models. This model may be less formal in its processes.
- Work experience model – this model involves volunteers in a specific work environment in order to gain insights, experience, skills and contacts that will benefit their career progression. It often includes student placements as well as work placements and tends to be short term. Participants may include young people, students, new migrants, unemployed people and ex-offenders. It tends to follow more formal processes.
- Faith based model – this type of VIO is based on specific values or ethics linked to a particular faith and the structures and motivations may be somewhat unique. It is congregation based and may be less formal than traditional volunteering.
- Corporate social responsibility model – this model dominates in the business community and can be found in major corporations as well as social enterprises. This model is based on the 'business case' for volunteering.
- Residential model – this model often involves volunteering abroad, gap year activities or full time volunteering in a residential setting in the UK.

While the above definitions are quite helpful in increasing the understanding of volunteering issues, there are also clearly a number of 'boundary' areas related to volunteering. These include most notably work placements or internships, volunteering as part of a course requirement and volunteering by people who are paid for their time to participate, as in through some types of employer-supported volunteering. These border lands of volunteering will force us to re-examine long held concepts of volunteering and volunteers and this has implications for the development of a volunteering strategy in the borough.

3.2 Volunteering rates

The official volunteering rate in Islington is 22.8 per cent for people that are engaged in regular formal volunteering. This is defined as volunteering within a group or organisation at least once a month over the previous year¹⁹. This compares favourably to the London average of 20.8 per cent and the national Place Survey average of 23.2 per cent.

Another view of the level of volunteering can be seen by looking at a snapshot from Islington Volunteer Centre (IVC), which has now merged with IVAC to create Voluntary Action Islington. Currently, they have more than 2,400 volunteers registered at the centre and have face to face appointments with approximately 20 people per week who are interested in volunteering. IVC have traditionally provided services to people who have been under-represented in volunteering such as young people and BAME groups and this is in keeping with trends from other volunteer centres²⁰. For example, almost half (48 per cent) of IVC clients in November 2009 identified as being BAME and 43 per cent were 25 or younger²¹. As is the case in many volunteer centres, IVC tend to have appointments with people who need a bit of extra support in order to begin volunteering, while others who are simply looking for an appropriate opportunity will often get the information they need directly from www.do-it.org.

The volunteer centre is currently publicising over 300 volunteering opportunities in the borough, most of which are linked to a national online volunteering database called do-it (www.do-it.org.uk). The www.do-it.org.uk database generates approximately 300 enquiries per week about volunteering in Islington and is locally managed by IVC. The volunteer centre has experienced a large increase in volunteer enquiries when comparing the same ten month period of 2008 with 2009 which was 1435 compared to 3216 respectively²². The reasons for the doubling of enquiries over this time period are as yet unclear, but it could be related to the state of the economy, the merger, or maybe other disparate reasons.

IVC has 474 VIOs registered currently and employs three part time and one full time staff member. This is lower than the London volunteer centre average of four full time and three part time staff.²³ The volunteer centre also benefits from volunteer involvement.

Among volunteers surveyed for this review, there were a total of 75 respondents who had given help to groups based in or benefitting Islington communities. Among this group, the amount of volunteering done in the previous four weeks totalled 992 hours

¹⁹ This result is taken from Question 15 from the Place Survey, 2008, which reads: Overall, about how often over the last twelve months have you given unpaid help to any group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)?

²⁰ Institute for Volunteering Research (2008). London Volunteering Health Check: All fit for 2012? London: Institute for Volunteering Research in association with Greater London Volunteering.

²¹ These statistics were provided by the Islington volunteer centre and came from their own volunteer database (VBase).

²² Ibid.

²³ Institute for Volunteering Research (2008). London Volunteering Health Check: All fit for 2012? Institute for Volunteering Research in association with Greater London Volunteering.

and averaged (mean) 18 hours per person. This is higher than the national average for all current volunteers of 11 hours per month²⁴. Survey respondents helped a total of 124 organisations in the previous year, an average (mean) of two organisations per person, per year. Respondents are volunteering regularly (defined as once a month or more) rather than as a one-off or episodic event (Fig. 1).

The local people are the ones that stay with it, they are the longest serving volunteers. - Interview respondent

As the volunteers surveyed were mainly regular volunteers, they may give some insight and depth to the Place Survey volunteering rate discussed above. It should be noted, however, that the 75 volunteers who responded to the online survey are not necessarily representative of everyone who volunteers in Islington and not all of them answered the questions related to demographics and equalities. Volunteer survey respondents did however report to be from a wide diversity of backgrounds.

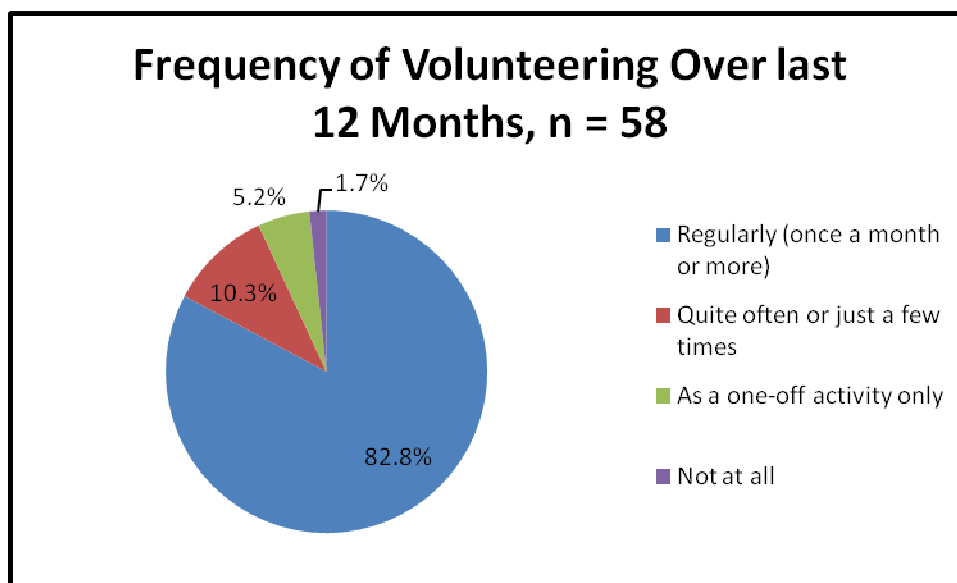
The majority of volunteer respondents who completed the survey were in the 26-49 (63%) or 50-65 (24%) age range, with less younger (6%) and older (7%) respondents. More women (65%) volunteers responded than men (35%). Most respondents identified as heterosexual (63%), with 16% identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other and 22% preferring not to say. A minority of respondents (8%) described themselves as disabled.

The ethnicity of respondents was reported as 76% white and 19% from BAME communities. The largest minority group was reported as Black or Black British, at almost 10%. Some respondents preferred not to report their ethnic identity. In terms of religion, half of the respondents reported having no religious faith while one quarter identified as Christian. Other religious identities reported were less than 6% and included 'other', Jewish, Muslim and Hindu respectively. Almost one tenth of respondents preferred not to report on faith identity.

Three fifths of respondents reported being in full time employment while one fifth were in part time work. Fewer numbers reported as retired (12%), unemployed (6%) or students (2%).

Figure 1

²⁴ Low, N., Butt, S. Ellis Paine, A. and Davis Smith, J. (2007). Helping Out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving. Cabinet Office, London.

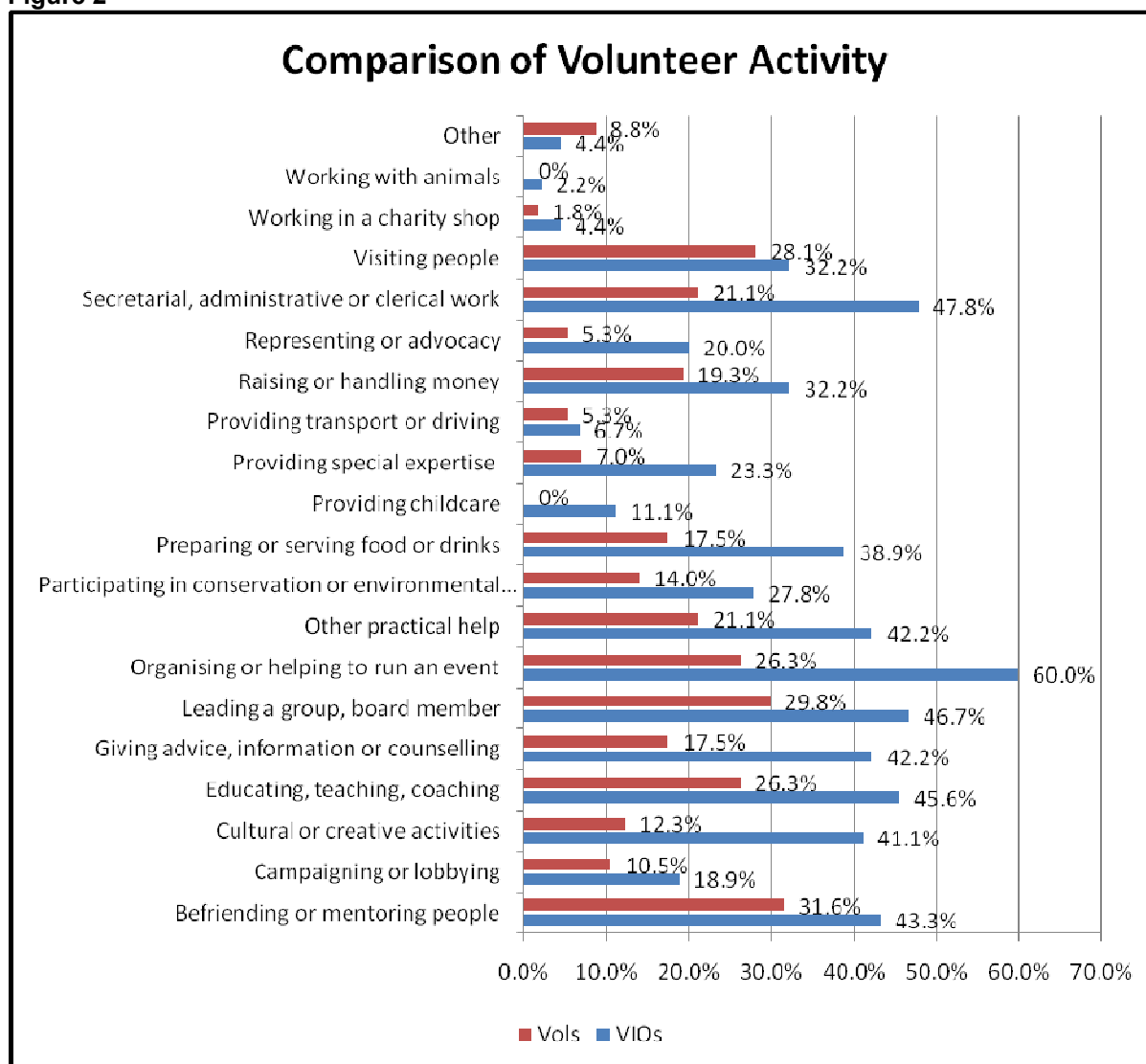


3.3 What volunteers do

Volunteers clearly do a range of activities across a very wide spectrum. The information we have from the survey, it must be noted, was taken only from a small sample of volunteers and is likely not to be representative of all volunteers in Islington. The type of organisations helped varies considerably from national data and may mean that the survey respondents came from a limited number of groups. This is impossible to fully understand without a more comprehensive data set. Among respondents, the most common groups helped were older people, community groups, health related groups, children, young people and environmental organisations.

Volunteering activities within groups were examined from both the perspective of volunteers and VIOs (Fig. 2). The types of activities offered by VIOs in the borough loosely matches national statistics with a few exceptions. These include admin or secretarial work and practical types of help. Interviews did however suggest that popular forms of volunteering in the borough included youth work, helping older people, environmental activities and administrative work. The volunteering activities data reported by volunteers may be somewhat skewed by an over-representation of volunteers involved in befriending activities.

Figure 2



NOTE: Figure 2 shows a comparison between reported volunteer activities by representatives of VIOs and volunteers participating in the survey. A total of 90 people answered the VIO question (Please tell us the type of activities volunteers participate in within your organisation) and 59 answered the volunteer question (Have you given unpaid help to these groups in any of the following ways).

3.4 Volunteering initiatives in Islington

In recent years there have been a number of initiatives to support volunteering in the borough. These include support for a network of Time Banks, volunteer brokerage, getting more young people involved in volunteering, supporting under-represented groups to take part in volunteering, support for volunteering through small groups and neighbourhood based volunteering projects. There have also been initiatives from public sector agencies such as the police and schools. Additionally, there have been increases in volunteering initiatives by universities and employers²⁵ as well as a renewed emphasis on sports related volunteering in anticipation of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

²⁵ City of London's City Action Initiative saw a 90% increase in matches between VIOs and companies in the first quarter of this year according to a Guardian article on 14/10/09.

This Review does not aim to quantify every project or programme related to volunteering in the borough, as this would be a huge task and beyond the scope of this work. However, the following initiatives are meant to highlight some of the volunteering efforts which may fall outside of traditional concepts of volunteering.

Islington's Time Banks

The borough has five formally organised Time Banks:

- Caxton House Time Bank
- Hilldrop and Caledonian Time Bank
- Mildmay Time Bank
- St Luke's Time Bank
- Upper Street Time Bank (which includes Chapel Market Time Bank)

The Vaudeville Time Bank is under development and time-banking will soon be starting at City and Islington College. These are all part of the Islington Time Bank Network. This is the largest Time Banking scheme in London and has been established for more than seven years. It operates as an exchange of time, with individuals swapping time and building credits. It is mainly a 'volunteering' brokerage service between individuals rather than individuals and organisations. Time banking is seen by its organisers as an enhancement of, rather than alternative to, the Volunteer Centre. Time banking is still not seen as 'volunteering' by everyone and even within the volunteering infrastructure there are mixed opinions and understanding about this new and growing phenomenon.

Public sector volunteering

Islington Council have a number of initiatives related to volunteering including a new employee volunteering programme called *Visible Volunteering in Islington* which was launched in November 2009. The Islington Education Business Partnership works alongside schools to broker support from the business community to help prepare young people for work. It provides support, training and resources to participants. It includes a work experience project and a primary and secondary school mentoring project. The Council currently run 'Personal Best', which is a programme for Islington residents who are not in work or education and who do not have an NVQ2 qualification or higher. Everyone who completes the course is guaranteed an interview to become a London 2012 Olympics volunteer. After registering with the programme, participants attend a part-time 10 week course which is accredited. People who complete the course get help applying for jobs, volunteering and training.

Additionally, many departments within the Council such as Children's Services, Leisure & Cultural Services (which includes the 2012 Olympics Team) and Regeneration & Community Partnerships run specific programmes which involve volunteers and/or work placement interns. Islington Council is the largest employer in the borough. According to interview respondents, volunteering efforts within it are disconnected and the organisation is lacking any central point of coordination or information related to volunteering.

There are 42 state-run schools in the borough, all of which involve volunteers on some level. Much of the coordination of volunteering within schools is organised

directly by the schools themselves and there is no central coordination of or support for volunteering in schools. Schools involve the community and parents as volunteers to help them run but also encourage students to volunteer in the community. There are a total of 900 school governors in the borough and it is estimated that 400-500 of these are volunteer governors (community governors and parents). They have access to a training programme, reports and advice through Cambridge Education, which provide services to schools on behalf of Islington Council. There are also at least 21 supplementary schools in the borough which are independently funded and managed with a great deal of volunteer support.

The Metropolitan Police have increased its profile and activity related to volunteering overall and this is certainly true within Islington. In contrast to this, the NHS has involved volunteers throughout its history within hospital settings and other areas. Each of these organisations has made some effort to coordinate or support volunteering within their respective institutions.

Employer-supported volunteering

There have been a number of programmes aimed at increasing the uptake of volunteering within companies and corporations and efforts to encourage businesses to support volunteering by their employees. In addition to the above mentioned Council project, much of these efforts are based outside of Islington but offer services and benefits to VIOs in the borough. Unlike many other areas, in Islington there is no borough-wide partnership with the private sector focused on general volunteering.

The Macquarie Foundation (established by Macquarie bank) have a new initiative called COmmunity REsourcing (CORE) which has attracted 22 volunteers from their London office. Volunteers with special expertise are assigned to one of six local charities in Islington with needs in areas such as financial and business planning, human resources, information technology and administration. This pilot program runs for six months and will be repeated in 2010, in partnership with Cripplegate Foundation.

City Action is a free volunteer brokerage service for City-based companies and VIOs in the City and City fringe boroughs. Run by the City of London Corporation since 1998, City Action's service includes a volunteering opportunities database, networking events and online resources. City Action aims to help businesses and VIOs to share skills and experiences.

Three Hands is a social enterprise which links businesses and charities to address companies' learning and development needs while serving charities' strategic and day to day operational needs. Their programmes take place both in the UK and developing countries. Clients include Royal Bank of Scotland, BSkyB, Legal & General, O2, Standard Chartered Bank, Orange and the Guardian.

Employers have expressed a growing interest in volunteering as the awareness of its business benefits increases. There are also documented benefits of volunteering for employees, as a TimeBank survey noted:

- 83% of employers surveyed view employees who do voluntary work positively;

- 70% of employers claim that employees who volunteer have a better chance of earning a higher salary and gaining a promotion;
- When recruiting, employers value volunteering more than hobbies and travel on a CV with 80% of employers rating volunteering as important²⁶.

Faith-based volunteering

With 75% of the population in Islington²⁷ defining themselves by a religious faith and with volunteering being part and parcel of most conceptions of religious values, this is an important area related to volunteering activities and often not linked in with the third sector more generally. There are at least 118 faith-based organisations (FBOs) in Islington and currently 128 FBOs involved in the Islington Faiths Forum as members.

There are more than 289 social projects run by FBOs in Islington every year, involving more than 500 volunteers. This is equivalent to an average of two and a half projects run by each organisation. Education projects are the most common type of non-religious activities with the most common target groups being young people and the elderly²⁸.

Volunteering in sport

Although we do not have any specific data related to volunteering in sport in Islington, volunteering in sport and all forms of physical activity is purported to be the largest area of volunteering activity in England, according to research commissioned by Sport England²⁹. This will presumably only increase in the run up to the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Games. London 2012 goals include recruiting 70,000 volunteers to help in the Olympic Park and other venues. The main volunteer recruitment programme will be launched in the summer of 2010 and will need both generalist volunteers and specialist volunteers. Already over 200,000 people have registered an interest on the London 2012 website to volunteer.

Islington Council have already launched the Personal Best programme described earlier which will guarantee an interview to be a London 2012 volunteer to participants. Additionally, the Islington 2012 Action Plan contains a number of actions that relate to volunteering. In addition to encouraging residents to become a Games volunteer in the Olympic Park, the plan also proposes that Islington-based volunteers could be located in various transport hubs and in high visibility Games related areas around the borough as well as helping with Olympic events in the run up to the Games³⁰.

²⁶ Continental Research, 2004. TimeBank Employer Attitude Survey [online]. Available at: <http://www.timebank.org.uk/mediacentre/research.php> [accessed 13/12/09].

²⁷ Islington Faiths Forum (2004). *Survey of Faith-Based Organisations in the London Borough of Islington*. London.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Sport England did a study in 2002 showing that 26% of all volunteers regard sport as their main area of interest. Nearly 15% of all adults (16 and older) volunteered for sport in 2002, averaging 208 hours each in the year.

³⁰ This information was gathered within an interview and follow up communications with the Islington Olympics Officer.

Young people and volunteering

There have been a number of government supported programmes in recent years aimed at increasing volunteering among young people and within higher education. These programmes sit within a broad policy framework of government interest in increasing citizenship and community cohesion and broadening participation in public service delivery as well as linking volunteering with the employability agenda. For example, the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) set out to create more volunteering opportunities for university staff and students across England.

Volunteering is undertaken by thousands of students each year at higher education institutions. A national survey reported that over 42,000 students volunteer annually through organised volunteering programmes and that each student volunteer gives 82 hours per year (on average) to their community, contributing nearly £1,000 per year to the economy³¹. Other reports have suggested that volunteering provides students with work experience and equips them with some of the skills and personal qualities looked for by potential future employers.

Many universities both within and outside of Islington have their own volunteer brokerage services for students and staff; such as REACH (London Metropolitan University), City University London, University College London and Provide (Queen Mary University). Some of the volunteering is course-related and some is closer to work placement situations. While many VIOs benefit from these services, student volunteering efforts are often not linked in to other brokerage services or third sector networks.

The previous Millennium Volunteers programme which targeted young people aged 16-25 has now been replaced with v's National Youth Volunteering Programme. Islington benefits from this work through the Central London vinvolved Team's efforts. The three year project began in 2008 and works with organisations and community groups across inner London to create and develop innovative volunteering opportunities that reflect the needs, aspirations and goals of 16-25 year olds. Through this project, young people get opportunities to learn new skills, make friends, build confidence and develop work experience.

Islington Council has received acclaim for its outstanding youth work and one example of this is with Young Muslim Voices (YMV), part of the youth engagement programme of the Listen Up project which won the Phillip Lawrence award in 2008 for its youth led work. Part of the aim of the project is to develop leadership among young people and to give them a voice. The young people are involved in all aspects of the project, such as strategic direction, participating in projects, attending training courses, hosting events and attending meetings with decision makers to highlight issues of concern to them. Some of the successes of the project have included:

- Successfully engaging over 1,400 young people;
- Delivering a youth led conference in November 2008, which was well attended by key decision makers and community leaders to raise awareness and discussions around the issues affecting young people;

³¹ Student Volunteering England, 2004. *Student Volunteering: The National Survey 2003*, London.

- Building up links with key decision makers in the community and council, who are ready to work with the young people on the issues that are important to them, such as policing;
- Launching the Young Muslim Voices report which details the issues and the recommendations made by young people;
- The Kick Islamophobia anti-racism event which brought together almost 1000 people to stand up against Islamophobia and
- Enrolling 20 young people in training for Youth Work and Participation Level 2, to become young leaders in their community.

4. Moving into and Staying in Volunteering

Key messages:

- Word of mouth remains the most effective means of volunteer recruitment but also VIOs are doing much of their own recruitment and only a small proportion of respondents have noted either the Volunteer Centre or Time Bank as their route into volunteering. These services as well as www.do-it.org.uk are likely under-utilised and under-publicised.
- Regular volunteers are giving higher than average amounts of time to volunteering.
- There are an increasing number of volunteers coming in through job centres or employment programmes such as A4E.
- Main barriers are seen as economic, language barriers, lack of information about opportunities, time commitment, long waits to start and Criminal Record Bureau checks.
- Volunteers feel quite supported but more than half are still not receiving expenses or supervision.
- Additional training for volunteers is needed.
- There is wide agreement for the need for more social and networking events for volunteers, perhaps some centrally organised by VIOs and the Volunteer Centre.
- There was emphasis on the importance of involving volunteers with special needs.

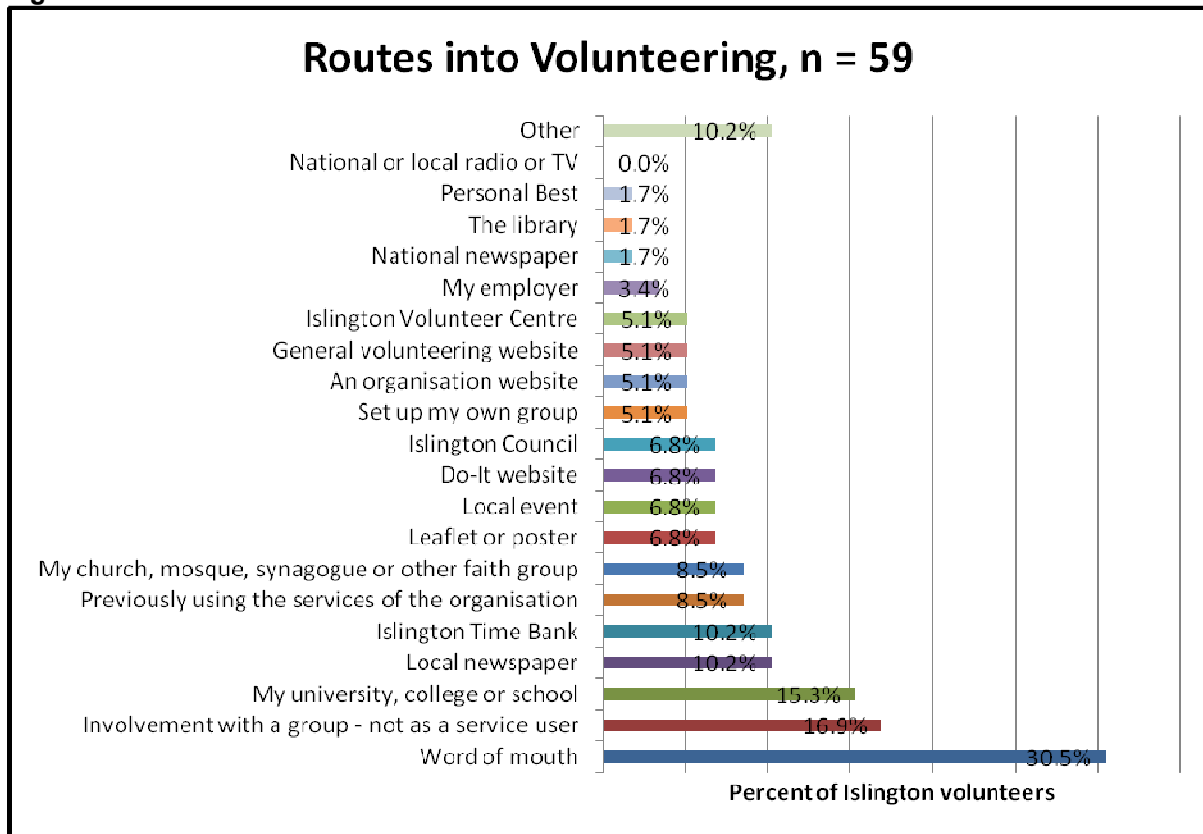
As we have noted, the concepts of volunteering and who volunteers have been stretched and questioned by new forms of volunteering and by the involvement of a wide variety of participants who volunteer for many different reasons. This section examines routes into volunteering in Islington, what volunteers do, barriers to volunteering, and the support given to volunteers.

4.1 Routes into volunteering

Word of mouth remains the most effective means of recruitment and is consistently one of the main ways people find out about volunteering opportunities (Fig. 3). In addition, many VIOs are doing much of their own recruitment while a smaller proportion of respondents have noted either the Volunteer Centre or Time Bank as their route into volunteering. This is closely comparable to national statistics on routes into volunteering³². These services as well as the do-it website are likely under-utilised and under-publicised. Universities, schools, job centres and faith-based organisations also serve as important routes into volunteering. With the exception of word of mouth, the routes into volunteering for volunteers may not match the recruitment efforts of VIOs (see section below).

³² Low, N., Butt, S. Ellis Paine, A. and Davis Smith, J. (2007). *Helping Out: a national survey of volunteering and charitable giving*. Cabinet Office, London.

Figure 3



Survey respondents were varied in how long they have been involved with groups as volunteers, ranging from within the previous year to over ten years (Fig. 4). Motivations for volunteering generally mirror those found at the national level, with the desire to give something back, help people or improve communities top on the list (Fig. 5). It is also worth noting that volunteer motivations vary by demographic factors, particularly age. For example, a young person may be more likely to be motivated by building up experience and skills while a retired person may be more interested in giving something back to their community or filling up free time.

Figure 4

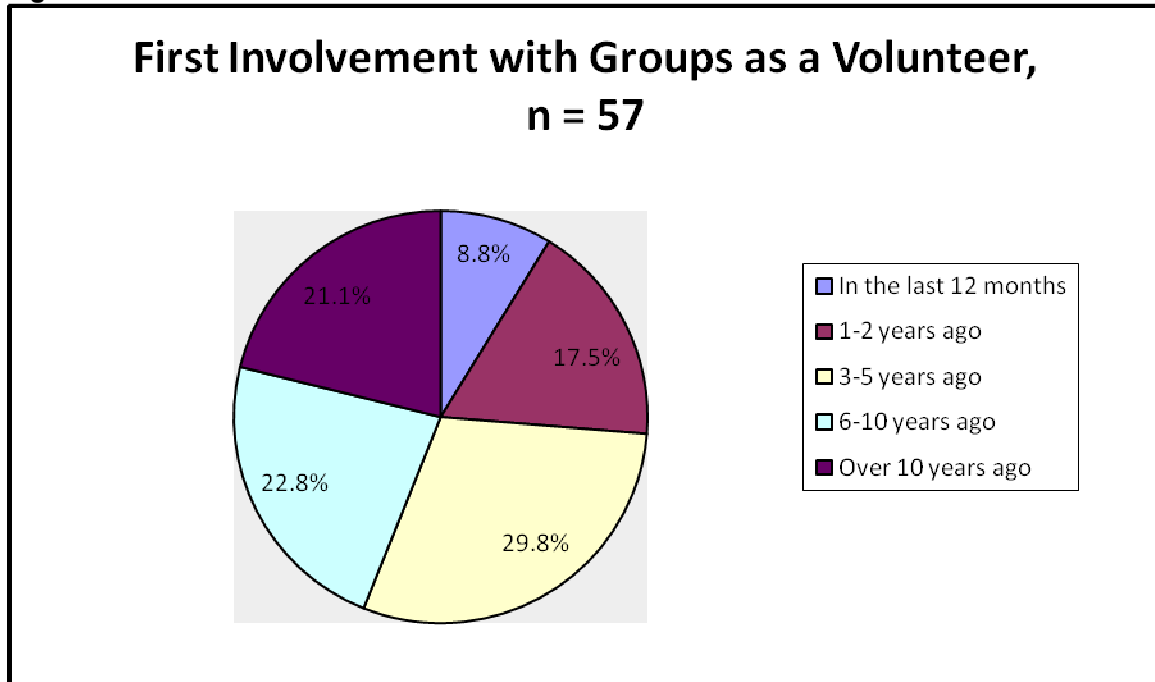
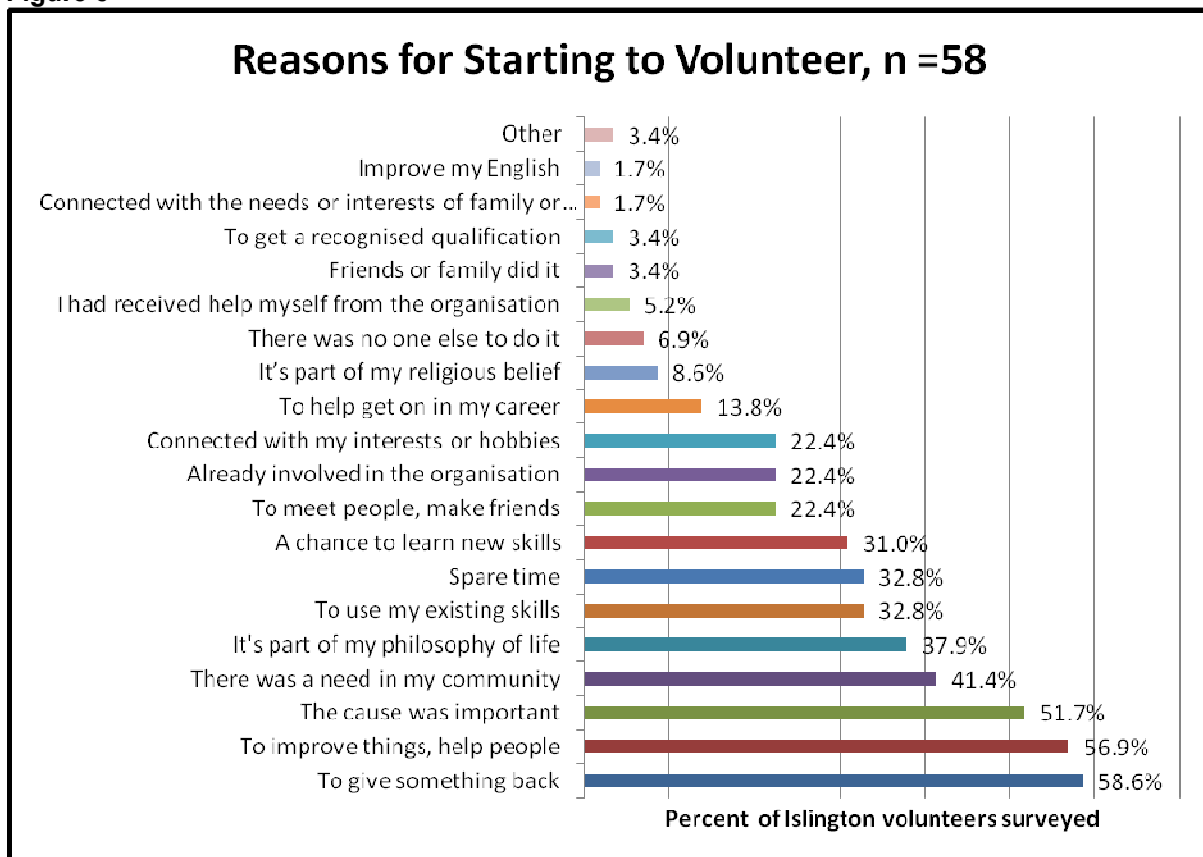


Figure 5



4.2 Barriers to volunteering

When asked about what might stop people from volunteering or prevent people from helping, most common responses were related to economic reasons, lack of

information about opportunities, language barriers and lack of time. An additional important drawback is related to volunteers being put off by a long wait to start volunteering, for example by waiting for a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check to come through. This issue was highlighted by several volunteers:

The two-month or so wait for CRB checks is a real deterrent to new volunteers. They volunteer in a spirit of enthusiasm but the long wait before they can actually start makes them lose interest. – Survey respondent (volunteer)

People need to be involved within about 72 hours. If the volunteering is of the type that requires a CRB check, people need to be involved in some other way, such as group activities. – Survey respondent (volunteer)

Economic barriers included not getting out of pocket expenses related to volunteering paid, the need to work longer hours (and therefore have less time to volunteer) and no access to the internet or a computer. The lack of information about how and where to volunteer was also commonly cited as a barrier. Language barriers may apply to volunteers who are new migrants or refugees and who want to volunteer in organisations outside of their community and this was highlighted in part due to the high turnover rate of new communities in the borough and the refugee population. The concerns about time commitments related to volunteering roles were especially important to people in full time employment and students.

A number of people raised concerns about barriers that may be faced by people with special needs, such as disabled volunteers. There was wide agreement that more needs to be done in order to empower people with special needs to engage with volunteering.

Barriers related to childcare provision, benefits misinformation, logistics, bureaucracy, bad experiences with volunteering, and emotional difficulties such as lack of confidence were also cited to a lesser extent. From a volunteer management perspective, the lack of staff devoted to managing and coordinating volunteers and a lack of capacity for one to one support were also mentioned as potential barriers.

4.3 Support for volunteers

Efforts to support volunteers are made in part to minimise or alleviate the barriers mentioned above. From a volunteer perspective, most respondents said they feel very supported by the groups that they help, yet more than half are not receiving any reimbursement of volunteering expenses or supervision (Fig. 6). This is in contrast to what VIOs claim, where a majority report always or sometimes paying volunteer expenses and offering supervision (Fig. 7).

Volunteers were very positive about feeling needed, appreciated, informed and able to progress in their own development as a volunteer. Approximately one quarter of respondents felt that they are not given the opportunity to influence the development of the VIO. One fifth of respondents felt that it was difficult to find out about volunteering opportunities in Islington. One quarter of respondents felt that volunteering could be better organised by VIOs. A smaller minority of volunteers felt that organisations are too concerned about risk:

There is some volunteer progression, we have supervision and talk about their development. Some of the home visitors go on to be on our management committee, most of the MC are former volunteers. We ask them what they want next. - Interview respondent

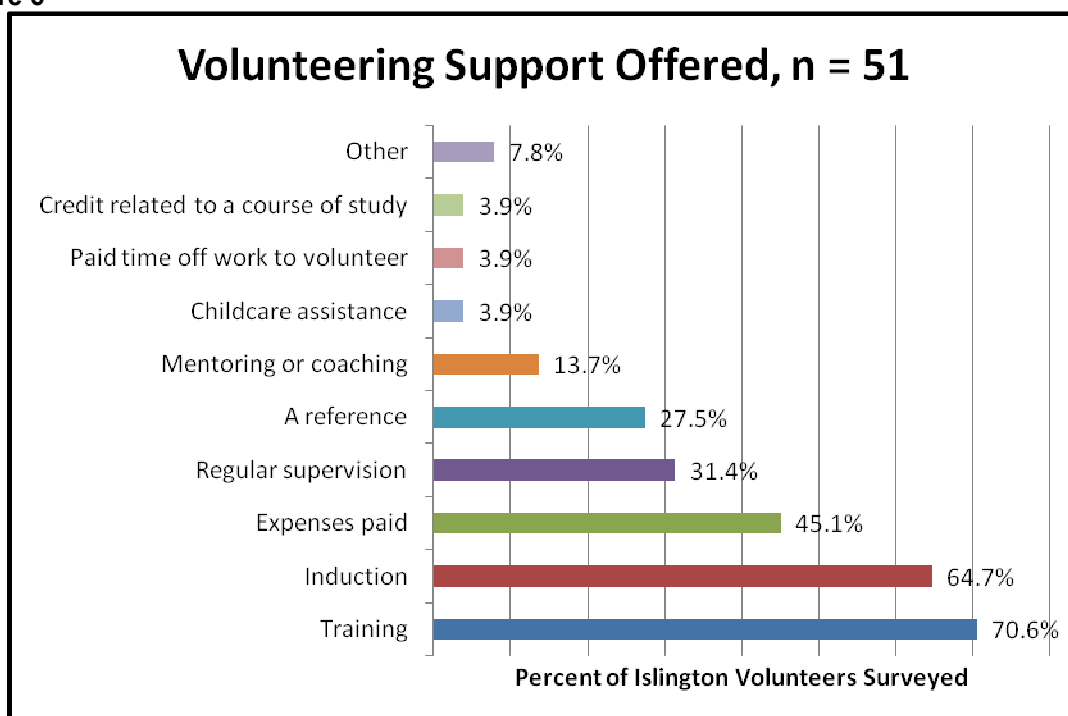
Training and induction are offered to or taken up by a majority of volunteer respondents. Best practice would have all VIOs conducting volunteer inductions and there is wide agreement that more training for volunteers is needed in the sector. Many respondents were in favour of an accredited volunteering course. There was also broad agreement for the need for more social and networking events for volunteers, which are seen to be positive activities that help volunteers share information and support. This is potentially an area that would benefit from some central coordination. There was also some opinion that potential volunteers would benefit from an easily accessible shop front volunteering point where people could drop in to get information, support and register as a volunteer:

I like the idea of a local pot of money available to support volunteers for expenses and costs associated with volunteering such as training. I would like the public sector to grow their understanding of volunteering in the third sector. - Interview respondent

There needs to be a lot more training available, people ready to volunteer are quite often ready to take the next step into training and then employment. – Survey respondent (VIO)

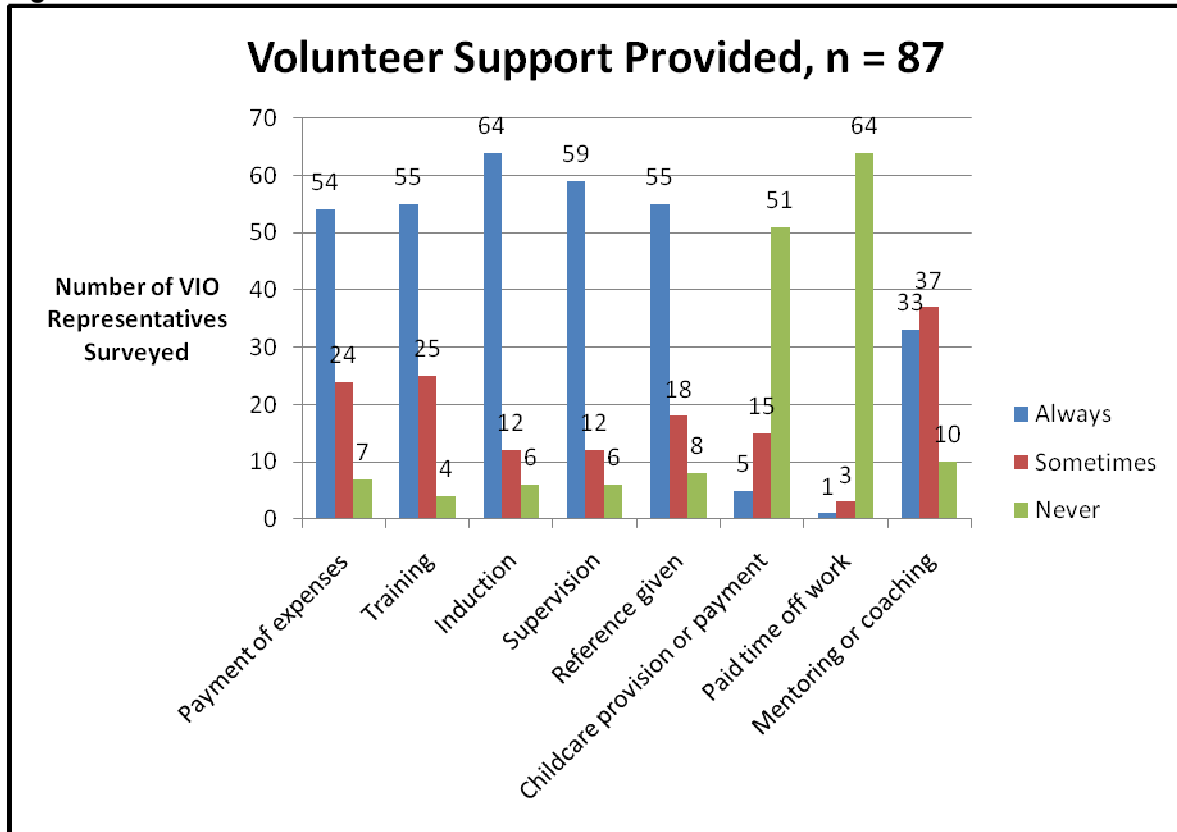
Less than one third of volunteer respondents report being offered references, yet most VIO respondents report giving them. The only area surveyed where VIOs report not providing support to volunteers is in childcare provision and paid time off for employees to volunteer.

Figure 6



Additional suggestions for supporting volunteers include having user-friendly forms and minimising bureaucracy, signposting and referrals between VIOs and more incentives for volunteers.

Figure 7



5. The Purpose, Value and Impact of Volunteering

The value of volunteering is beyond any economic measure, it has intrinsic value. - Interview respondent

Key messages:

- The overarching purpose of volunteering is centred on community cohesion and social capital, leading and managing organisations, building skills and contributing to personal development such as increased confidence.
- Similarly, the impact of volunteering most significantly is on community cohesion, reducing isolation, supporting vulnerable people, improving skills and employability, raising awareness of VIOs, improving neighbourhoods, and fostering better links between the three sectors and local people.
- Volunteering is potentially a key component in achieving local agendas such as increasing employability (through building skills and experience) and in fostering community cohesion, networking and linkages.

In looking at the interrelated purpose, value and impact of volunteering, it is helpful to present it in the framework of the beneficiary; individuals, third sector organisations, the public sector, businesses and local communities. While there are general themes throughout each area such as with community cohesion, improving local areas and personal development, each of these areas has a particular perspective on volunteering and its benefits.

5.1 Individuals

The overall purpose of volunteering to individuals typically relates to altruistic values, the needs of family or friends, personal development goals and/or social needs. In these areas, volunteering positively impacts people's quality of life by increasing skills, experience and confidence, lowering stress levels and serving to reduce isolation³³.

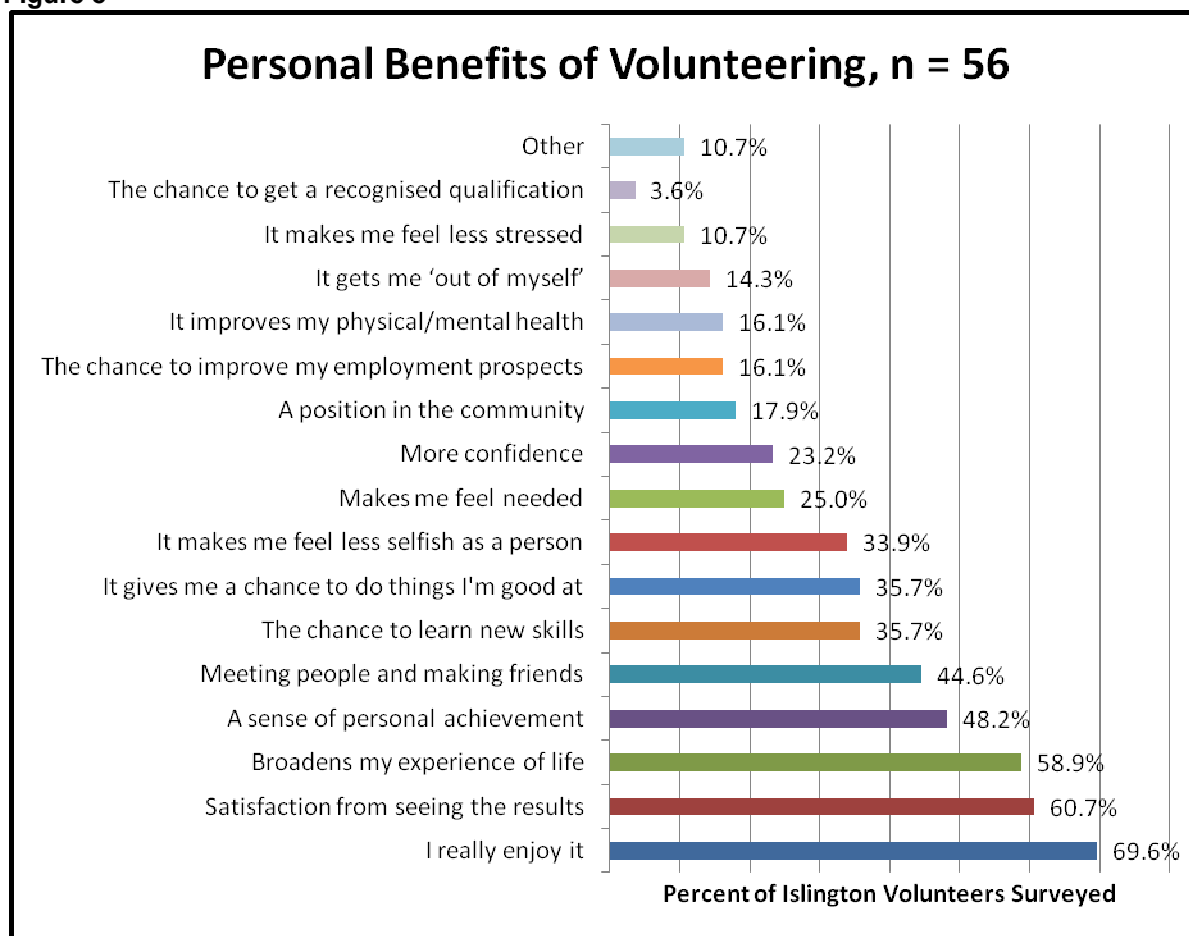
The benefits to individual volunteers in Islington are many and the most common responses in this review reflect national trends such as satisfaction, achievement and enjoyment from their work. The survey results differ from national trends in the emphasis on personal development or employment related benefits such as broadening life experience and learning new skills (Fig. 8).

For example, a common scenario in the borough is a new migrant who volunteers in order to gain experience, language competency, references and overall familiarity with the British workplace and culture. Another common scenario is that of a long

³³ For more evidence relating to the benefits of volunteering for individuals, see both Rochester, C. (2009). *A Gateway to Work: The role of volunteer centres in supporting the link between volunteering and employability*, Institute for Volunteering Research and The Corporation for National and Community Service (2007). *The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research*. Washington DC.

term unemployed person who is volunteering as a means to build skills and confidence to re-enter the job market.

Figure 8



5.2 Third sector organisations

There is a wide spectrum of organisations within the third sector in Islington, from very small groups to larger organisations who rely mainly on paid staff. Most of the smaller VIOs that we know about in the borough could not exist without the support of volunteers; whether it be the management committee, a founder, people delivering services, sport coaches, mentors or admin support. Many of these organisations are completely volunteer run with no paid staff and many of those with employees rely on volunteers to deliver their programmes. As one organisational respondent put it:

Volunteers are the main focus of what we do, without them we would not have a service, we wouldn't be delivering anything. Our volunteers are the core and main thrust of what we do. - Interview respondent

5.3 The public sector

As was discussed in a previous section, volunteering is a means to help meet the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Each of the priority areas relies on volunteering at least in part to meet its goals. This includes increasing employability, building social capital, reducing isolation, encouraging civic engagement, improving neighbourhoods and fostering community cohesion. It also

helps to serve the needs of vulnerable or excluded people who may not otherwise access services or support. For example, the greening of local areas would not be possible without volunteer engagement and the type of bridging social capital that volunteering enables allows isolated communities to network and make contacts with people who they might not otherwise ever interact with. This potentially opens up new employment avenues and leads to valuable future contacts:

What we do fits in with all of that, for example employability; people are gaining experience and building confidence in getting back to work. We get people meeting each other from completely different backgrounds and this is inspiring to people, they get exposure to people very different from themselves. It is about community cohesion, building networks in the local community where there is isolation. The bonds help to break down the isolation and build social networks and communities. - Interview respondent

5.4 The private sector

Respondents reported that employer-supported volunteering (ESV) helps businesses to educate and develop their employee base, improve community relations, increase their 'brand' recognition and foster links between staff and with local communities. Employee volunteers bring new and valuable skills, experience and knowledge to companies and volunteering is often seen as a career progression tool by employers. ESV can also improve understanding between sectors, which can lead to better links and access to resources and support for everyone. Particularly for larger companies, the emphasis on corporate social responsibility often includes volunteering within its set of values.

5.5 The community

Volunteering has an invaluable impact on local communities. It is often described as the glue which binds communities together, improving neighbourhoods and building a sense of civic pride, belonging and unity. Volunteering also serves the purpose often of giving people (especially young people) something to do, 'keeping people out of trouble' and providing role models for the younger generation. Comments included:

Volunteering can strengthen communities. We have seen how successful placing older volunteers in schools can be. It adds value to the lives of the children, the older people and the schools. Children benefit from having contact and one-to-one attention with an adult. However, the adults need to be trained and supported –if we can help the schools do that, then it is less impact on their limited time. The older people enjoy the chance to have a regular commitment and receive energy from the children. Belonging to the school gives them a sense of identity. More and more it seems to me this sense of belonging to a community and having a sense of identity, something we take for granted when we are a parent or in employment, is a really important factor around the value of volunteering. When we lose that sense of identity it can be easy to feel disenfranchised. - Interview respondent

Volunteering is vital to creating a community spirit, it enables people to network, to participate in their community in a valuable and rewarding way. - Interview respondent

6. Supporting and Organising Volunteering

It would be most helpful to have a 'one stop shop' approach to finding volunteers that are able to offer skills and experience at all levels. – Survey respondent (VIO)

Key messages:

- A need was identified to foster a climate of sharing information, referrals and volunteers in particular by reducing the competitive environment and fostering partnership and cooperation between VIOs in relation to volunteering.
- Gaps include; volunteer career development, training, referrals system, signposting, monitoring and evaluating volunteers and follow up with volunteers.
- There is wide agreement that volunteering efforts are not well linked in the borough and the need for a central point of contact regarding volunteering, or a 'one stop shop'.
- There is a perceived need to do a better job of using and publicising the networks that are in place including the local, sub-regional, regional and national networks and forums.
- The main brokerage bodies include the Volunteer Centre, Time Bank, universities, v and the local Council but there are many other organisations serving a brokerage role in Islington. There are still many VIOs and volunteers who are not familiar with these services or who do not see the need or value in these services. There is a need for outreach, coordination and education about the services available and their value.
- There is demand to celebrate success stories and publicise the efforts of volunteers, this could include case studies of volunteers, conferences or regular media coverage of volunteer stories.
- There is a need to tackle negative perceptions and stigma associated with volunteering and publicise its benefits.
- There is a consensus that leaders need to embrace volunteering and foster understanding, especially within the Islington Strategic Partnership.

6.1 The organisational perspective – support needs, barriers and gaps

There is no end to the potential; it is a changing society, a changing world. You have to think creatively to see how volunteers can be used. - Interview respondent

VIOs within the borough are as diverse and varied as its population. They comprise third sector groups as well as the public and private sectors and social enterprise. The most common VIO survey respondents were in the fields of health, children and young people, older people and community groups or local neighbourhood groups. Many VIOs however are struggling to meet the capacity and resource challenges related to volunteer management:

If there was an organisation publicising more about volunteering it would be good, but we have staffing constraints. Volunteers want to volunteer right then and there, but we can't always respond to them immediately, so we lose some people that way. Allowing people quick access to speak to people about volunteering or starting the process would be better. - Interview respondent

VIOs also have a variety of recruitment methods (Fig. 9) although these do not always match with volunteers' routes into volunteering (see previous section). Most use a variety of recruitment tools and are aware of volunteer brokerage services available in the borough such as through the Volunteer Centre, Time banks, universities, the local Council and other services (Fig. 10). A wide range of brokerage services in the borough was uncovered, although there was limited knowledge of these services and mixed reviews as to their effectiveness and usefulness. Some VIOs complained that the Volunteer Centre does not do enough outreach to VIOs and others had stopped using Volunteer Centre and Time Bank services due to a poor record of past service delivery. It was suggested that the Volunteer Centre is too far below capacity and under-resourced to be of use to VIOs:

We do get a small amount [of volunteers] through the volunteer centre, such as with the disability project. We did have some stuff on Do-it via the volunteer centre but I haven't kept it updated, probably because we don't get that much from there. - Interview respondent

Figure 9

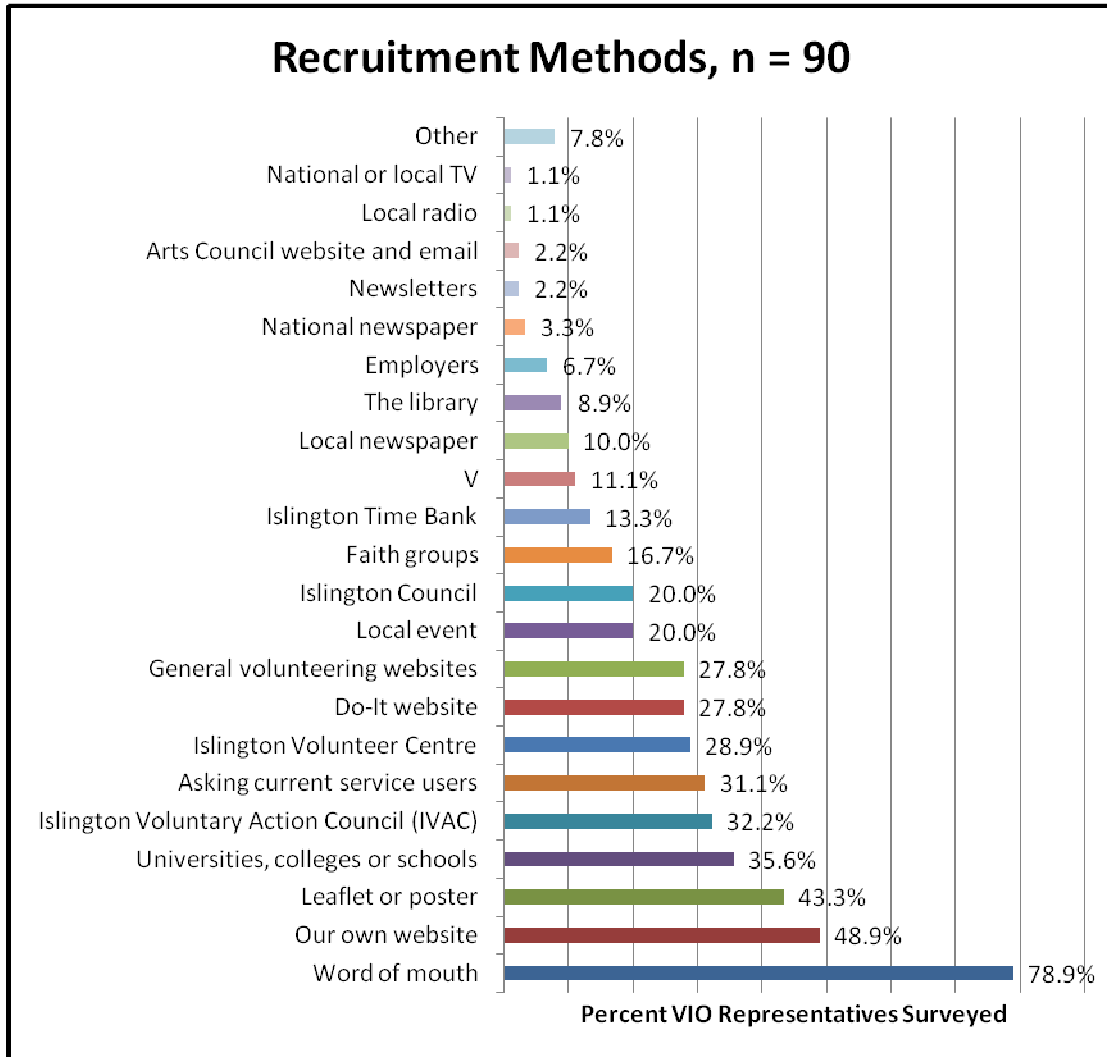
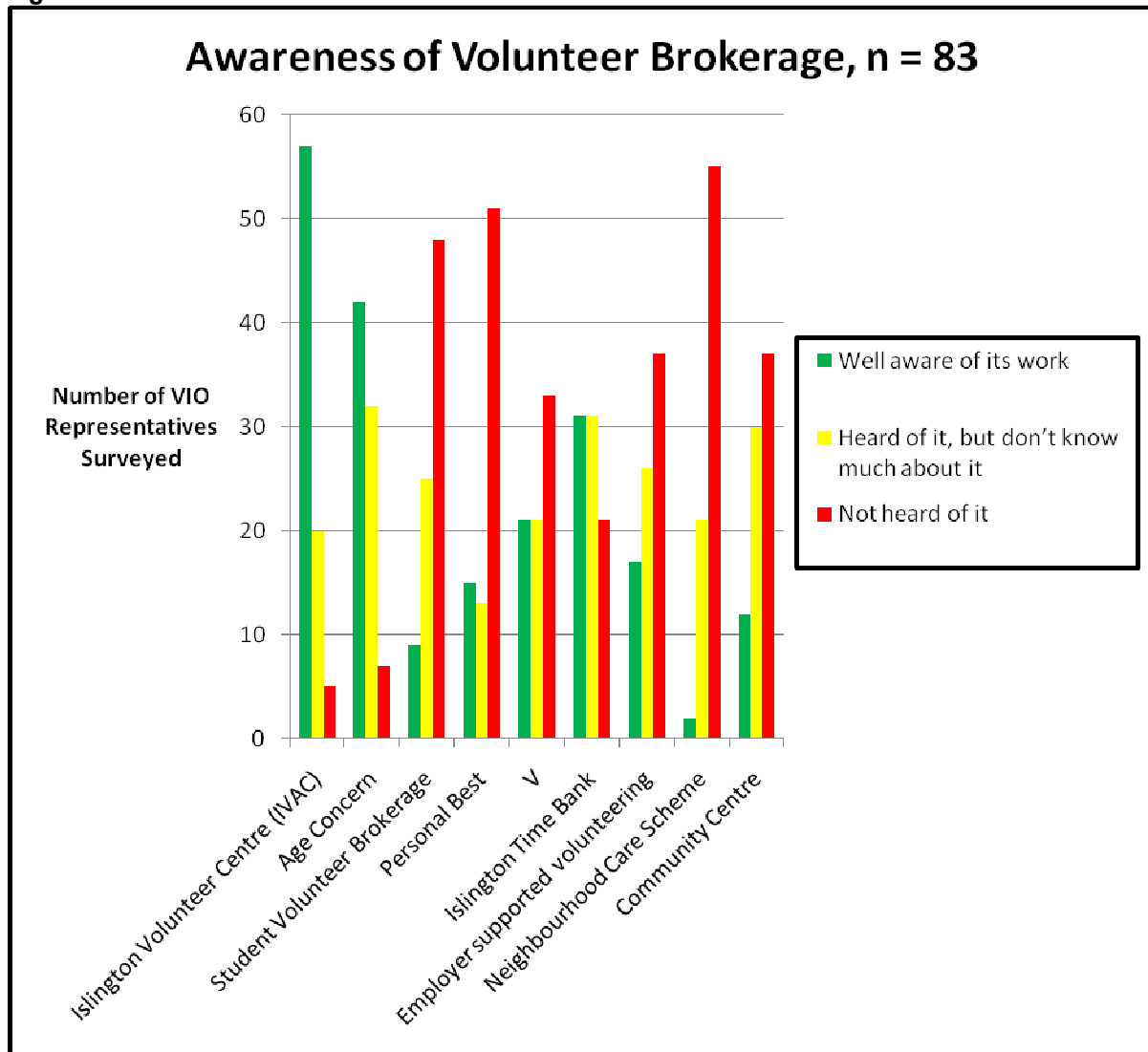


Figure 10



Many VIO respondents spoke about the impact of the economic climate on volunteering, particularly the recession. Respondents were split as to whether this had a positive or negative impact on volunteering, as the following comments illustrate:

The recession is generating better qualified and experienced volunteers with more time on their hands. – Survey respondent (VIO)

I feel we will see more volunteering opportunities from low skilled people wanting to remain in work. This is due to the recession. Higher paid volunteers and skills are not coming forward due to the credit crisis. – Survey respondent (VIO)

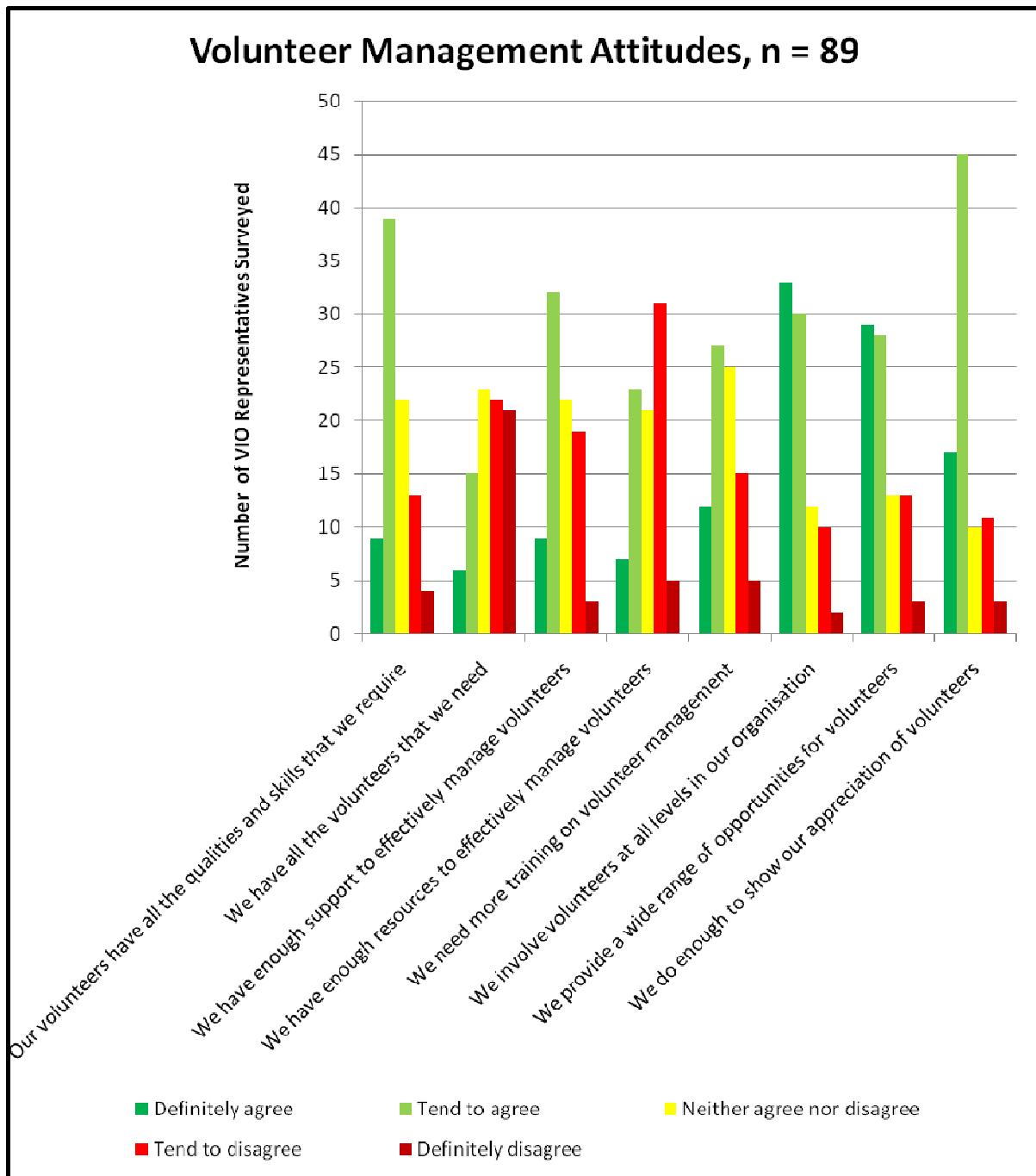
People who may have had time are now working more to make ends meet, so they have less time to volunteer. - Interview respondent

Some concern was expressed that fee-based groups such as sports clubs may be adversely impacted. Others noted that there was an increased demand for advice services and increased volunteer enquiries, such as at the volunteer centre.

VIOs have different opinions as to levels of support and resources needed related to volunteer management (Fig. 11). Some have enough volunteers, support and resources to function adequately (in their own opinion). Others clearly have capacity and resource challenges. Most VIOs agreed that increasing the number of volunteers within an organisation cannot be done without a commensurate increase in capacity and resources. This link is crucial in any strategy development, as many VIOs clearly stated a desire to increase the number of volunteers involved but could not take on any more people without more staff and/or funding.

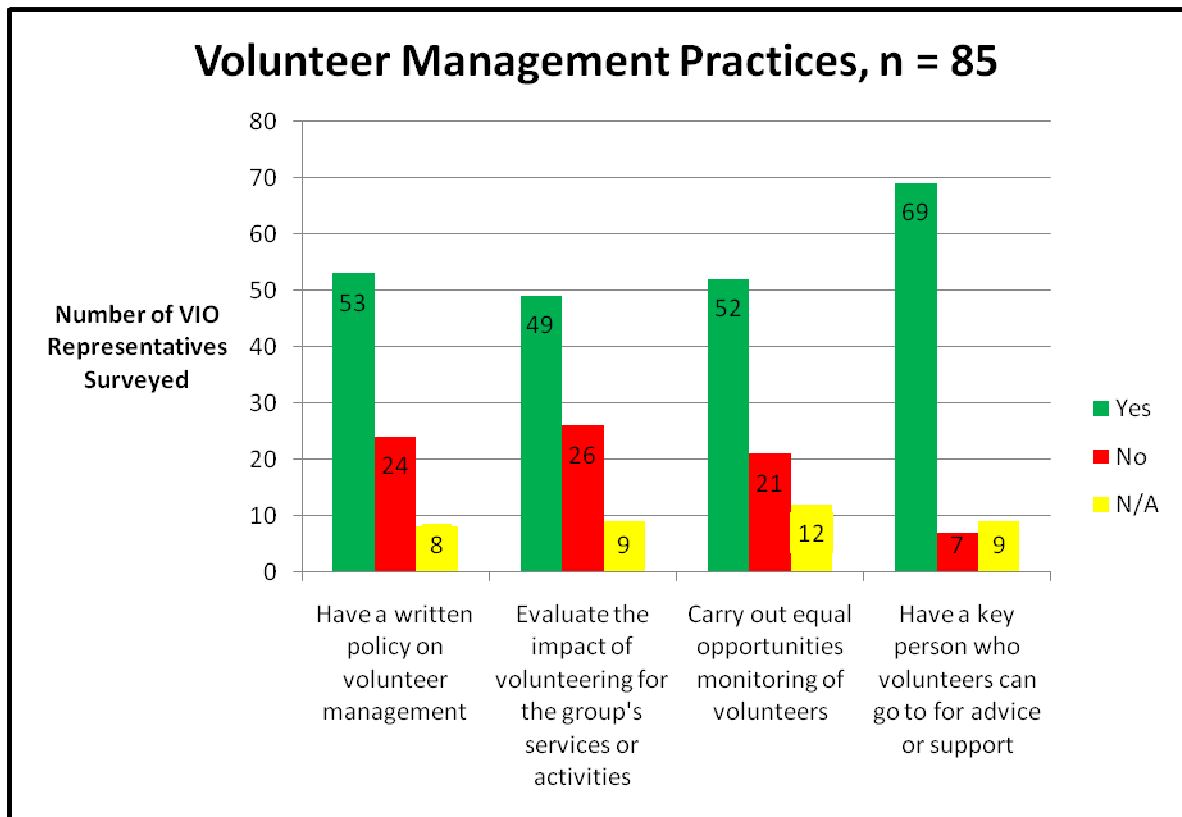
We need access to funding for volunteer management. People are needed to supervise volunteers and resource them properly. – Survey respondent (VIO)

Figure 11



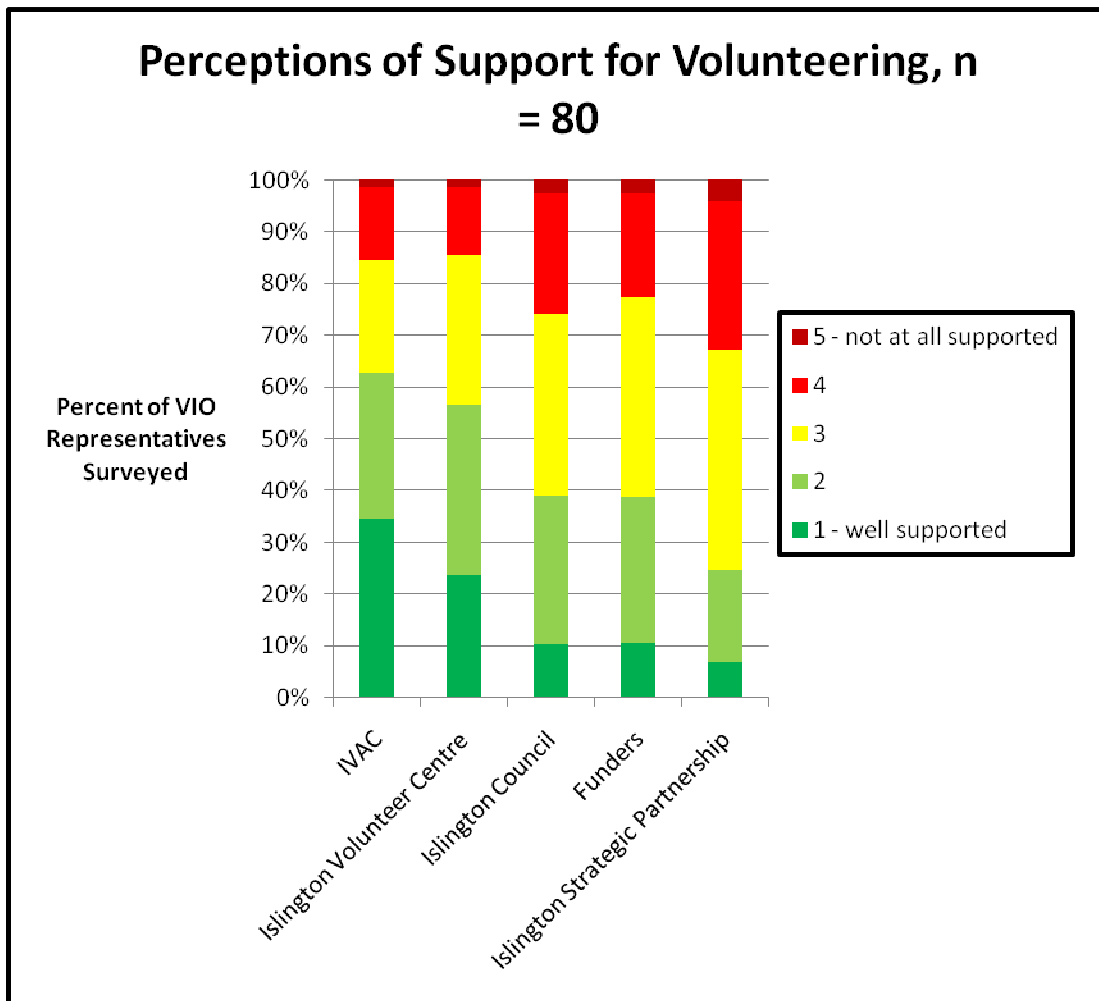
While most VIO respondents report complying with best practice standards related to volunteering, a quarter of respondents are not exhibiting best practice in volunteer management (Fig. 12).

Figure 12



Many VIOs have a positive opinion of local infrastructure organisations in terms of volunteering support, while opinions are split on the supportiveness of the local Council and funders and there is a relatively low opinion of the ISP (Fig. 13). It is perhaps surprising that the perception of funders is fairly low and this may be an area where further dialogue, education and support are needed between VIOs and funders from both the private and public sectors.

Figure 13



Both the local infrastructure organisations and the Council provide support to VIOs in relation to volunteering and there is some information sharing and networking happening but the majority of respondents agreed that additional training and resources must go into building the capacity of volunteer management within VIOs. Support needs that were suggested include a helpline for volunteer managers, clear web based advice for VIOs, more follow up support for VIOs and relevant and customised training.

There are a number of barriers faced by VIOs in relation to volunteer management in addition to resource constraints. Many small groups are excluded from receiving help if they fail to produce proper policies and procedures related to volunteering. Some VIOs simply do not see the usefulness of volunteer management support or Volunteer Centre services or do not feel that they have the capacity or time to devote to training and development:

Smaller groups can be excluded from participating or brokerage, for example if they do not have policies and procedures they are not allowed to register with the volunteer centre. I'm not sure how to tap into the resources available such as with the volunteer centre. When you are working to projects without core funding, it is difficult to create sustainable networks and links. If links exist, they tend to be coincidental or through individual networking. - Interview respondent

For us as an organisation, we need the funding support and anything other than that is just beyond our thinking right now. - Interview respondent

Many organisations are concerned about the lack of capacity for volunteer coordination and the need for more training, as illustrated by the following respondent:

We can recruit people, but because we haven't got more resources, we can't retain or recruit more volunteers because we just don't have the capacity. The training course is key and we need to be able to offer more of this. - Interview respondent

The gaps in relation to volunteer management cover several areas: training, referrals and signposting, monitoring and evaluating volunteering, networking and volunteer 'career' progression. Many respondents spoke about a lack of communication between VIOs in terms of signposting volunteers and referring people to each other. There was a sense of 'turf' issues among groups and little acknowledgement of the fact that volunteers cross organisational boundaries regularly. There was wide agreement as to the poor standards and knowledge related to monitoring and evaluating volunteers and volunteer programmes. This is an area that would certainly benefit from joint working. There is also a need for additional networking opportunities for VIOs to share best practice and information. These services however must be based on the evidenced needs of VIOs and be designed to have a clear benefit.

6.2 Volunteering linkages

There is wide agreement among respondents that volunteering efforts are not well linked together in the borough. This is followed up by agreement on the need for a central point of contact regarding volunteering, or a 'one stop shop'. The main question that this raises is who should take on this role. Many would agree that this should be done through the Volunteer Centre/Voluntary Action Islington but some feel that they need to improve services and capacity and increase the resources devoted to this role in order for this to work. Those that felt there were some linkages agreed that this was mainly within certain sub-sectors such as sports or faith-based volunteering. This was demonstrated by a number of respondents:

I'm mostly only aware of sports volunteering opportunities; there is a fair amount of communication between the different providers in this sector and clubs (which are mostly volunteer-run) do have some opportunities to link together. – Survey respondent (VIO)

No, everyone works in isolation depending on the type of organisation it is and do not cross support volunteer development. – Survey respondent (VIO)

I didn't know there was an Islington Volunteer Centre so no, there is no linking as far as I can see. – Survey respondent (VIO)

Colleges and universities tend to keep separate or only work with particular organisations. – Survey respondent (VIO)

Both within the Council and throughout the borough there is a clear need for a centrally organised point of coordination for volunteering. This was a message not only within this review, but was found in other reports related to volunteering such as Islington Council Children's Services Report on volunteering which states:

“Although there is some extremely good practice in place and a number of volunteering opportunities there is no apparent clear strategic overview with regard to volunteering in Islington.....The task group has identified a need for a strategic approach to volunteering in order to make sense of the sheer volume of information and to develop a structured and central approach to volunteering in Islington.³⁴”

Respondents in the review reinforced this view:

[We need] training offered for volunteers centrally - we and other projects do our own but it would be good if there were some free, low cost courses offered on a broader range of topics and so that volunteers could meet others on different schemes. – Survey respondent (VIO)

Apart from the Council, I don't know of courses that our volunteers can access. It would be great if there were computer courses for example that were free to volunteers. Something provided centrally in the borough that any volunteer within the borough could access. I also think it would be great if it were easier to offer Time bank credits to any volunteer in the borough. I am not sure how well the Time bank system currently works. - Interview respondent

[VIOs are] not linking as well as they could. People are confused as to what various groups do. Conflicting information puts people off and we don't have one place that people go to for volunteering information. The current branding is not sufficient, one point of access would be better. - Interview respondent

Our events are quite 'exciting' and we are having a lot of success attracting volunteers using the Arts Council free e-mail service. We feel that there is little help in the borough. – Survey respondent (VIO)

One of the barriers to linking activities is the lack of time available for most volunteer managers, especially those working in very small VIOs with little or no paid staff. This was highlighted by a number of VIO representatives:

We get invited to networking events which we attend if we can but as we are very, very small (less than 2 full time members of staff) it's hard to link in to everything to get a feel for the network of support available. – Survey respondent (VIO)

³⁴ Islington Children's Partnership (2009, pp. 3-4). *Volunteering in Islington Report*. London Borough of Islington, London.

It's a bit patchy, it is not joined up and takes us to initiate it. We don't have time to devote to networking, we contacted VAI for the benefits that we get but we don't have time for the other stuff. - Interview respondent

6.3 Strategic volunteer roles within Islington

Primarily it is about having a clear idea of all the roles that already exist across Islington and then finding the gaps – with resources –to develop new roles. I don't think it is possible to develop volunteering without thinking about the specific roles. - Interview respondent

One of the missing pieces to the strategic development of volunteering in Islington is the lack of clarity as to roles of different organisational stakeholders related to volunteering such as within volunteering brokerage, volunteering infrastructure, publicity and policy. Roles between the sectors, although helped by the Islington Compact, are still unclear as to where the central point of contact should be located, how publicity related to volunteering can be jointly supported, how to link the disparate volunteer brokerage services across the borough and how to speak with one voice when it comes to volunteering policy needs:

Islington Volunteer Centre or another Islington wide agency should be a central hub for all volunteering in Islington, responsible for raising the profile of volunteering and should encourage volunteers to highlight their experiences of volunteering. They should also co-ordinate the various volunteer involving organisations in Islington. – Survey respondent (VIO)

The main brokerage bodies in Islington are the Volunteer Centre, Time Bank, universities, v and the local Council but there are many other organisations serving a brokerage role in Islington. As illustrated above, there are still many VIOs and volunteers who are not familiar with these services or who do not see the need or value in these services. There is a need for outreach, coordination and education as to the services available and their value. There is also some frustration among respondents relating to the perceived lack of understanding by funding bodies as to the benefits of volunteer activities.

Voluntary Action Islington is clearly a natural volunteering infrastructure hub and many respondents expressed an interest in them taking on the former role of the Islington Volunteering Association (IVA). In addition, there must also be dialogue and clear roles related to the strategic development of volunteering in the borough and the roles of other strategic partners and brokerage agencies.

A useful guide to the key roles related to volunteering infrastructure is Volunteering England's six core functions of volunteer centres:

- Brokerage
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development
- Develop volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development of volunteering

The above functions could serve as a starting point in discussions of strategic roles between organisations operating within the volunteering infrastructure in Islington.

It would be unrealistic to expect that one organisation could take on all of the roles needed however there is a clear case for central coordination and consistency across the borough and open communication channels between strategic partners. The natural choice for a central volunteering hub role would be the volunteer centre within the new Voluntary Action Islington.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Bringing it together

The findings from this review are meant to inform the development of a volunteering strategy for Islington and the recommendations contained herein focus their suggestions in that direction. There is much more to be learned about volunteering in Islington, but this review has made a start at both contextualising and understanding local volunteering efforts and needs as well as the associated infrastructure gaps.

The findings from the review have seen an underlying, cross-cutting theme of the existing and potential contribution of volunteering to community cohesion. We have also shown the importance of not solely focusing on increasing volunteer numbers in Islington, but the need for a focus also on building a sustainable volunteering infrastructure in the borough that will serve to support potential and existing volunteers as well as the organisations that involve them.

Volunteering in Islington is clearly a vibrant and growing area which serves the needs of individuals, local government and statutory agencies such as the police and the NHS, organisations and communities. It has the potential to be a key driver in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy, but currently lacks the coordination and capacity that would allow it to reach this potential.

In developing a volunteering strategy for the borough, the recommendations below can be summarised as:

1. Clarification of roles associated with volunteering infrastructure.
2. Identify and resource a lead body(ies) for volunteering in Islington.
3. Removing the barriers to volunteering and supporting everyone who wants to volunteer.
4. Increasing the understanding and championing of volunteering locally.
5. Promoting and publicising volunteering.

7.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed specifically with the Volunteering Strategy in mind. They are meant to accompany the development of the strategy and serve as an aide to its implementation.

1. Clarification and development of roles associated with volunteering infrastructure.

- a. Agree the key roles required for a well-rounded volunteering infrastructure.

This suggestion goes hand in hand with the following recommendation of a 'one stop shop' for volunteering in Islington. It may be helpful to use as a starting point the six core functions of volunteering infrastructure developed by Volunteering England:

- Brokerage
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development
- Develop volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning

- Strategic development of volunteering

In addition to the above functions, it seems necessary to discuss a role related to monitoring and evaluation of volunteers and volunteer programmes.

- b. Building the support and capacity for organisations to develop and support well managed volunteering opportunities.

Although included as one of the core functions above, the need to further develop a support system for volunteer management in the borough with a role to work with VIOs to help them build opportunities for volunteer engagement and to expand their understanding and implementation of good practice requires particular attention. There is also a need for developing VIO capacity to involve volunteers and for models to cater to both larger and smaller VIOs and their unique needs.

- c. Link local and regional efforts related to the London 2012 Olympics with the central volunteering hub.

Efforts should include coordination between the local Council, sports volunteering infrastructure organisations operating in the borough and the volunteer centre around volunteering opportunities for London 2012. The volunteering hub should specifically link in with the Islington 2012 Volunteering Task Group and Action Plan. Coordination should also include a focus on the volunteering legacy and preparation of the volunteering infrastructure for the likely increase in volunteering demand related to London 2012. Volunteer brokers in the borough should be encouraged to promote Personal Best and other Olympic and Islington based 2012 opportunities. Lastly, there is a need to clarify who the lead Olympic volunteering body is locally and who will be involved in London 2012 volunteer recruitment.

- d. Develop better partnership arrangements between Islington-based business and the third sector and public sector.

The purpose of the partnership would be to develop and publicise opportunities for employer-sponsored volunteering that would benefit local communities and organisations. This may be most easily achieved through an expanded partnership with City Action, as they are already doing brokerage for employers and VIOs in city fringe boroughs. Additionally, relationships between the business community and volunteering infrastructure organisations should be encouraged and developed so as to make the most of employer-sponsored volunteering opportunities, for example between Voluntary Action Islington and the Chamber of Commerce.

2. Identify and resource a lead body(ies) for volunteering in Islington.

- a. Develop the role of Voluntary Action Islington as the volunteering 'hub' for Islington following the merger of the volunteer centre with IVAC.

The volunteer centre is the most logical 'one stop shop' for volunteering in the borough but must be connected to the other key partners and brokerage agencies such as Time Banks, universities, employer volunteering and faith based efforts. The volunteer centre must improve its reach, resources and capacity if it is to be a central coordinating body for volunteering efforts in the borough.

- b. Building the capacity, reputation and quality standards of the lead volunteering body(ies).

Most notably, the central point of coordination must undertake the following:

- Act as the central point of coordination for ALL volunteering efforts in the borough in all sectors;
- Involve and engage all organisations who are providing brokerage services in Islington and provide signposting to volunteering opportunities and manage www.do-it.org.uk;
- Do regular outreach to VIOs in the borough so as to have the widest possible coverage and specifically include:
 - Tailored capacity building training which is developed for both larger and smaller VIOs and is based on evidenced need;
 - Information sharing and signposting in relation to resources related to volunteering available from second tier organisations and the public sector at the local, regional and national level;
 - Islington-focused internet resources in relation to volunteering best practice, facts and support;
 - Create an annual information sharing event for volunteer managers, coordinators and infrastructure organisations in Islington;
 - Coordinate and manage formal networks in the borough related to volunteering such as a volunteer managers forum, volunteer brokers network, trustee and management committee network and employer-supported volunteering forum and
 - Targeted support to help VIOs with monitoring and evaluation of volunteering and volunteers.
- Have an accessible volunteering 'shop front' with flexible hours, methods and locations for recruiting potential volunteers;
- Provide electronic and other information and signposting to volunteers about opportunities, support and best practice;
- Coordinate volunteer awards and celebration events, including Volunteers Week and
- Collect and publicise local data about volunteering and volunteers.

- c. Identify resource needs and potential sources of funding for the lead body(ies).

Each of the roles related to volunteering infrastructure not only needs to be clarified, agreed and partners named but the resources required must also be identified and potential sources investigated. Without sustainable sources of funding to build the capacity and best practice of the infrastructure, efforts to involve volunteers will be short term and their success limited.

3. Removing the barriers to volunteering and supporting everyone who wants to volunteer.

- a. Target and support under-represented groups to enter into volunteering.

This should specifically include disabled people (including people with mental ill health), older and retired people, young people, people from BAME communities, refugees and asylum seekers, people with a history of substance misuse and ex-offenders. Brokerage efforts should include face to face appointments and drop-in sessions available for these specific communities. Efforts should also attempt to partner with organisations that represent each of these communities. Brokerage

efforts should also be based out in the community so as to target particular geographic areas, estates and community gathering places. The development of partnerships with GPs to 'prescribe' volunteering because of its health benefits may be successful with some communities as well.

b. Support current volunteers.

A more coordinated support system for volunteers needs to be in place that will help to sustain and develop volunteering locally. The following efforts needs to be made to ensure that volunteering is inclusive and that current volunteers are properly supported:

- i. Promote best practice for the payment of volunteer expenses and childcare, perhaps through a central funding source or by including these costs in budgets.
- ii. Reducing the wait times to begin volunteering. This should include working with organisations to ensure that CRB checks are applied appropriately and that volunteers are aware of why they are needed and that they may have to wait. Organisations should also be supported to involve these volunteers in ways that do not require vetting while they are waiting.
- iii. Supporting VIOs to provide references for all volunteers who would like them.
- iv. Reduce the misinformation about benefits and volunteering by developing a local publicity campaign and relationships with local job centres.
- v. Hosting more social and networking events for volunteers both at the VIO organisational level and centrally in the borough. This will serve to support volunteers through information sharing and mutual support.
- vi. Foster better signposting and referrals for volunteers from VIOs about opportunities at other VIOs around the borough.
- vii. Support volunteer-career progression within and across VIOs so that all volunteers are informed and encouraged to be involved at all levels of the organisation.

c. Support progression routes for workless people who would like to move towards employment by improving both soft and hard employability skills through volunteering.

This should include linking volunteering brokers with job centres and employment related programmes, providing references, training and expenses for volunteers and discussion of transferable skills.

d. Provide volunteer training.

Provide training for volunteers that could include an accredited course, centrally coordinated and supported volunteer training and inductions and more frequent training opportunities. There could be both general training and induction as to volunteering and its roles and responsibilities as well as specific training based on the needs stated by volunteers such as health and safety, equalities and diversity or providing advice to service users.

4. Increasing the understanding and championing of volunteering locally.

- a. Championing of volunteering by leaders in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

If local leaders championed volunteering in the borough, it would go a long way to both increasing volunteering and building the infrastructure. Council leaders have a particular strategic shaping role in stepping up and championing volunteering at all levels both internally and externally but other partners must contribute from the private and voluntary sectors as well.

- b. Increasing the understanding and benefits of volunteering by the public sector and other funders such as the local Council and NHS Islington.

All sectors need to embrace volunteering and foster increased understanding and support of its purpose and role. However this is particularly important within the local public sector and could make the difference between an effective strategy and one that sits on a shelf. This should include education about volunteering in Islington for Council staff that is developed in partnership with volunteering infrastructure bodies and volunteers as well as the identification of a central volunteering lead contact within the Council who can serve to coordinate internal activities and information related to volunteering as well as liaise with external organisations. Additional outreach should be targeted at the local NHS, PCT, Met Police, schools and other public sector areas where volunteering infrastructure has had fewer links.

- c. Increase dialogue between sectors about the scope of volunteering.

This discussion should take into account the wide range of volunteering happening in the third sector as well as the public and private sectors and should consider both the standard concepts of volunteering as well as the 'boundary areas' and decide whether to have a broad or narrow scope in relation to volunteering activities and support. While the boundary areas of volunteering may be constantly shifting, there is a clear need to support and protect volunteers from exploitation and this is perhaps where to start.

5. Promoting and publicising volunteering.

Promoting and publicising volunteering in the borough needs to happen through a strategic and targeted approach which includes highlighting success stories and reducing any stigma associated with volunteering. In terms of publicity related to volunteering, the more outreach that is done, the greater the volunteering demand is generated. Outreach work can tap into previously unreached resources of volunteers but there must be adequate volunteer management capacity to effectively deal with the increased demand. This point must be considered when planning any marketing or publicity campaigns.

Promotional efforts should make use of innovative approaches such as using new media and social networking tools.

- a. Publicity efforts need to be joined up but targeted to specific audiences and geographic areas.

Efforts should include local newspapers such as Islington Now, and poster campaigns in community gathering places such as shopping centres and bus shelters.

- b. Promotion activities should celebrate volunteering and tell volunteer success stories.

We need to regularly celebrate volunteer success stories and publicise the efforts of the diversity of volunteers across the borough, such as through a small book, case studies of volunteers, appointing volunteer ambassadors or regular media coverage (or column) dedicated to volunteer stories.

c. Volunteering strategies must address negative perceptions and stigma associated with volunteering and publicise the benefits of volunteering. In order to encourage under-represented groups to volunteer, we must address some of the barriers and perceptions of volunteering. For example, young people may only see volunteering as 'unpaid work' rather than an opportunity to gain experience and help the community and some cultures may view volunteering as a kind of forced government service, especially if it is linked to attaining citizenship or visas. By both highlighting the benefits of volunteering for the individual and the community as well as addressing any potential stigma attached to it, volunteering can be encouraged in a positive light.

d. Improvements must be made in publicising the current resources and networks that are in place in relation to volunteering. This should include the local, sub-regional, regional and national networks and forums such as through Greater London Volunteering.

Appendices

A. Review of Current Volunteering Strategies in Other Localities

This section summarises a number of publicly available volunteering strategies from London and the rest of England. The strategies discussed here are underpinned by a set of common values relating to volunteering, which equate to those set out in national and local Compact Codes of Good Practice on Volunteering: choice, reciprocity, diversity and recognition. In addition the strategies are informed by a set of assumptions, which can be summarised as:

- Recognition that volunteering is high on policy agenda at national and increasingly also at regional and local level, therefore local strategic partnerships must take it seriously too (sections on why volunteering matters to...)
- Recognition that volunteering takes place not just in the voluntary and community sectors but also the public sector and with local employers through employer-supported volunteering, partnerships and indeed through the involvement of volunteers in some private sector organisations.
- Recognition that there is room for improvement in the delivery of volunteering in each local area, with particular concerns in many strategies about uncoordinated approaches and lack of cross-sector partnership working.
- Understanding that volunteer management and infrastructure needs to be adequately resourced: that volunteering does not come for free, but that the benefits can outweigh the costs.
- Recognition (in more recently produced strategies) that the recession presents both challenges and opportunities for the volunteering landscape.

The volunteering strategies reviewed here tend to be structured into between three and five main sections (variously called 'building blocks', 'priority areas' or 'overarching objectives') with a number of more specific objectives listed under each. The most common objectives are summarised below, under three main headings, with some specific examples also listed.

Increasing the number of volunteers

Most of the volunteering strategies reviewed here have a core goal of increasing the number of volunteers and the number of volunteering opportunities available in the local area. Moreover most policies have a strong equality and diversity agenda aimed at ensuring volunteering is open to all in the local community. However, not all policies include specifics on how they plan to break down the barriers to volunteering and several are rather vague about 'outreach' work. Approaches include:

Supporting volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) to develop new, high quality volunteer opportunities:

- Increasing access to volunteering through taster sessions;
- Providing flexible volunteer opportunities through family volunteering, seasonal, 'offsite' and 'out-of-hours' opportunities (Edinburgh, Hertfordshire, Sheffield, Lewisham);

- Maximising opportunities for volunteering arising from the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics – could include recruiting volunteers for pre-volunteer programme and for Games, expanding community/volunteer policing in lead up to 2012; capitalising on Games to get more people into sports or event volunteering.
- Creating/extending employer-supported volunteering schemes across voluntary, public and private sector organisations – could involve increased recognition of schemes through awards, developing Volunteer Centres capacity to develop ESV, marketing strategy, promotion events by organisations already involved in ESV (Edinburgh, Sheffield, Westminster, Brighton and Hove).

Breaking down barriers to volunteering and engaging under-represented groups in volunteering:

- Most strategies identify several different groups reflecting local priorities, including: people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; refugees and asylum seekers; older or retired people; young people; NEET; LGBT people; ex-offenders; lone parents; people with mental health issues, learning difficulties or disabilities; people with addictions; unemployed people; residents in social housing, people with caring responsibilities.
- Targeting volunteer marketing campaigns at specific under-represented groups (Camden, Westminster);
- Promoting volunteering to young people through outreach work in school or colleges or through the v initiative (Edinburgh, Westminster)
- Developing projects based on learning as a way of attracting BME volunteers (Lewisham);
- Identifying and addressing easy to solve barriers such as expenses, transport, timing of volunteering (Salford);
- Developing services to support under-represented volunteers, such as pre-volunteer training, volunteer buddies, supported-volunteer schemes, translators for volunteers (Edinburgh, Sheffield, Lancaster);
- Encouraging residents in social housing to get involved in volunteering through specific projects and to serve with tenants associations (Westminster);
- Establishing volunteering outposts ('hubs' or 'spokes') in particular areas, such as deprived communities, linked to central Volunteer Centre (Edinburgh, Sheffield);
- Developing 'social prescribing', where GPs advise patients with mental health problems; health conditions or disabilities to take-up volunteering (Edinburgh, Sheffield).

Extending volunteer involvement across public/private/voluntary sectors:

- Promoting volunteering that enhances public services, including through local authority-led programmes and various police volunteering schemes, including police cadets (Waltham Forest, Lewisham, Westminster);
- Broadening the number and range of volunteering opportunities available with local authority services/departments, and introducing volunteering frameworks across council departments to support volunteering (Edinburgh, Waltham Forest, Brighton and Hove)

- Promoting as volunteering roles that allow residents to influence local decision making, such as PCT User and Career Involvement services / Police Safer Neighbourhoods Panels, Youth Offender Panels, Young Mayor's Advisory Group (Lewisham, Westminster);
- Developing new schemes to encourage and support council employees to volunteer (Westminster, Camden, Lewisham).

Raising the profile and local awareness of volunteering

Most strategies reviewed here include a number of objectives aimed at increasing awareness of volunteering, promoting the benefits of volunteering to volunteers and communities and marketing volunteer opportunities. The strategies recognise that volunteers can derive many benefits from volunteering and that marketing approaches need to recognise the diversity of volunteers' motivations. Examples include:

Improving access to general information about volunteering and about how to get involved in volunteering:

- Developing and improving websites offering information about volunteering and listing opportunities in the local area (Westminster);
- Extending the use of social networking sites and new media such as Myspace, YouTube, Twitter, texting (Merton, Sheffield);
- Ensuring volunteering is promoted and public spaces such as community centres, libraries, Volunteer Centres, community notice boards (Hertfordshire, Lancaster);
- Ensuring volunteering is represented and promoted at community events (Waltham Forest, Lewisham);
- Producing standard publicity leaflets to be used across local area (Lancaster).
- Continued investment in local volunteer infrastructure, for example resourcing Volunteer Centres to perform core functions well (Edinburgh, Brighton and Hove)

Developing and extending marketing campaigns aimed at recognising value of volunteers in communities and recruiting new volunteers:

- Instigating a local marketing campaign (common across most strategies);
- Promoting positive and diverse images of volunteering as widely as possible in the local area, through local press coverage, in local authority health or sports campaigns (Hertfordshire, Lancaster);
- Appointing volunteer champions, volunteering ambassadors or 'volunteers of the year' (Merton, Salford, Westminster, Lewisham);
- Holding recruitment events such as taster sessions or fun days (Merton);
- Piloting a pass it on campaign, where volunteers encourage friends to volunteer (Sheffield).

Valuing and celebrating volunteers:

- Promoting wider use of organisation's own in-house volunteer awards (Waltham Forest);
- Developing local volunteer recognition events or schemes (Edinburgh, Waltham Forest, Lancaster);

- Developing and extending volunteer celebration events linked to Volunteers' Week (Hertfordshire, Lewisham, Westminster);
- Developing annual borough or county-wide volunteer celebration (Lewisham);
- Ensuring volunteers celebrated in VIOs annual reports (Merton).

Improving the quality of the volunteering experience

All the strategies reviewed here contain objectives relating to improving the quality of volunteers' experiences, recognising retention of volunteers is dependent on good experiences.

Promoting good practice in volunteer involvement across all sectors:

- Enhance volunteer experiences by improving access to existing good practice advice and resources and making sure all VIOs in the local area meet a minimum quality standard (Camden, Salford);
- Offering advice and support (face to face or online) to volunteer-involving organisations, especially smaller ones or those struggling to meet good practice guidelines (Sheffield, Merton);
- Improve access to training and support for volunteer managers, including where possible links to national programmes such as Excellence in Volunteer Management (Edinburgh, Brighton and Hove);
- Offering 'health checks' on volunteer management to VIOs;
- Supporting more VIOs to work towards quality standards such as Investing in Volunteers (Edinburgh, Lewisham, Salford);
- Improving knowledge and understanding of broad social and economic impacts of volunteering in local areas through research;
- Promote wider use of existing impact assessment tools such as IVR's Impact Assessment Toolkit (Edinburgh, Salford, Brighton and Hove).

Improving collaboration and partnership working between volunteering stakeholders in different sectors:

- Holding joint training sessions for volunteer coordinators from different sectors and organisations (Lewisham, Merton, Lancaster);
- Extending the reach of volunteer coordinators' forums and peer-support groups (Sheffield);
- Developing cross-sector networking opportunities (Lewisham, Lancaster, Sheffield).

Improving access to awards and accreditation for volunteering:

- Increasing take up of qualifications that recognise involvement in volunteering such as ASDAN (Westminster, Sheffield, Salford);
- Making better use of other accreditation/recognition schemes such as Duke of Edinburgh's Award and various local schemes (Salford, Westminster, Merton)
- Developing new, local accreditation and recognition schemes (Lancaster).

Strengthening links between volunteering, skills development, training and employment:

- Developing volunteering as a path to employment by raising awareness among employers or Job Centre Plus advisors of the skills that can be

developed through volunteering and providing these groups with information about volunteering (Westminster, Salford, Brighton and Hove);

- Developing volunteering as a path to employment by enabling volunteers to capitalise on their skills, improving personal development planning and introducing progression for volunteers;
- Promoting volunteer accreditation schemes to employers (Brighton and Hove)
- Improving volunteers' access to accredited and non-accredited training (Lewisham, Salford).

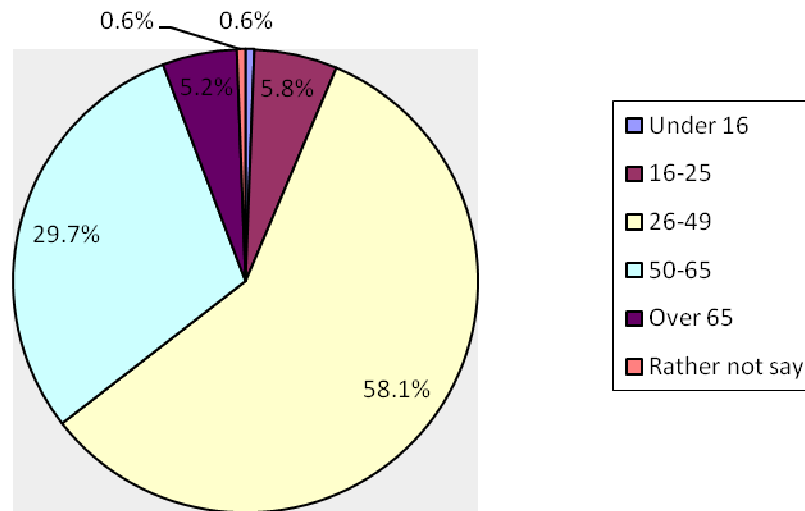
Developing volunteering strategies

Most strategies reviewed here have been developed through a process of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders. The extent of these consultations varies between areas according to budgets and timescales; some strategies are based on extensive consultations, others on one or two workshops or focus groups. This review identifies several stages of good practice in developing a volunteering strategy:

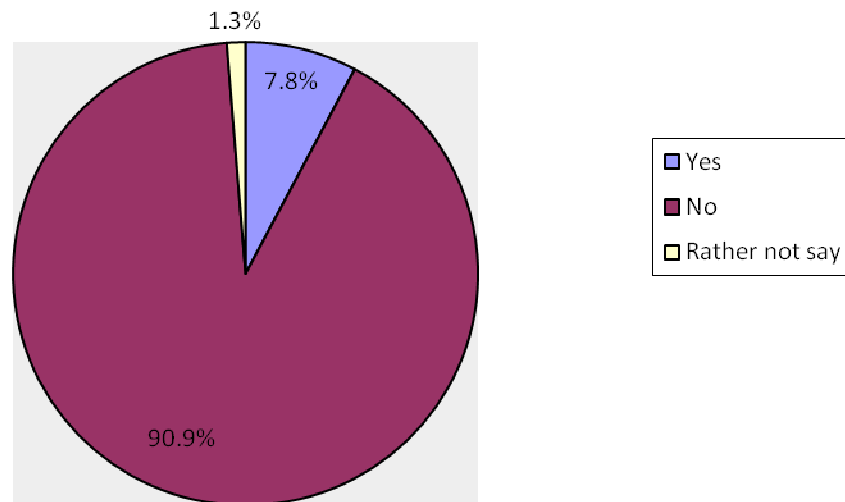
- Form a steering group to oversee strategy development. To improve co-ordination of volunteering within the borough, members of this group should be drawn from voluntary and community sector; public sector; private sector; volunteers
- Conduct background research to inform objectives and actions and ensure they fit with local needs – includes reviewing literature; compiling statistics about levels / types of volunteering in local authority area; conducting interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, including volunteers
- Hold public consultation on draft strategy, which should be posted online and distributed widely. Feedback from all stakeholders can be sought through inviting written responses, conducting an online survey and holding consultation events, for example workshops as part of local volunteer co-ordinators meetings and training events. Some strategies are using new media to invite comments, for example the Sheffield First Partnership has set up a blog and uses twitter to communicate developments in the roll out of the volunteer strategy.
- Public launch of final strategy, providing an opportunity for partners from different sectors to get together
- Ongoing consultation during implementation and development of strategy, especially as some strategies have long time-scales.

B. Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

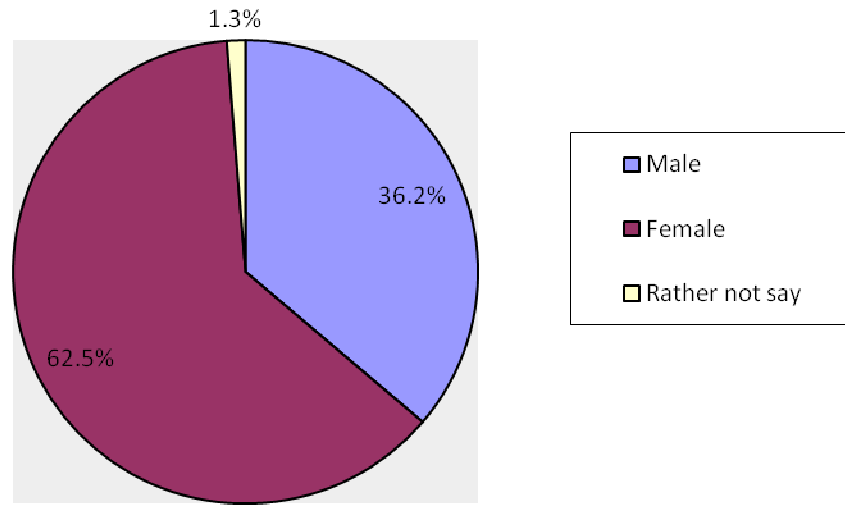
Age Range of Respondents, n = 155



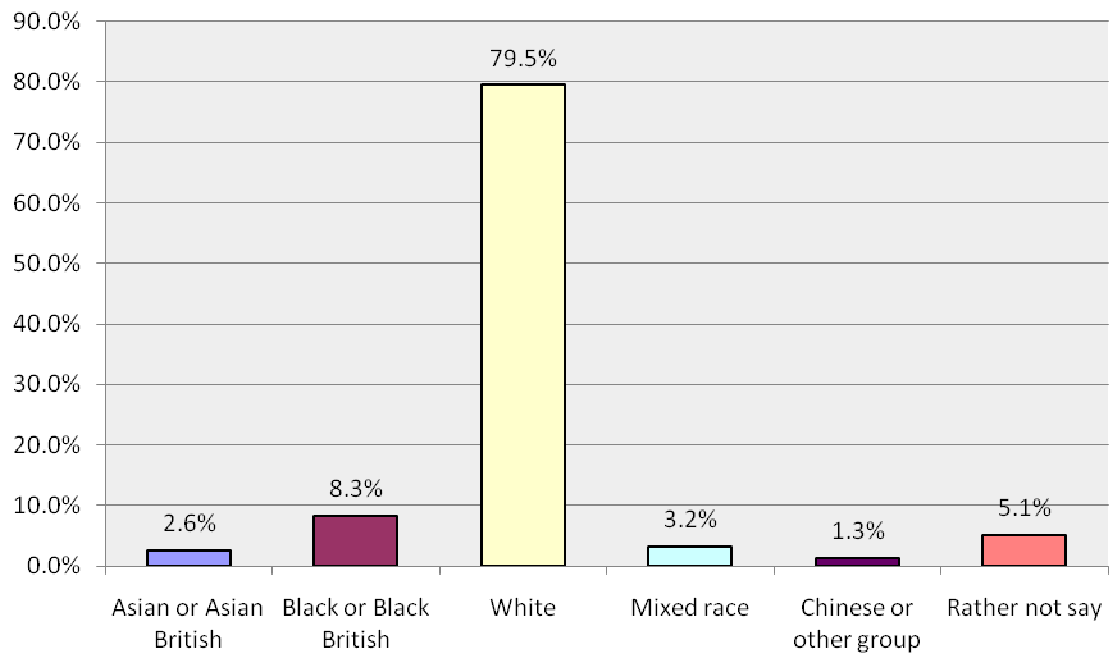
Disability Status of Respondents, n = 154



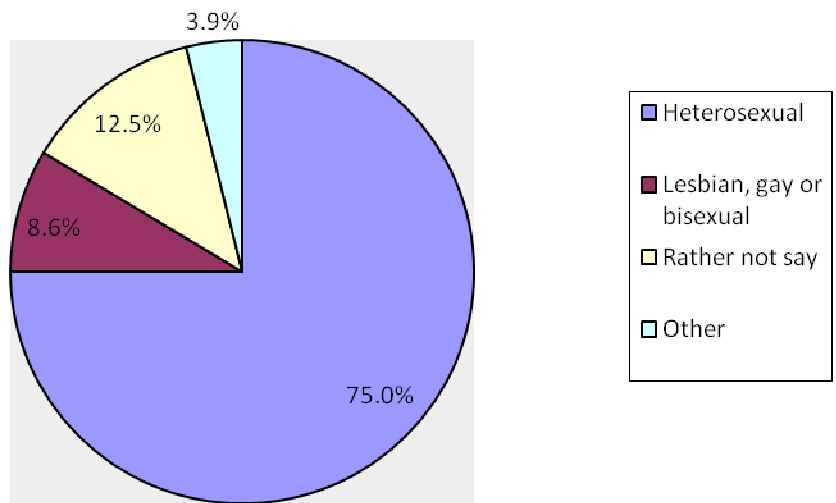
Gender of Respondents, n = 152



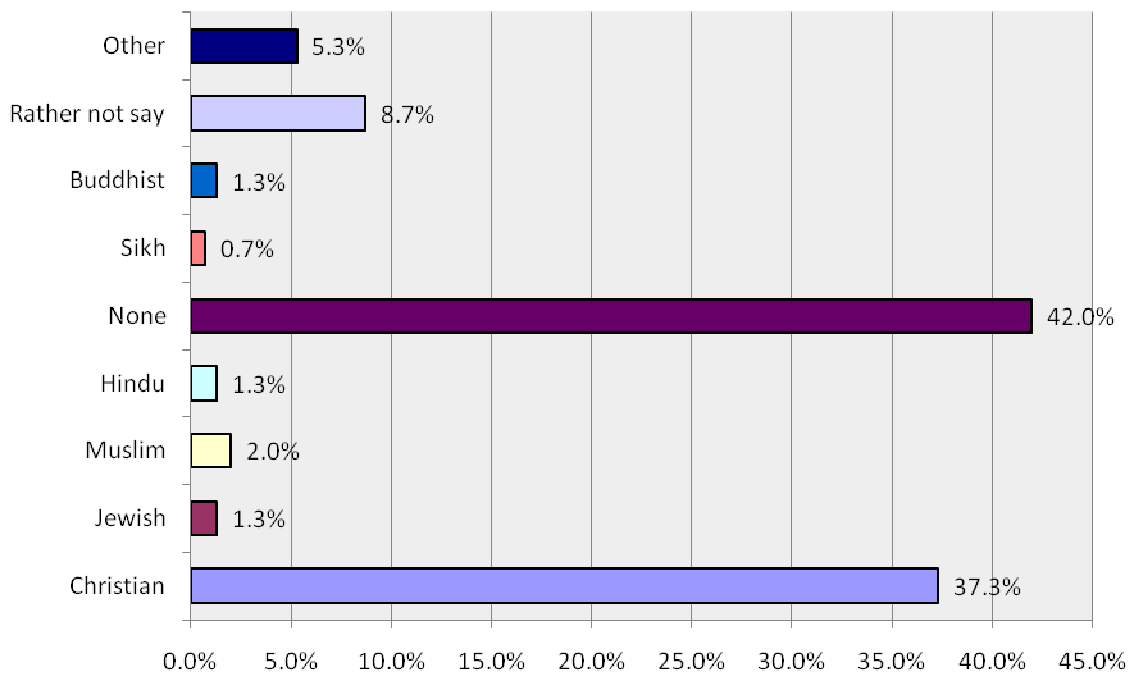
Ethnicity of Respondents, n = 156



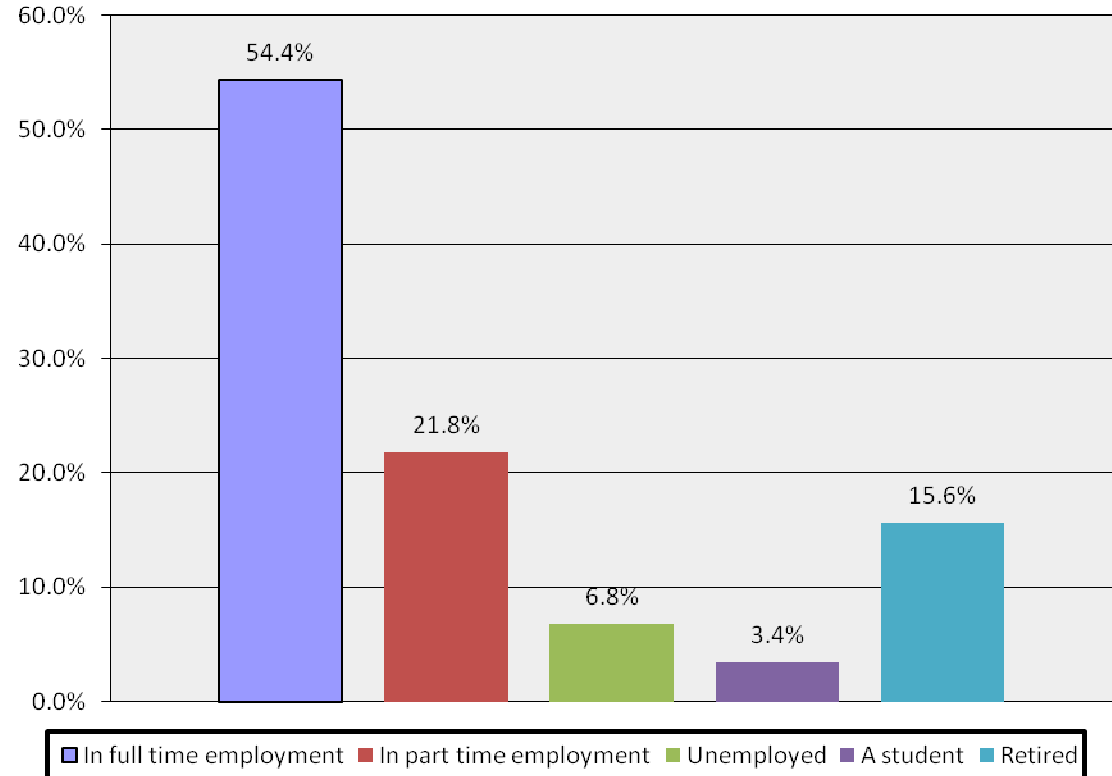
Sexual Orientation of Respondents, n = 152



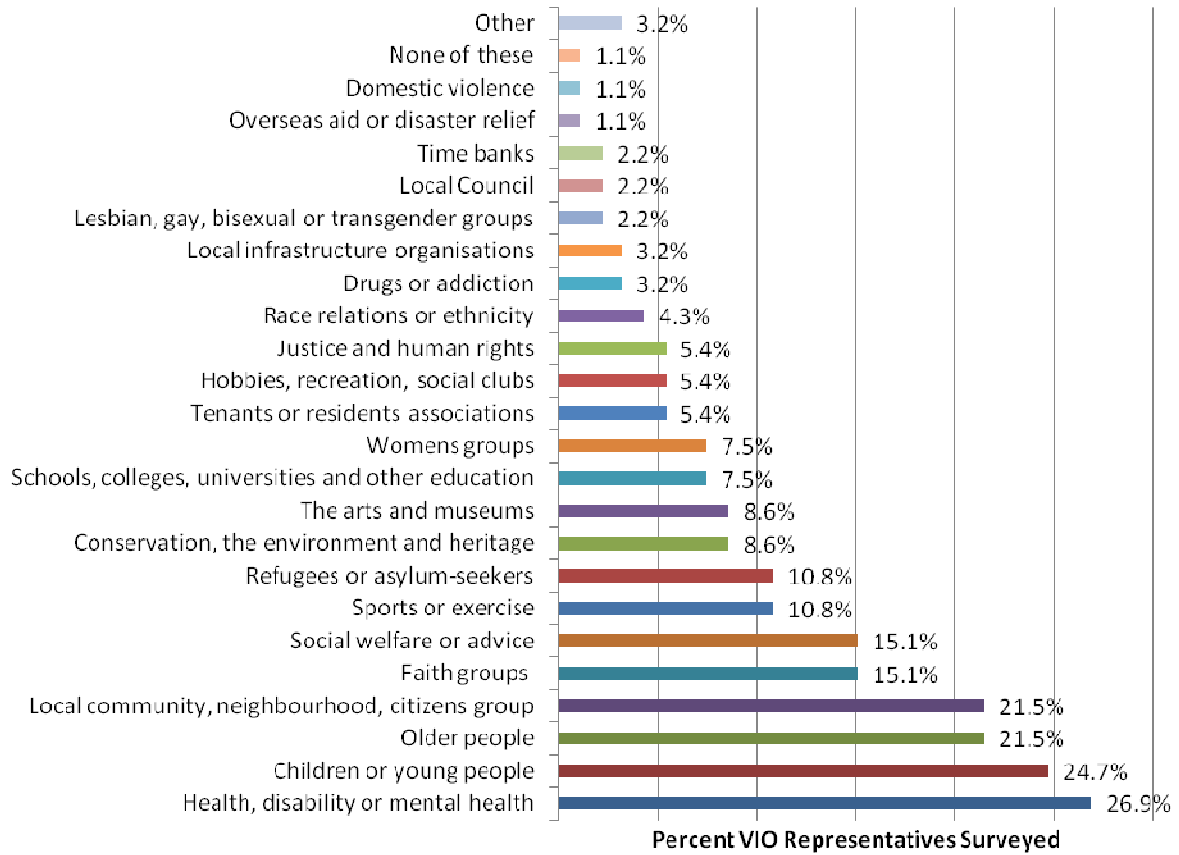
Faith Affiliation of Respondents, n= 150



Employment Status of Respondents, n = 147



Types of Organisations Represented, n = 93



C. Online survey questions

Filter Questions:

1. Do you live in Islington? Yes/No
2. Would you like to answer the survey as a:
 - an individual
 - a representative of a volunteer-involving organisation which benefits communities in Islington?
 - None of the above

Part 1 - Individuals:

3. Have you ever given unpaid time to groups, clubs, charities or organisations to benefit the environment, individuals or groups in Islington? This refers to activities that benefit communities in Islington and/or organisations based in the borough.
 - Yes, in the last 12 months
 - Yes, more than 12 months ago
 - No

If No:

Non-volunteers

4. Have you ever given unpaid time to groups, clubs, charities or organisations to benefit the environment, individuals or groups outside of Islington? Yes/No
5. Have you ever wanted to spend time giving unpaid help to groups, charities, clubs or organisations in Islington? Yes/no
6. Which, if any, are the reasons why you don't give unpaid help to groups, charities, clubs or organisations in Islington? (tick all that apply?)
 - Worried I might end up out of pocket
 - Worried about threat to safety
 - Not enough spare time
 - Not got the right skills/experience
 - Don't know how to find out about getting involved
 - Worried I wouldn't fit in with other people involved
 - Illness or disability
 - Family and partner wouldn't want me to
 - Put off by bureaucracy
 - Wouldn't be able to stop once I got involved
 - Don't feel I speak good enough English
 - Worried about risk/liability
 - Worried about losing benefits
 - Worried that my immigration status might be a barrier
 - Feel I am too old
 - Other (please specify)
7. What, if anything, would make it easier for you to get involved in this kind of activity (tick all that apply?)
 - If I had more information about the organisations or activities
 - If I had more spare time

- Nothing
- If I were at a more convenient location
- If my health improved
- If I was asked
- If I had fewer other commitments
- If I had support or help with childcare or fewer childcare responsibilities
- If someone I knew got involved too
- If I had a drivers license or transport
- If the times were more convenient
- If I had more money
- If I were working less
- If I knew who to contact about it

SKIP to demographics

If Yes:

Volunteers

8. Which of the following best describe any groups, charities, clubs or organisations you've taken part in, supported or helped? Please exclude giving money and anything that was a requirement of your job (tick all that apply).

- Local community, neighbourhood, citizens group
- Trade unions
- Justice and human rights
- The arts and museums
- Safety and first aid
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender groups
- Domestic violence
- Race relations or ethnicity
- None of these
- Hospitals
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Hobbies, recreation, social clubs
- Animal welfare
- Faith groups (i.e. church, mosque, synagogue)
- Politics
- Conservation, the environment and heritage
- Social welfare or advice
- Overseas aid or disaster relief
- Women's groups
- Tenants or residents associations
- Sports or exercise
- Schools colleges, universities and other education
- Children or young people
- Older people
- Health, disability or mental health
- Drugs or addiction
- Time Banks

- Other (please specify)

9. Have you given unpaid help to these organisations in any of the following ways (tick all that apply)?

- Working in a charity shop
- Other practical help
- Secretarial, administrative or clerical work
- Organising or helping to run an event
- Providing childcare
- Participating in conservation or environmental projects
- Raising or handling money
- No help given
- Representing or advocacy
- Cultural or creative activities
- Providing transport or driving
- Leading a group, member of a committee, board or trustee
- Campaigning or lobbying
- Giving advice, information or counselling
- Befriending or mentoring people
- Working with animals
- Providing special expertise (e.g. accounting, translation, etc)
- Educating, teaching, coaching
- Visiting people
- Preparing or serving food or drinks
- Any other help (please state)

10. Over the past 12 months, how often have you given unpaid help to groups?

- Regularly (once a month or more)
- Quite often or just a few times
- As a one-off activity only
- Not at all

11. How many hours have you spent helping groups in the last four weeks?

12. How many organisations in total did you give unpaid help to in the past 12 months?

13. How did you find out about opportunities to give unpaid help to the groups you have assisted (tick all that apply)? If you give to more than one organisation please select the main group that you help when answering the questions.

- My church, mosque, synagogue or other faith group
- National newspaper
- Personal best
- National or local TV
- Set up my own group
- Involvement with the organisation but not as a service user
- Through previously using the services of the organisation

- Word of mouth
- The library
- Local event
- General volunteering website
- My employer
- National radio
- Islington Volunteer Centre
- Local newspaper
- Islington Council
- Do-It website
- My university, college or school
- v
- Islington Voluntary Action Council
- Leaflet or poster
- Local radio
- Islington Time Bank
- An organisation website
- Other (please state)

14. When did you first get involved with giving unpaid help to groups, clubs, charities or organisations (choose one)?

- In the last 12 months
- 1-2 years ago
- 3-5 years ago
- 6-10 years ago
- Over 10 years ago

15. Please think back to the first time you ever gave unpaid help to an organisation. Did you start helping for any of the following reasons (tick all that apply)?

- I wanted to improve things, help people
- I wanted to meet people, make friends
- The cause was really important to me
- My friends or family did it
- It was connected with the needs or interests of my family or friends
- I felt there was a need in my community
- I had received voluntary help myself
- I thought it would give me a chance to learn new skills
- I thought it would give me a chance to use my existing skills
- To give something back
- I thought it would help me improve my English
- I thought it would help me get on in my career
- It's part of my philosophy of life
- It's part of my religious belief
- It gave me a chance to get a recognised qualification
- I had spare time
- I felt there was no one else to do it

- I had received help myself from the organisation
- It was connected with my interests and hobbies
- I was already involved in the organisation
- Other (please state)

16. Thinking about the kinds of help you give to groups, clubs, charities or organisations, what have you gained from these activities (tick all that apply)?

- Meeting people and making friends
- Satisfaction from seeing the results
- It makes me feel less selfish as a person
- Broadens my experience of life
- A sense of personal achievement
- The chance to learn new skills
- A position in the community
- It gets me 'out of myself'
- The chance to get a recognised qualification
- More confidence
- Makes me feel needed
- The chance to improve my employment prospects
- It gives me a chance to do things I'm good at
- It makes me feel less stressed
- It improves my physical/mental health
- I really enjoy it
- Other (please specify)

17. Please note how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.
(options were: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

- I feel the organisation is too concerned about risk
- Volunteering could be better organised by the organisation I am involved with
- I am given the opportunity to influence the development of the organisation
- I found it difficult to find out about volunteering opportunities in Islington
- My help is not really needed
- I feel there is too much bureaucracy
- I feel fully supported in my volunteering role
- My efforts are appreciated by the group that I help
- I received all the information I needed from the organisation to begin volunteering
- I am given the opportunity to do the sort of things I like to do

18. Have you ever been offered or received any of the following types of support?

- A reference for volunteering activity completed
- Induction
- Training
- Mentoring or coaching
- Regular supervision

- Paid time off work to volunteer
- Childcare assistance
- Credit related to a course of study
- Expenses paid related to volunteering activity
- Other (please specify)

19. Do you have any suggestions for how volunteering might be better supported or publicised in Islington?

SKIP to demographics

Part 2 – VIO Representatives:

20. Do you represent a volunteer-involving organisation either based in or benefiting communities in Islington? If you represent more than one group, please choose only one organisation when answering the following questions.

- Yes, I am board member or trustee
- Yes, I am volunteer
- Yes, I am a paid staff member
- Yes, in some other way (please state)
- No, I do not represent a volunteer-involving organisation (SKIP to demographics)

21. What type of organisation do you represent?

- Public Sector
- Private Sector
- Voluntary, community or Third Sector
- Social Enterprise

22. Please tell us the type of activities volunteers participate in within your organisation. (tick all that apply)

- Campaigning or lobbying
- Working with animals
- Participating in conservation or environmental projects
- Educating, teaching, coaching
- Providing transport or driving
- Organising or helping to run an event
- Preparing or serving food or drinks
- Secretarial, admin or clerical work
- Representing or advocacy
- Counselling
- Providing special expertise (e.g. accounting, translation, etc)
- Working in a charity shop
- Providing childcare
- Other practical help (e.g. DIY, shopping)
- Cultural or creative activities
- Leading a group, member of a committee, board or trustees
- Befriending or mentoring people
- Visiting people
- Raising or handling money

- Giving advice, information and counselling
- We do not involve volunteers at all
- Other (please specify)

23. Please tell us what type of organisation you are representing:

- Faith groups (i.e. church, mosque, synagogue)
- Justice and human rights
- Health, disability or mental health
- Hospitals
- Politics
- Tenants or residents association
- Race relations or ethnicity
- Drugs or addiction
- Safety and first aid
- Social welfare or advice
- Sports or exercise
- Trade unions
- Older people
- Overseas aid/ disaster relief
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender groups
- Local community, neighbourhood, citizen group
- Hobbies, recreation, social clubs
- Refugees or asylum-seekers
- Children or young people
- The arts and museums
- Women's groups
- Schools, colleges, universities or other education
- Conservation, the environment and heritage
- Domestic violence
- Animal welfare
- None of these
- Other (please specify)

24. What are the methods that you use to recruit volunteers? (tick all that apply)

- The library
- National or local event
- Islington Volunteer Centre
- National newspaper
- Local newspaper
- National radio
- Local radio
- Do-It website
- Our website
- General volunteering websites
- Word of mouth
- Leaflet or poster
- Local event

- Asking current service users
- Faith groups
- Employers
- V
- Islington Voluntary Action Council
- Islington Council
- Universities, colleges or schools
- Islington Time Bank
- Other (please specify)

25. Please estimate the total number of volunteers who have helped your organisation in the last four weeks. This should include all unpaid help such as from trustees or board members.

26. Please estimate the total number of volunteer hours given to your organisation in the last four weeks. This should include all unpaid help such as from trustees or board members.

27. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements (options were: definitely agree/tend to agree/neither agree nor disagree/tend to disagree/definitely disagree/n/a).

- We provide a wide range of opportunities for volunteers in our organisations
- We involve volunteers at all levels in our organisation
- We have enough support to effectively manage volunteers
- We have all the volunteers that we need
- We need more training on volunteer management
- Our volunteers have all the qualities and skills that we require
- We do enough to show our appreciation of volunteers
- We have enough resources to effectively manage volunteers

28. What type of support does your organisation provide to people who volunteer? (Rated on a scale of always, sometimes, never)

- Payment of expenses
- Training
- Induction
- Supervision
- Reference given
- Mentoring or coaching
- Childcare provision or payment
- Paid time off work
- Other (please state)

29. Please tell us if you have implemented any of the following volunteer management practices (options were: Yes/No/n/a).

- Evaluate the impact of volunteering for the group's services or activities
- Carry out equal opportunities monitoring of volunteers
- Have a written policy on volunteer management

- Have a key person who volunteers can go to for advice and support
30. How much do you feel volunteering is encouraged and supported in Islington by the following organisations, funders and the public sector? (Scale of 1-well supported to 5-not supported at all)
- IVAC
 - Islington Volunteer Centre
 - Islington Council
 - Funders
 - Islington Strategic Partnership
31. Do you feel that the various volunteering efforts in the borough link together and if so how?
32. Where do you see any scope (if at all) for developing further volunteer opportunities in Islington?
33. How would you suggest the profile of volunteering be raised in Islington?
34. Which of the following volunteering brokerage efforts in Islington are you aware of? (Options were: well aware of it's work/heard of it, but don't know much about it/not heard of it)
- Islington Volunteer Centre (IVAC)
 - Islington Time Bank
 - Community Centre
 - Neighbourhood Care Scheme
 - V
 - Age concern
 - Employer supported volunteering
 - Student Volunteer Brokerage
 - Personal Best
35. Please tell us about any changes that might be impacting volunteering within your organisation such as the recession, changes to volunteering infrastructure, Olympics planning, technology changes, demographic changes etc.
36. Please comment on any key priorities in relation to the strategic development of volunteering in Islington?

Demographics

37. What is your age range?
- Under 16
 - 16-25
 - 26-49
 - 50-65
 - Over 65
 - Rather not say

38. Do you consider yourself to have a disability (this is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on one's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)? Yes/No/rather not say

39. How would you describe your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Rather not say
- Other (please specify)

40. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual or 'straight'
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Rather not say
- Other (please specify)

41. How would you describe your religious affiliation or faith (if any)?

- Christian
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Hindu
- None
- Sikh
- Buddhist
- Other
- Rather not say

42. Would any of the following apply to you? (Tick all that apply)

- I am retired
- I am unemployed
- I am a student
- I am in part time employment
- I am in full time employment

Ethnicity

43. How would you describe your ethnicity?

- Asian
 - Indian
 - Pakistani
 - Bangladeshi
 - Other Asian background
- Black
 - African
 - Caribbean
 - Any other Black background

- Mixed race
 - White and Black Caribbean
 - White and Black African
 - White and Asian
 - Any other mixed background
- Chinese or other
 - Chinese
 - Any other ethnic group
- White
 - British
 - Irish
 - Any other white background
- Rather not say

D. List of interviewed organisations

- Age Concern Islington
- Arsenal in the Community
- Central London v involved team (run by Volunteer Centre Westminster)
- Dorcas Project (Canon Community Baptist Church)
- Homestart Islington
- Islington Council Children's Services
- Islington Council Human Resources
- Islington Council Leisure & Cultural Services (including Olympics office)
- Islington Council Regeneration & Community Partnerships
- Islington Faith Forum
- Islington Law Centre
- Islington School Sports Partnership
- Islington Time Bank Network
- Mildmay Time Bank
- Refugee Forum
- Sport Islington
- St. Luke's Centre
- Voluntary Action Islington (including staff and volunteers from the Volunteer Centre)
- Whittington Hospital Voluntary Services (including several volunteers)
- Women's Association for African Networking and Development (WAND UK)

E. Interview questioning route

1. We have been looking at volunteering in the following areas:
 - a. Faith based organisations
 - b. Small, medium and large third sector (voluntary) groups
 - c. Volunteering within the public sector such as through Islington Council, schools, the Police, the NHS and local hospitals
 - d. Private sector – employer-sponsored volunteering
 - e. Sports volunteering
 - f. Volunteering within Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
 - g. Student and youth volunteering
 - h. Time banking
 - i. Tenant and resident association

Are there other volunteering areas that you think are missing from this list?

2. Do you feel that the various volunteering efforts in the borough link together and if so, how?
3. From your perspective, are there particular areas or types of volunteering that happen more frequently or that have more volunteers than others?
4. How is volunteering encouraged in Islington? How do people in Islington find out about volunteering? Can you give any examples? Do you feel that current efforts are sufficient? How and where would you target future efforts?
5. Are you aware of any volunteering brokerage efforts happening in the borough?
6. What do you see as any barriers to volunteering or what might stop people from volunteering?
7. What type of help is given to support volunteering and volunteers? A) VIOs B) volunteers C) career development/progression? Where are the gaps?
8. What purpose do you see volunteering serving within your organisation?
9. What are the key impacts of volunteering on the communities or neighbourhoods you work with or live in?
10. How do you see volunteering linking in with local agendas such as reducing poverty, increasing accessibility, raising aspirations and employability; if at all?
11. How would you suggest the profile of volunteering be raised in Islington?
12. Where do you see any scope (if at all) for developing further volunteer opportunities in Islington? For involving more people in volunteering?

F. Glossary

BAME – Black, Asian and minority ethnic.

Capacity building – a term used to refer to a variety of assistance or forms of support given to organisations in order to build their internal systems, structures, policies and procedures. This can include all forms of organisational development, help with governance and financial systems and a variety of training.

Community cohesion – the concept of a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the community³⁵.

Employer-supported volunteering (ESV) - Businesses and the public sector are becoming increasingly interested in how their employees can get involved in volunteering. Programmes set up to assist employees to volunteer, whether during work hours or in their own time is known as employer-supported volunteering.

Islington Compact – a document which sets out how the local public sector and third sector will work together.

Islington Strategic Partnership (ISP) – This is the local strategic partnership for Islington which brings together the main statutory service providers in the borough including the council, the NHS, and police, along with representatives of the third sector and the private sector. It aims to create a community where people of all ages and from different backgrounds have a chance to reach their potential.

Local Area Agreement – within local government, this refers to the set of priorities for a local area that has been agreed between central government and a local area [normally the local Council and the Local Strategic Partnership (ISP)].

Personal Best - a training programme for Islington residents who are not in work or education and who do not have an NVQ2 qualification or higher. Everyone who completes the course is guaranteed an interview to become a London 2012 Olympics volunteer.

Private sector – refers to private businesses or companies which are profit-making in nature or exist to make a profit for shareholders or owners.

Public sector – refers to government or state-run organisations at any level which provide public services and rely on the tax base for funding. Examples include the local Council, schools, hospitals and the police.

³⁵ Based on the Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion, 2007.

Signposting – referring individuals or organisations to other sources of information or resources.

Social capital - the central tenet of social capital is that social networks have value. Social capital refers to the collective value of those networks (who people know) and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other (norms of reciprocity)³⁶.

Social enterprise – these are mission-based organisations which apply market principles to achieve a social purpose. The sub-sector includes both not-for profit organisations that use business models to pursue their mission and for-profits whose primary purposes are social. Social enterprises are distinctive because their social purpose remains central to their operation.

Sustainable Community Strategy – this document was developed by the ISP with the aim to create a vision for sustainable community involvement and services. Its objectives are to reduce poverty, improve access for all and to realise everyone's potential.

Third sector – refers to the voluntary and community sector or organisations which are mainly not-for-profit such as charities, clubs, faith-based groups and community organisations and are generally run by an unpaid management committee or board of trustees.

Time banking – this is a concept that involves an exchange of time between individuals, with individuals swapping time and building credits. There are five organisations in Islington that coordinate time banking. It is considered a form of informal volunteering.

Voluntary Action Islington - VAI is Islington's umbrella agency for the voluntary sector and a main provider of support for local volunteer-involving organisations. It is sometimes referred to as the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) for Islington. Voluntary Action Islington was formerly known as Islington Voluntary Action Council, or IVAC, and changed its name in December 2009 to coincide with a relocation and merger with the Islington Volunteer Centre (as of April 2009).

Volunteer brokerage – matching individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community. This may include holding information on a comprehensive range of opportunities and offering potential volunteers support and advice in matching their motivation to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Volunteer centres – are sometimes known as volunteer bureaux or volunteer development agencies and provide support at a local level for individual volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. Volunteer Centres have six core functions:

- Brokerage
- Marketing volunteering

³⁶ From www.bowlingalone.com, accessed on 12/12/09.

- Good practice development
- Develop volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development of volunteering

Volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) – are organisations in the public, private or third sectors who involve volunteers in unpaid activity to benefit the community.

Volunteering - any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment, individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives. Volunteering includes any type of unpaid help such as being a trustee, helping to deliver services, work to improve the environment, helping with office or admin work, starting a self help group or being a school governor. It could include work with community groups, faith organisations, public sector organisations, time banks, schools and universities or volunteering through places of work.

Volunteering infrastructure - this refers to the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, coordinate, represent and promote front-line organisations to help them deliver their aims more effectively, thus enabling them to create more effective volunteering programmes. Organisations that make up volunteering infrastructure include volunteer centres and other brokerage agencies such as time banks and universities.

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